CHAPTER II

GANDHI'S SEARCH FOR THE SOLUTION AND NEW POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Gandhi had been fully convinced even during his struggle in South Africa that Hindu-Muslim unity was a pre-condition of Indian home-rule. Consequently, on his return to India in January 1915, he made efforts to contact popular Muslim leaders like Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari, Mazhar-ul-Huq, Abdul Bari and Ali Brothers who could sacrifice for a good cause.\(^1\) He attended the sessions of various Mohammedan associations and Muslim League Conferences and delivered speeches to win the cooperation of the Muslims.\(^2\) He assured them that he had returned to India with a desire to render equal service to both the communities. He said, "We shall accomplish the tasks that face us in India only when my Hindu, Muslim and Parsi brethren feel that they are all one."\(^3\) With the same end in view, he championed the cause of Ali Brothers and tried to secure their release.\(^4\)

As a sequel, Gandhi established himself as a spokesman of the Muslims by the end of 1921. Dr. Ansari, as President

2. Ibid., vol. XIII, pp. 325-326.
3. Ibid., p. 197 and p. 326.
of Reception Committee of the Muslim League, referred to
him as "that dauntless champion of our rights" and as "that
acknowledged intrepid leader of India who is never afraid
to speak out the truth and who has by his noble actions,
endeared himself as much to Mussalmans as to Hindus."\(^5\)
Gandhi's efforts, coupled with the Lucknow Pact, brought the
Hindus and the Muslims still closer. The discontentment of
the Muslims over the cause of Khilafat offered a great oppor­tunity to Gandhi to win over the Muslim elite.

He advised the Muslims not to accept the British
cooperation till the latter reviewed the Turkish Peace terms.
On Gandhi's suggestion, a conference of all parties was held
at Allahabad. The Conference favoured the policy of non­
cooperation and appointed a committee comprising Gandhi, Ali
Brothers, Azad, Kitchlew, Hasrat Mohani and Hazi Ahmad Siddiq
Khatri to frame the programme for the Khilafat movement.\(^6\)
The committee, on August 1, 1920, entrusted Gandhi to guide
the movement. Subsequently, the Khilafat issue became a
part of the Non-cooperation movement.

For Gandhi, Khilafat was the 'Kamadhenu' (desire
yielding) as it offered to him 'an opportunity of uniting
Hindus and Mussalmans, as would not arise in a hundred

\(^5\) Speech by M.A. Ansari in Delhi Muslim League Meeting
on December 30, 1918, Annie Besant Papers quoted in

\(^6\) S.C. Biswas (ed.), Gandhi Theory and Practice: Social
impact and Contemporary Relevance (Simla: Indian
years". He saw in it a remarkable opportunity for promoting various causes about which he was deeply concerned. He wrote in *Young India*:

"I hope by my alliance with the Mohammedans, to achieve a three fold end - to obtain justice in the face of odds with the method of Satyagraha and to show its efficacy over all other methods, to secure Mohammedan friendship for the Hindus and thereby internal peace also and last but not the least to transform ill will into affection for the British and their constitution which in spite of imperfections has weathered many a storm."

Diwan Chaman Lall believed that Gandhi took the step purely on political grounds. He said,

"It was desired for the purpose of touching the imagination of the Muslim masses and converting them to Gandhi's thesis, to Gandhi's creed."

Hindu-Muslim unity was at its highest during the Khilafat days. Gandhi became the leader of all Muslims. This is evident from Mohammad Ali's speech, who spoke on behalf of his community:

"I declare today that the Indian army is the army of Mahatma Gandhi; the Indian police is the police of Mahatma Gandhi; everyman is on the side of Gandhi, nay, on the side of religion and country."

Shaukat Ali also spoke in a similar vein:

"Do you see Mahatma Gandhi, the Sardar of the country? Go and pay your homage to him."

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7. Ibid., pp. 132-133.
11. Ibid., p. 173.
The atmosphere of fraternization generated by this move of Gandhi brought the two communities so close to each other that for a moment it seemed as if the differences between them had completely vanished. Even the Government Intelligence recorded that Hindu-Muslim unity was more than a phrase.\(^{12}\)

However, it is sad to note that the Muslims were more concerned with Khilafat than with Hindu-Muslim unity or Non-cooperation movement. Lala Lajpat Rai observed on the basis of his experiences in the Punjab:

"Appeals for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and the Congress did not evoke much response from the Punjabee Muslims ... but the appeals for Khilafat and Angora Funds have met with hearty responses."\(^{13}\)

Gandhi also corroborated this. He wrote to Shaukat Ali that out of more than one crore rupees collected for Tilak Swaraj Fund, Muslim contribution was hardly ten lakhs.\(^{14}\) Indulal Yagnik, a member of Bombay Home Rule League and a strong critic of Gandhi remarked that though the Muslims cooperated with the Congress but there was something of a bargaining spirit which was evidenced by Shaukat Ali's statement:

"You give me Khilafat, I will give you the protection of the cow"\(^{15}\)

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12. Ibid., p. 75.
However, Gandhi was not oblivious of the distrust existing between the two communities. He said,

"I know that there is much, too much distrust of one another as yet. Many Hindus distrust Mussalman honesty. They argue that without the British, Mussalmans of India will aid Mussalman powers to build a Mussalman empire in India. Mussalmans, on the other hand, fear that the Hindus, being in an overwhelming majority, will smother them."  

Thus, Gandhi's efforts to forge complete unity between the two communities could not bring forth the desired results. The Hindus and the Muslims retained their separate entities and could not merge into each other to create a strong nation. The cooperation that the Muslim masses extended to Gandhi was more because of the Khilafat, a communal issue, than a manifestation of their genuine concern for the freedom of the country. Consequently, with the withdrawal of the Khilafat and the Non-cooperation movements, the feeling of mutual distrust came to the surface once again. Moplah rising of August 1921, had already created misunderstanding between the two communities. Their proselytising activities through Shuddhi and Tabligh movements further charged the atmosphere with communal distrust. Cry of Sangthan by the Hindus was followed by the call of Tanzeem by the Muslims. The 'Mahabir Dal' and 'Ali Ghol', the two para-military organisations of the Hindus and the Muslims respectively, trained the youth of the two communities for

an armed conflict. Immediately after Gandhi's release in 1924, there occurred communal riots in Delhi, Kohat and other parts of the country.

The agony suffered by Gandhi as a result of this fratricidal strife was so intense that he decided to observe a fast of 21 days as a penance. The fast of the revered leader caused concern and anxiety throughout the country. When everything else had failed, the single act of Gandhi seemed to have arrested the attention of all communities.\(^\text{17}\)

The propaganda by the native press of one community to vilify the other stopped.\(^\text{18}\) The Shuddhi and Sangthan movements were suspended. A call for unity conference was given by the leaders of both the communities. It was held at Delhi under the presidency of Motilal Nehru from September 26 to October 2, 1924. Three hundred delegates from different religions and various parties participated in the conference. Prominent leaders like Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mohammad Ali, Swami Shraddhanand, Sarojini Naidu, Lala Lajpat Rai, M.A.Ansari, Jayakar and Shaukat Ali attended the conference. Jawaharlal Nehru and Shuaib Qureshi were appointed secretaries of the conference.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{17}\) N.N.Mitra (ed.), *Indian Quarterly Register* (Calcutta: Annual Register Office, 1924), vol.II, p. 147.

\(^{18}\) *The Tribune*, September 24, 1924.

\(^{19}\) *Indian Quarterly Register*, op.cit., 1924, vol. II, pp. 151-152.
Several resolutions were passed in order to remove the causes underlying the dissensions and quarrels between the Hindus and the Muslims. The committee advised that the differences between the two communities should be referred to an arbitration or even to a court of law.20 With this end in view, the conference resolved to set up a Central National Panchayat of not more than 15 members under the chairmanship of Gandhi.21

The various resolutions of the conference were concerned with the immediate causes of tension and their removal. The Hindu and Muslim members called upon their coreligionists to be tolerant to each other and expected a change of heart. Unfortunately, they could not succeed in their efforts mainly because the resolutions were backed only by moral sanction and not by any coercive authority. In Jinnah's words, the resolutions were "merely appeals to the good sense of the Mohammedans".22

Thus, the conference did not yield any concrete result. The intelligence report from the Punjab conveyed to the Government "generally speaking, neither his fast nor the unity conference has made much impression".23 The Bombay Government Report communicated "while on the whole, the Hindus are in favour of fostering Hindu-Muslim unity on

23. Ibid.
the lines of the resolutions of the conference, the Mohammedans are more or less indifferent."24

Another attempt at Hindu-Muslim unity was made at the All-Parties Conference Committee which met at Delhi under the presidency of Gandhi on January 23, 1925. Gandhi advised that a subcommittee should be constituted to frame the scheme for Swaraj and to "suggest ways and means by which an agreement could be reached between Hindus and Mussalmans as also among all the political parties."25 Accordingly, a subcommittee consisting of forty members was constituted which included such outstanding leaders as Jinnah, Lala Lajpat Rai, Ali Brothers, Mohammed Shafi, Dr. Ansari, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Jawaharlal Nehru and Jayakar.

In the very first meeting of the subcommittee, the existence of a wide gulf between the leaders of both the communities was apparent. Jinnah, while speaking about the Muslim demands, pleaded for the extension of the Lucknow Pact to protect the rights and claims of the Muslims especially in the Punjab. On the other hand, Lala Lajpat Rai, representing the feelings of the Hindus about the Lucknow Pact, observed that the Pact was a temporary one liable to be modified in the interest of the country as a whole.26

24. Ibid.
Gandhi favoured the middle course. He was against the system of separate electorates as its working proved unsatisfactory almost everywhere. Moreover, he was afraid that the grant of separate electorates to one community might give rise to similar demands by other communities which would mean 'ruin of nationalism'. But he wanted the Mussalmans in the Punjab and Bengal to have representation in accordance with their numbers, as he could well judge that they were suspicious of Hindu majorities. He appealed to the Hindus to yield to the principle of surrendering out of strength to the Mussalmans in every mundane matter.

Gandhi put forward a plan which had the provision of election on joint ticket and reservation of seats for Mohammedans. His plan offered to the Muslims due share of political power even without resorting to separate electorates. It was based on his conviction that:

"What the Mussalmans want is not separate electorate for its own sake, but they want their own real representatives to be sent to the legislatures and other elective bodies. This can be done by private arrangement rather than legal imposition which would mean a domestic settlement of domestic quarrels and a solid wall of united opposition against a common enemy - the foreign rule."

But he warned that if communalism was the goal, then any


private arrangement must break down. If, however, Swaraj was the goal and the parties approached the question purely from a national stand point, there was no fear of breakdown. He concluded that the law should provide a just franchise whereby every community could have voters on the roll in proportion to their numbers.29

The plan was good in the sense that it provided fair representation to the Muslims without adopting separate electorates. It had the great merit of eliminating communal fanaticism as under joint electorate only those persons could hope to be elected who could carry the confidence of Hindu voters also. In spite of its merits, the plan could not yield desired results and the stalemate continued.

Till late thirties, several such conferences were held to evolve a formula for the settlement of the communal question. While the Congress leadership tried to meet the demands of the Muslims without resorting to the system of separate electorates as it was inimical to the national unity, the Muslim leadership were not ready to accept joint electorate unless a system was devised to ensure adequate share of power to them.

One such attempt was made by the Nehru Committee constituted in 1928 under the presidency of Motilal Nehru. Gandhi was in close touch with the working of the committee.

29. Ibid., p. 163.
and commended its work. The committee made certain recommendations which were accepted by the All-India Congress Committee which considered them as a great contribution towards the solution of India's political and communal problems. The Muslims, however, were divided over them.

Aga Khan advocated independence for each Indian province. Shaukat Ali expressed Muslim feeling of resentment. He even blamed Gandhi for vitiating the composition of the Committee. Gandhi, however, refuted the charge. Jinnah on behalf of the League and Shervani on behalf of the Central Khilafat Committee, keeping in view the Muslim proposals of March 1927, presented certain recommendations to the Nehru Committee. But the recommendations were rejected by the Conference. Sapru, however, wanted to accommodate Jinnah. He said,

"We must, as practical statesmen, try to solve the problem and not be misled by arithmetical figures." 

30. Gandhi Papers, Ser. No. 13078 and 13083, vol. 34, letters from Motilal Nehru to Gandhi dated February 21, 1928 and February 24, 1928 also


Ibid., Ser. No. 13692, letter from Gandhi to Shaukat Ali, dated September 24, 1928 and November 3, 1928, G.M.M.L.


34. Ibid., p. 389.
Jayakar, on the other hand, considered them incompatible with the recommendations of All-Parties Conference at Lucknow. He argued that Jinnah represented only a small section of the Muslims and even if the Conference agreed to his recommendations, the support of the whole Muslim community could not be guaranteed. He was also afraid that it would lead the Hindus' support to a breaking point as they had been persuaded to approve the Nehru Report with great difficulty. He said, "Any further concession would only bring a rupture." Jinnah, in an interview to the Associated Press, blamed Jayakar for the failure of the Conference. "The fate of Nehru Report", he lamented, "was sealed by the speech of Jayakar at the convention."

Another Muslim League delegate, Aziz-ul-Haq, opined that agreement could not be reached because of the stern attitude of the Congress and the Hindus for the Muslim demand for one third share of seats in the Central Legislature. He further revealed that Jinnah had persuaded the Muslim leaders, especially the delegates from Bengal, with a great difficulty to agree to joint electorate with reservation of seats recommended by the Nehru Report. It is also reported that even some of the Congress-Muslims were quite upset with the way the Muslim demands had been treated.

37. The Tribune, June 2, 1929.
The failure of the Nehru Report made the Muslims realise that their division was suicidal for the Muslim interests. They made efforts to consolidate themselves.

Attempts were made by different political parties to achieve unity when Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, announced His Majesty's Government's intention to confer the Dominion Status on India and to convene the Round Table Conference to understand the Indian viewpoint for making the future Indian constitution. The First Round Table Conference which was attended by almost all political parties except the Congress, failed to solve the problem of communal representation mainly because of the divergence of opinion on the vital issues.

The failure of the First Round Table Conference reinforced Gandhi's conviction that the task of framing the constitution of India could not be accomplished without arriving at an agreement on the communal issue between the two communities. He, therefore, appealed to the Hindus, the majority community, to be more considerate towards the minorities in the interest of national unity. He asked them to tell the Mussalmans "Have as big a share of the spoil as you want". He said, "As a Congressman and as a Hindu, I say that I wish to give the Muslims what they want."

Addressing the Muslims, he said, "I would like you to put

down whatever you want on a blank sheet of paper and I shall agree to it." He told Jamiat-ul-Ulema at Karachi on April 1, 1931, that the Congress was not a Hindu organisation and to satisfy the Muslims he would like to concede all their demands. Immediately after, he proceeded to Delhi as a Congress representative to have talks with the Muslim leaders for the communal settlement. The Muslim leaders at Delhi presented their demands known as Jinnah's 'fourteen points'.

The demands mainly consisted of separate electorates, special weightage for the Muslims in the provincial and federal legislatures, separation of Sind from Bombay and the retention of residuary powers by the provinces in case of creation of a federation. Though Gandhi was willing to give a blank cheque to the Muslims and concede all their demands, he could not come to an agreement with them because the nationalist Muslims, including Dr. Ansari and Sherwani, condemned separate electorates. They told Gandhi that if he yielded to that demand of the Muslim Conference, they would oppose it strongly. It was argued that separate electorates were bad for the Muslims and the Muslim masses

40. Ibid., p. 381.
did not like them. Similar views were expressed by A.M. Khwaja in a private letter to Gandhi. He wrote to him that the demand was mainly raised by the Muslim elite from minority provinces like the United Provinces and Bihar and their main concern was to safeguard the weightage enjoyed by them.

Replying to these demands, in a press statement on April 6, Gandhi said that though he was in favour of full surrender to any universally expressed wish of Muslims and Sikhs, he could not accept the claim as it was not unanimous. He told the Mussalmans, "I cannot identify myself with any solution which is frankly based on communalism and yet has not what may be called unanimous support of the community concerned."

A conference of Muslim representatives was held at Simla on April 18, 1931, with a view to formulate the demands of the Muslims to be given to Gandhi but it could not evolve any unanimous formula.

In July 1931, the Congress Working Committee offered another scheme for communal settlement. It was the result

46. Ibid., vol. XLVII, pp. 139-141.
of the efforts of a subcommittee comprising Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dr. Ansari and Sardul Singh. The scheme was a compromise between the proposals based on undiluted communalism and undiluted nationalism. The Working Committee hoped that it would be endorsed by the nation as a whole.

The scheme embodied the reservation of seats for the minorities under the joint electorate, appointments in the public services by non-party Public Service Commission on the basis of efficiency and equal opportunity to all the communities, protection of interests of the minority community, carving out of North-Western Frontier Provinces and Sind as separate provinces and the retention of residuary powers by the provinces in case of creation of a federation.

Commenting on the scheme, Gandhi said, "Intrinsically considered, the scheme appears to me to be sound if the necessity for a communal solution be admitted." But from the nationalist point of view, he held, "The scheme is a fall ... we are fallen ... and so the Congress has offered a compromise." He further added, "If Congress scheme proves unacceptable, I am not precluded from endorsing any other reasonable scheme acceptable to the parties concerned."

49. Ibid., vol. XLVII, p. 139. and vol. XLVIII, p. 119.
The scheme did not satisfy the Muslims. All-India Khilafat Committee condemned the formula and characterised it as 'more harmful and destructive than even the Nehru Report'. Shaukat Ali while criticising the Congress stand on communal problem warned that the Muslims would seek British cooperation if their demands were not accepted. He even threatened a civil war if the Congress tried to impose its views on the Muslims. Jinnah also condemned the attitude of the Hindus.

In the absence of an agreement over the communal question, Gandhi was reluctant to participate in the Second Round Table Conference but the Congress Working Committee persuaded him to go. He reached London in the second week of September 1931. Immediately after reaching there, he initiated talks with the Muslims and other minorities to settle the communal problem.

Shafat Ahmad made the position of the Muslim delegation clear at the first formal gathering of the session by talking about the constitutional structure. He wanted that type of electoral system which could get the Muslims a majority of seats in the Punjab and Bengal and complete autonomy for the provinces in the proposed federation.

51. The Times of India, September 5, 1931.
In brief, he put forward the Muslim demand to have Swaraj with the 'provincialisation of the Raj' as the Muslims did not like a powerful Hindu Centre. Even the India Office commented that the crux of the problem was:

'whether the Muslim provinces, or the provinces in which the Muslims hope to consolidate their power, should be under any degree of control from a centre, which will be predominantly Hindu.'

Their primary object was, no doubt, to establish a 'Muslim India'.

The attitude of communal Muslim leadership was not helpful. The Aga Khan in his broadcast to America, said, "They will resist to the last any attempt that under the colour of democracy places them at the mercy of other sections." Jinnah, too, appeared to be in a non-compromising mood. Shaukat Ali was in a mood to fight a 'thousand Gandhis:

But in spite of all these odds, Gandhi was determined to hammer out a settlement. In pursuance of the same, he suggested the adjournment of the proceedings of the Minorities Committee to October 1, 1931 in order to have informal and unofficial consultations with the representatives of the different groups. An informal committee with

Gandhi as President, was constituted to review the whole question. After hearing the views of the representatives of the various minorities, Gandhi conceded the principle of separate electorates on the condition that the Muslims would endorse the demand for Swaraj and leave the question of joint electorate to referendum which would be held on the introduction of the new constitution.56

On October 16, 1931, Gandhi held talks with Muslim delegates and offered them three alternatives:

i) The package that they had already rejected including majorities in Bengal and the Punjab, a referendum on joint electorates, weightage in Muslim minority provinces, one third of the centre seats and residuary powers with the provinces;

ii) Arbitration by a few members of the conference;

iii) A Punjab settlement of the type proposed by Geoffrey Corbett.57

The first two alternatives did not find favour with the Muslims. To them, arbitration was unacceptable and a referendum an anathema.58

The Sikhs expressed their disapproval of the Corbett Scheme. Moreover, the Hindu Mahasabha and Sikh position was irreconcilable with that of the Muslims.

57. Ibid., pp. 221-222.
58. Ibid., p. 222.
Commenting on the causes of the failure, Gandhi said that it was due to the very composition of the Committee. He remarked, "We are not chosen ones of the nation which we should be representing but we are the chosen ones of the Government." He found himself confronted with the delegates who were selected only because they were communalists. Under the circumstances he could not have succeeded. Similar views were expressed by Nehru.

Some London correspondents also hinted that Muslim conservatives had been having "secret contacts with a section of British Torryism." A report prepared by Benthall also revealed that "Right wing of the Government had made up its mind to break up the Conference and fight the Congress." Commenting on the British attitude, C.L. Setalvad observed:

"The British were anxious to take advantage of every division among our ranks but our people did not realise that their whole intention was to create a division between the pro-Hindu section and the Muslims and thus prevent an agreement."

64. M.S. Setalvad (son of C.L. Setalvad), Oral History Transcript No. 176, N.M.M.L., New Delhi.
Some Muslim leaders including the Aga Khan, Khaliq-uz-Zaman and others have blamed Gandhi for the failure of the Round Table Conference. They attributed the failure to Gandhi's unsympathetic, unrealistic and dogmatic attitude.65

Since the Indian leaders at the Round Table Conference failed to arrive at any agreement, the Prime Minister, in the capacity as Chairman of minorities subcommittee, released the Communal Award on August 17, 1932 which conceded most of the Muslim demands. Separate electorates were retained. Gandhi was much perturbed over the extension of the principle of separate electorates to depressed classes. He gave an ultimatum to resort to fast from September 20, 1932 if the provision was not altered.

As a result of the efforts of Azad, Shaukat Ali and Madan Mohan Malaviya, a unity conference was held at Allahabad from November 3 to November 17, 1932. It was attended by 121 persons in all, 63 Hindus, 11 Sikhs, 39 Muslims and 8 Christians.66 A committee of 20 members was appointed to find out a solution acceptable to all the communities. The Unity Conference held three sessions and made certain recommendations67 which were strongly opposed

by a section of the Muslims. Iqbal, the President of All-India Muslim Conference and a number of prominent Muslims declared in a statement:

"We feel that it will be highly inopportune to reopen the question of separate versus joint electorate as we are convinced that our community is not prepared to give up this safeguard at the present juncture."68

The British also made the efforts of the Unity Conference futile by announcing the grant of 33.33 per cent of seats to the Muslims in Central Legislature and agreeing to make Sind a separate province. All this was done to appease the Muslims with the tacit approval of Lord Willingdon.69

Another attempt was made to find an alternative to the Communal Award in 1935. The Muslim League Council's Resolution of April 1, 1934 and Jinnah's interview to the Associated Press70 provided the basis for the hope of settlement of the communal problem. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, was anxious to find a solution of the communal issue. Jinnah and Rajendra Prasad, therefore, decided to formulate certain proposals for the settlement of the communal problem. The latter put forward a formula

69. Templewood Collection, letters from Willingdon to Samuel Hoare, July 9 and July 10, 1932 quoted in Uma Kaura, op.cit., p. 85.
having joint electorate, reservation of seats on the basis of population and freedom of the minorities to contest additional seats. The franchise was to be arranged in such a manner as to reflect the proportion of various communities in the electorate.\textsuperscript{71} Jinnah suggested that Muslims should be properly compensated for separate electorates. As a result of their talks, a formula having joint electorate in place of separate ones was evolved. The Congress leader felt that the formula on the whole furnished a fair basis of agreement. He was prepared to 'pay some price' in order to secure joint electorate.\textsuperscript{72} Jinnah assured him that if the communal problem was solved, the Muslims would be ready to join hands with the Congress in any national demand.

The formula approved by Rajendra Prasad could not find favour with the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, though Congress leaders and the Punjab branch of the Hindu Mahasabha could be persuaded to accept it. Rajendra Prasad stated that he had accepted the formula in his individual capacity but on Jinnah's insistence that it should be approved by Malaviya and some leaders of Hindu Mahasabha also, the talks failed.\textsuperscript{73} As a sequel to this, Rajendra Prasad asked Jinnah

\textsuperscript{71} Rajendra Prasad Papers, extract from the notes of conversation held between Jinnah and Rajendra Prasad on January 28, 1935, N.A.I., New Delhi.
\textsuperscript{72} Rajendra Prasad Papers, microfilm, letter from Rajendra Prasad to Patel dated February 14, 1935, N.M.M.L., New Delhi.
to reconsider his attitude but the latter said,
"What might have been possible some years ago, was not possible today and those who made such suggestions ignored the basic fact of the Award being in favour of the Mussalmans."  

The spectacular success of the Congress in the elections to the provincial Assemblies, constituted under the India Act 1935, further widened the gap between the two parties. The Congress secured a clear majority in five provinces while in another four it emerged as the largest single party. The Muslim League won 109 out of 482 Muslim seats and obtained less than 5 per cent of the total Muslim votes. Even in the Muslim-majority provinces, it could not get a majority of seats. In the Punjab, the League was routed. It obtained only 2 out of 86 Muslim seats. In Bengal, it won 40 out of 119 seats. In Sind and North-West Frontier Provinces it failed to annex any seat. These hard realities upset all calculations and plans of Jinnah. The League leaders had agreed to work according to the Government of India Act 1935 under the impression that their party would have a dominating position in the Muslim-majority provinces besides securing an

important position in the legislatures of Hindu-majority provinces with the help of separate electorates and Communal Award.77

The poor performance of the League was due to the fact that it was not so well organised as the Congress and Jinnah was not as popular among the Muslim masses as Gandhi and Nehru were among the Hindus. Moreover, he was not the sole representative of the Muslims. The Unionist Party in the Punjab and the Krishak Praja Party in Bengal commanded greater hold over the Muslims than the League. Consequently, when the All-India League leader made an attempt to capture the Punjab Muslim politics in 1935, the Unionist Leader Fazl-i-Hussain conveyed to him that he should keep his finger out of Punjab pie.78 Similarly, the Aga Khan did not support Jinnah at that time as he was giving financial help to the Unionist Party in the Punjab. In Bengal, the Muslim League Parliamentary Board dominated by landlords could not arrive at any lasting electoral arrangement with Fazl-ul-Huq's Krishak Praja Party79 though initially it agreed to join Muslim League Parliamentary Board on the persuasion of Jinnah.

79. Shila Sen, Muslim Politics in Bengal (New Delhi: Impex India, 1976), pp. 77-78.
The Congress, after having obtained spectacular victory at the polls, formed Governments in eight out of eleven provinces. It decided to follow the well-known principle of homogeneous ministries composed of the members of one single political party among whom nationalist Muslims were included. Consequently, it refused to enter into coalitions with the League even where the latter had secured a substantial number of seats and had more or less the same constitutional aim and legislative programme as that of the Congress. It decided to choose Muslim ministers out of the Congress members. This was the beginning of confrontation with the League.

It was particularly true of the United Provinces and Bombay. Though the Congress was having a clear majority in the United Provinces, the League had cherished the hope of joining the cabinet under a coalition ministry since it had cordial relations with the Congress. Khaliq-uz-Zaman entered into negotiations with Pant, the Premier of the United Provinces. The Muslim leader hoped that the League would be given a few seats in the cabinet. But the Congress High

Command put stringent conditions on the League for joining the cabinet which were not acceptable to the latter as they posed a danger to its very existence as a separate entity. Similarly, while considering the question of ministry making in Bombay, Jinnah turned down the Congress offer of including two Muslim members in the cabinet as they were to work under the Congress discipline and abide by the principle of joint responsibility.

It is held in some quarters that the reluctance of the Congress to form coalition with the League was to a great extent responsible for alienating the Muslims. They argued that since the League had fared badly in the elections, the Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces would have welcomed the offer of cooperation between the two parties. In Munshi's opinion, Jinnah felt so helpless in 1937 that he would have given anything to work with the Congress. Diwan Chaman Lall also observed that Jinnah

82. The Leader, August 4, 1937.
84. Ibid.

*The conditions laid down by the Congress were:
   i) The Muslim group in U.P. Legislature should cease to function as a separate group.
   ii) The existing members of Muslim League Party in U.P. would become a part of the Congress Party and be subject to the discipline of the Congress Party.
   iii) The Muslim League Parliamentary Board in U.P. will be dissolved.
in 1937 was prepared to accept joint electorate if the Congress had given 33.33 per cent share to the Muslims in Central Legislature. But the offer was not welcomed by Gandhi and Nehru.\textsuperscript{85}

Another Muslim Leader, Khaliq-uz-Zaman, who later became a great champion of Pakistan, also felt bitter about the treatment he had received from Jawaharlal Nehru. He held the United Provinces Congress leadership responsible for driving him into the arms of the Muslim League.\textsuperscript{86} The attitude of the Provincial Congress leadership in the Punjab also was not in any way helpful to the Unionist Premier Sikander Hyat Khan, who was compelled to arrive at some understanding with the League under Sikander-Jinnah Pact. It was believed by some of the contemporaries that had the Congress taken the decision about office acceptance before the formation of the Unionist Ministry in the Punjab, Sikander might have offered some seats to the Congress in the cabinet.\textsuperscript{87}

Similarly, it is surmised that the refusal of the Congress to give support to Fazl-ul-Huq\textsuperscript{88} in Bengal, left no choice for him but to join hands with the Muslim League

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\textsuperscript{85} Diwan Chaman Lall, Oral History Transcript No. 220, N.M.M.L., New Delhi.
\textsuperscript{87} S.L. Malhotra, From Civil Disobedience to Quit India (Chandigarh: Publication Bureau Panjab University, 1979), P. 88.
\textsuperscript{88} Shila Sen, op.cit., pp. 89-91.
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The Bengal Congress leaders failed to realise the importance of supporting Fazl-ul-Huq and thus missed an opportunity to win the confidence of a section of Bengal Muslims led by him.  

Several writers believe that the issue of coalition ministry ultimately led to the demand for partition. According to Majumdar:

"The decision of the Congress leaders was extremely unwise ... The Muslims now fully realised that as a separate community they had no political prospects in future ... The Congress set an example of totalitarianism by asking the League to liquidate itself which led to the most disastrous consequences in future politics."  

Lateef, a Muslim scholar, recorded that the reaction was not confined to the Muslim League alone as other Muslims outside the League were also alarmed.  

Undoubtedly, the Congress victory widened the breach between the two communities. Michael Brecher observed:

"Flushed with success, the Congress adopted an imperious attitude to all other political parties, a 'Himalayan blunder', for which it had to pay dearly in the years to come."  

89. Ibid., p. 93.  
According to Frank Moraes:

"Had the Congress handled the League more tactfully after the elections, Pakistan might never have come into being ... Jinnah certainly created Pakistan. But the Congress by its acts of commission and omission also helped to make it possible."93

Aziz, a Muslim scholar also held:

"The Congress refusal to share power with the Muslims in 1937 was to crystallize the notion of Pakistan into a definite scheme."94

But the issue of coalition ministry in the United Provinces or elsewhere was not so simple as is made out by the critics of the Congress. It had secured an absolute majority in these provinces and was not under any obligation to enter into coalition. Moreover, to project itself as a national organisation, it did not require the support of the Muslim League as it could include nationalist Muslims or non-League Muslims in the cabinets. Only for the sake of political expediency and for earning the good will of Muslim leaders in the United Provinces, it could have taken a few Muslim League members in the cabinet. But in the face of Muslim League demands such an offer of cooperation could not materialise as the League wanted one third share of the seats in the cabinet.95 In that case, after the

inclusion of a nationalist Muslim in the cabinet, the Muslim representation would have amounted to 50 per cent whereas the total strength of the Muslims in the United Provinces was 14 per cent of the entire population. Such a course would have deprived other communities of their due share of power. The Congress, therefore, hesitated to do so. Besides, Muslim League members wanted to have freedom to vote in the Assembly in accordance with their conscience on communal matters which could not have been acceded by the Congress because of several complications.

Further, there were divisions in the Muslim League Parliamentary Board in the United Provinces. Jinnah in his repeated declarations had expressed himself against any move for settlement with any particular group and even rebuked those who talked loosely of cooperating with the Congress. Even some communal minded members of the United Provinces Muslim League were hostile to any idea of cooperation with the Congress. Under these circumstances, it is not fair to suggest that the issue of coalition ministry alone ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan. According to Mehrotra, Azad's contention that the Congress generosity to give one more seat to Muslim League in the United Provinces, would have disintegrated the Muslim League Party in the provinces and the demand for Pakistan

96. The Leader, April 28 and April 29, 1937.
would not have arisen is too naive a conclusion.  

The League was not very strong at that time and the Congress in place of seeking the cooperation of the League, embarked on the Muslim mass contact programme to acquire hold over the Muslim masses and to neutralise the hostile propaganda of the League among the Muslims. Emphasizing its need, Nehru said,

"The Congress failed to get Muslim seats because it had long neglected working among Muslim masses and we could not reach them in time."  

He issued circulars to all Provincial Congress Committees asking them to pay special attention to the enrollment of Muslim members. Provincial Congress Committees were asked to appoint special committees in order to maintain closer contact with rural and urban Muslim masses. District and local authorities were asked to issue notices in Urdu in all those areas where a large proportion of the population could read. Provincial Congress Committees were also asked to form primary committees in villages and Mohallas or wards of towns. Their members were to meet twice a year to review their own work and to consider local problems.

Henceforth, the Congress members projected themselves as the real champions of the Muslim poor classes because of their commitment to the economic uplift of the poor irrespective of their religion and caste while the League was presented as a body controlled by landlords who could not be entrusted with the task of promoting the interest of the poor. This propaganda naturally irritated the Muslim Leaguers. Sayeed opined that the Congress tried to weaken the Muslim League by telling Muslim lawyers and landlords that their political future and material prosperity lay in associating themselves with the Congress Party and not in condemning themselves to a life time in the wilderness by joining the League.\textsuperscript{101}

Jinnah felt that "Congress policy of mass contact with Mussalmans is fraught with very serious consequences."\textsuperscript{102} He interpreted it as 'Massacre Programme'.\textsuperscript{103} Shaukat Ali also beseeched Hindu Leaders not to waste their money and time in bullying the Muslims and try an honourable friendship and understanding with them.\textsuperscript{104} According to Chakrabarti, Nehru's move created an impression that the

\begin{enumerate}
\item Selected Works, op.cit., vol. VIII, p. 150. also The Bombay Chronicle, July 5, 1937.
\item A.I.C.C. File No. B/9, 1938, N.M.M.L., New Delhi.
\item A.I.C.C. File No. G-32, 1938, N.M.M.L., New Delhi also The Times of India, May 22, 1937.
\end{enumerate}
Congress had launched a rival campaign for recruiting Muslim votes. The League leadership took up the challenge and started a campaign of enrolling Muslim masses in the rural areas as a countermeasure which met with massive success.105

As a result of these political developments, the League propaganda created an impression among the Muslims that the Congress was aiming at the establishment of Hindu Raj. The Governor of the United Provinces recorded:

"The enthusiasm of masses for Congress Raj melted imperceptibly into the idea of Hindu Raj which were certainly prevalent throughout the provinces. These ideas were deeply resented by Muslims who were invincibly determined not to be ruled by the Hindus."

From them onward, Jinnah treated the Congress as a Hindu body which could not be relied upon for protecting the interests of the Muslims. His speech at the historic Lucknow League Session held from October 15 to October 18, 1937 bears testimony to this. He said,

"The present leadership of the Congress especially during the last 10 years has been responsible for alienating the Mussalmans of India more and more by pursuing a policy which is exclusively Hindu and since they have formed the Government in six, actually eight provinces, where they are in a majority, they have by their words, deeds and programme shown more and more that the Mussalmans cannot expect any justice or fairplay at their hands."107

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Gandhi, however, continued his efforts to create favourable conditions for a rapprochement between the League and the Congress. In pursuance of it, he entered into a dialogue with Jinnah through correspondence from October 19, 1937 to March 17, 1938. To conciliate Jinnah, he wrote on October 19:

"... the whole of your speech is a declaration of war. Only I hoped you would reserve poor me a bridge between the two. I see you want no bridge. I am sorry. Only it takes two to make a quarrel. You won't find me one even if I can not become a peace maker."108

Similarly, in his letter of February 3, 1938, he complained to Jinnah:

"In your speeches I miss the old nationalist. When in 1915, I came from South Africa, everybody spoke of you as one of the staunchest nationalists and the hope of both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Are you still the same Mr. Jinnah? If you say you are, in spite of your speeches, I shall accept your word."109

Jinnah, in his reply dated February 15, 1938, stressed the point that it was he who had initiated the correspondence, despite the propaganda made by Prasad and Nehru that he put obstacles in the way of communal settlement. He castigated Gandhi for writing, "Believe me, the

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moment I can do something that can bring the two communities together, nothing in the world can prevent me from so doing." He further asked, "Am I right in interpreting that the moment has not come." Referring to Gandhi's remarks about the League leader's faith in nationalism, the latter retorted with vengeance that nationalism was not the monopoly of any single individual and it was difficult to be defined. However, he felt that unity could not be brought about by correspondence alone. It needed tackling of the fundamental points in dispute for which both of them could suggest ways and means. He expressed his readiness to render all assistance in case Gandhi felt the moment had come.\(^{110}\)

Gandhi, appreciating Jinnah's point that face to face dialogue could be more fruitful than correspondence, asked the League leader to hold talks either with him or with Nehru or with Subhash, the Congress President. He further suggested to him that earlier he was guided by Dr. M.A. Ansari regarding Hindu-Muslim question and since Dr. Ansari was not alive, he would be guided by Azad. So he asked him to have a dialogue with Azad.\(^{111}\)


Any suggestion to settle the question through Azad hurt the League leader and he wrote pungently in a letter dated March 3, 1938:

"Whether you are of the opinion that you see the light and the moment has come and if so, whether you are prepared to take up the matter in right earnest, I find that there is no change in your attitude and mentality when you say you would be guided by Maulana Azad." 112

He warned Gandhi that by this manner he would repeat the tragedy which occurred before he went to the Round Table Conference. In the same letter Jinnah came out with a novel demand that hampered any settlement in future between Gandhi and the Congress on one side and Jinnah and the League, on the other. He wanted Gandhi to recognise the All-India Muslim League as the one authoritative and representative organisation of Mussalmans of India and accept for himself the status of the representative of the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country." "It is only on that basis" he concluded, "we can proceed further and devise machinery of approach." 113

Replying to Gandhi's suggestion to meet Nehru or Bose, he said that he was willing to meet anybody but ultimately he knew that the matter would be referred to

113. Ibid.
him (Gandhi). He, therefore, expressed his desire to see him first. Gandhi replied in his letter dated March 8, 1938, that much to his regret he had not seen the light as asked by Jinnah. He further wrote, "If I had, I would have proclaimed the news from the house tops."

Regarding the point that he should speak on behalf of the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country, he wrote, "I am afraid I cannot fulfill the text." He communicated to him that at the most he would exert all the moral influence, he could, over them to secure an honourable settlement. However, they finally decided to meet on April 28, 1938.

Gandhi met Jinnah at latter's residence at Bombay. It was a preliminary informal exchange of views between the two leaders and in a way, was preparatory to the forthcoming more formal negotiations. They had three hours of friendly discussion on the Hindu-Muslim question and in a joint statement they said that they would further pursue the matter, which unfortunately did not materialise. Thus, another attempt to resolve the Hindu-Muslim tangle failed.

Before Gandhi met Jinnah, Jawaharlal Nehru also entered into negotiations with the League leader through


correspondence from January 18 to April 16, 1938. In his letter dated January 18, referring to his correspondence with Nawab Ismail Khan, Nehru expressed his anxiety to find out the points of difference and agreement between the League and the Congress and asked Jinnah to throw light on them. In order to assuage the apprehensions of the Muslims, he wrote on February 4, 1938, that the Congress was not imposing Hindi or Hindustani and crushing Urdu. The question of language which represented the Congress viewpoint was approved not only by Gandhi but by those persons also who were interested in the advancement of Urdu, including Maulvi Abdul Huq, Secretary Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu of Hyderabad. He, however, offered to consider suggestions to rectify the Congress policy, if it was wrong.

In his letter dated March 8, 1938, Nehru once again assured that the Congress was anxious to remove the grievances of the Muslims. In his opinion there were mainly three matters viz. Communal Award, religious guarantees and cultural protection and guarantees. Regarding the letter two, he said that the Congress had endeavoured to give full assurances to the League. However, if the League felt some other guarantee to be necessary, it could communicate its desire.

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117. Ibid., pp. 213-215.
118. Ibid., p. 226.
In reply, Jinnah, on March 17, 1938, drew Nehru's attention to the articles on Muslim demands published in the *Statesman* dated February 12, 1938 and the *New Times* dated March 1, 1938 and enclosed a copy each of the same.

He wrote:

"Crux of the problem was to safeguard the rights and the interests of the Mussalmans with regard to their religion, culture, language, personal laws and political rights in the national life, the Government and the administration of the country."\(^{119}\)

In reply, Nehru on April 6, 1938, wrote a lengthy letter. Taking these articles as the basis of the Muslim demands, he enlisted fourteen points and wrote to Jinnah that if he liked, he could add any other demand. But he wanted the League to frame its demands keeping in the background the economic and political conditions of India as well as in the light of critical international situation. He further told Jinnah that many of the Muslim demands required changes in the constitution or statutory guarantees which were beyond the power of the Congress. He went on to explain all the points, including the fourteen points of Jinnah, Congress attitude towards the Communal Award,

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Muslim share in state services, protection of cultural rights, singing of Bande-Matram song of which only two unobjectionable stanzas were to be sung in future etc. He continued that the pacts were of little value. What really mattered was the basic understanding of each other for real cooperation.  

Jinnah did not appreciate Nehru's explanations and complained against his militant tone. He was hurt by Nehru's remarks, viz.:

"The Muslim League is an important communal organisation and we deal with it as such as we have to deal with all organisations and individuals that come within our ken."  

He claimed equal status for the League and wrote:

"In my opinion unless the Congress recognises the Muslim League on a footing of complete equality and is prepared as such to negotiate for the Hindu-Muslim settlement, we (Mussal-mans) shall have to wait and depend upon our inherent strength which will determine the measure of importance and distinction it possesses."

He also expressed his regret over the way Nehru had already pronounced his judgement over certain issues, when he was just considering the way, those matters should be discussed.


121. Selected Works, op.cit., vol. VIII, p. 239. also Hector Bolitho, op.cit., p. 117.

Thus the correspondence failed to yield any result as there were basic differences in the outlooks and objectives.

A number of letters were also exchanged between the Congress President, Subhash Chander Bose and the League leader, Jinnah during the period May 15, 1938 to October 10, 1938. In response to Bose's letter of May 15, and Gandhi's letter of May 22, 1938, Jinnah communicated the League's resolutions stating the conditions for negotiating with the Congress. The first resolution reiterated its earlier demand for the recognition of the Muslim League as the authoritative and representative organisation of the Mussalmans of India. The second resolution expressed that it was not desirable to include any Muslim appointed by the Congress in the personnel of the proposed committee.

The Congress President, in his letter dated July 25, 1938, expressed the difficulty of the Congress in acceding to the demands of the League. Jinnah in reply wrote that Nehru's statement that "there were only two parties in the country - The British Government and the Congress" had challenged the very existence of the League and so it had become necessary to reach an accord on the conditions laid down above.


The correspondence between Gandhi, Nehru and Bose on the one hand and Jinnah on the other could not bring the League and the Congress leaders closer. Rather it revealed that the gulf between the two principal parties in India had widened. The League had raised such demands, the acceptance of which would alter the basic character of the Congress. For instance, Jinnah's demand for the recognition of the Muslim League as the sole representative of the Muslim community would not only reduce the Congress to the position of a Hindu body but also undermine the claims of non-League Muslim organisations as the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Ahrars, the Momins and the Shias who were not within the folds of the Muslim League. Similarly, for the Congress to admit that Gandhi represented only the Congress and the Hindus would have deprived it of its national character and undo its past history of approximately half a century. According to Rajendra Prasad, conceding this demand of the League would have meant for the Congress "denying its own past, falsifying its history and betraying its future."

The working of the Congress ministries in the British Indian provinces from 1937 to 1939 further reduced

the chances of unity. The Congress had been barely in office for less than a year, when the Muslim League Council passed a resolution to the effect that since the Muslims, especially the League Muslims, were treated badly and justice was not done to them in the Congress governed provinces, a committee might be appointed 'to collect all information, make necessary enquiries and take such steps as might be considered proper and submit its report to the Council from time to time'. The Pirpur and Shareef reports were the result of this resolution. The reports charged the Congress with gross misconduct and persecution of the Muslims. A pamphlet was published by Fazl-ul-Huq bearing the title 'Muslim sufferings under Congress Rule' in which he accused the Congress of destroying Muslim culture. The Kamal Yar Zung Report while commenting on the position of the Muslims under Congress Governments, accused the Congress for neglecting Islamic education. It pointed out that the Muslim students hardly had any opportunity to know anything about their prophets— the caliphs, the saints, the scholars, the philosophers, the posts and the heroes of Islam.

128. The Report of the Inquiry Committee appointed by the Council of the All-India Muslim League to inquire into Muslim grievances in Congress provinces. (Pirpur Report), (Delhi: All-India Muslim League Publication, 1938), also All-India Muslim League Publicity Committee Report (Shareef Report), (Patna: All-India Muslim League Publication, 1940).

Other complaints of the League included the hoisting of Congress flag over public buildings, singing of Bande-Matram song in legislatures and other institutions, display of Gandhi's portrait in schools to which the children were asked to pay their homage, the introduction of Wardha Scheme of education and replacement of Urdu by Hindustani in schools.

The Congress leadership, however, viewed these charges as a mere propaganda. Azad, who was a member of Parliamentary Board stated that there was not an iota of truth in these charges. Nevertheless, to check this kind of hostile propaganda, the All-India Congress Committee approved and confirmed the resolution of the Working Committee on the minority rights passed in Calcutta in 1937 and declared afresh that:

"... it regards it as its primary duty and fundamental policy to protect the religious, linguistic, cultural and other rights of the minorities in India so as to ensure for them, in any scheme of Government to which the Congress is a party, the widest scope for their development and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation."

But all these moves failed to mollify Jinnah and the League.


By this time, Jinnah came to hold the firm view that mere safeguards in a unitary India would not suffice to protect the interests of the Muslims. The League, therefore, in its meeting on September 18, 1939, clearly laid down:

"It (Muslim League) is equally opposed to domination by the Hindu majority over the Mussalmans and other minorities ... and is irrevocably opposed to any federal executive which must necessarily result in a majority community rule under the guise of democracy and parliamentary system of Government. ... such a constitution was unsuited in a country inhabited by various nationalities."  

The League Leader had thus moved to a situation where a reconciliation with the Congress was not possible without modifying his demands. He, therefore, leaned towards the British for support. The opportunity was provided by the outbreak of war in September, 1939 and the clash between the Government and the Congress. Jinnah made full use of it and asked Linlithgow, the Viceroy, to protect the Muslims in the provinces ruled by the Congress. He wanted the Viceroy to dismiss the Congress ministries as in his view their aim was to destroy both, the British and the Muslims. Jinnah even hinted at the idea of partition at this time when Linlithgow asked him if they really did not have faith in


135. Linlithgow Papers, Microfilm, note of an interview between Linlithgow and Jinnah dated October 5, 1939, N.A.I., New Delhi.
democratic government and if it was so, how could the country achieve its goal of self-government. Jinnah replied, "an escape from the impasse lay in the adoption of partition."\textsuperscript{136}

When the Congress ministries resigned, the gulf between the two communities had become almost unbridgeable. Jinnah declared on December 6, 1939 that he wished the Mussalmans allover India to observe the 'Deliverance Day' on December 22, 1939 to mark the deliverance of the Muslims from the Congress atrocities.\textsuperscript{137}

The historical importance of the charges levelled by the League against the Congress ministries lay not so much in the question whether they were true or false but in the fact that a section of the Muslims believed them to exist.\textsuperscript{138} A supporter of the Pakistan move commented, "The Congress ministries, it seems, put the last nail in the coffin of Hindu-Muslim unity."\textsuperscript{139}

Undoubtedly, the 1937 elections and provincial autonomy had a serious bearing on the demand of a separate

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{137} Hector Bolitho, op.cit., p. 124. also \textit{Indian Annual Register}, op.cit., 1939, vol. II, p. 46. \\
\textsuperscript{138} Richard Symonds, op.cit., p. 16. \\
\textsuperscript{139} S.M.M.Qureshi, op.cit., pp. 63-64.
\end{flushleft}
Muslim homeland not because the Congress ministries treated the Muslims badly but because it made Jinnah feel that the Muslims were not able to dominate even in the Muslim majority provinces which caused a serious set back to his calculations.

The idea received further support from the presence of contagious Muslim majority provinces in the North-East and North-West which could be joined together for forming an independent sovereign state. Mehrotra commented, "But for this accident of geography, the idea of Pakistan even if it were born, would not have materialised." 140

Moreover, the introduction of the responsible Government in the provinces convinced the League leadership that under any system of democracy and representative government, with their limited numerical strength, the Muslims would not be able to compete with the Hindu majority which was roughly four times of the Muslims and the latter would be condemned to perpetual slavery under Hindu Raj. This factor weighed so heavy in Jinnah's mind that he ignored all the attempts made by the Congress leadership for Hindu-Muslim rapprochement during the years 1937-1940.

Khaliq-uz-Zaman, acknowledging the efforts made by the Congress, said, "Congress was now keenly anxious to reopen negotiations but in the meanwhile Muslim sentiments had been so excited that any settlement on the old line would not have satisfied them."\(^{141}\) Jinnah even asked Gandhi to abandon his chase after a mirage.\(^{142}\) He frustrated all hopes of nationalist leaders to find a solution within the framework of a united India.

\(^{141}\) Khaliq-uz-Zaman, op.cit., p. 178.