CHAPTER V


The year 1944, it appeared, would bring a change in the Indian political deadlock. With Lord Wavell as the new Viceroy, and the desire amongst the Indian leaders to solve the political problem, an impression was made that the Congress, the Muslim League, and the Government would be able to devise some formula to ease the tension in the country. This chapter deals with the two important events during the years 1944 and 1945, namely, the Gandhi-Jinnah Talks held in 1944, and the Simla Conference held in 1945. Both of these resulted in failure so far as the question of solving the political problem was concerned. The situation remained as it was. But, as shall be seen, from the Muslim League point of view the failure to reach at an agreement proved to be very important.

II

As has been noted in the last chapter, Jinnah had made a speech in April, 1943, advising Gandhi to write to him directly, if the former wished to come to an understanding with the Muslim League. Gandhi's letter to Jinnah failed to bring out any
result, because Jinnah declared that the letter did not mean anything, and that no settlement was possible unless Gandhi and the Congress decided to call off the C.D. Movement. Luckily for Jinnah, C. Rajagopalachari had continued his attempts to bring about a settlement between the Congress and the League. In 1942, he had failed. Now, in a letter to Jinnah on 8th April, 1944, C.R. sent a formula as a basis for the settlement between the Congress and the League, saying that he had discussed the formula with Gandhi in March, 1943, "and of which he (Gandhi) expressed full approval. You are aware of the intensity of my desire", wrote he, "for a settlement. I hope that you will bestow your fullest thought to the justice and fairness of these proposals." The basis for settlement, as laid down in the formula, are as follows:

"Basis for terms of settlement between Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League to which Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah agree and which they will endeavour respectively to get Congress and the League approved.

1. Indian Annual Register, 1944, Vol. Vol. II.
2. Ibid.
1. Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for Free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for independence and will co-operate with the Congress in transitional period.

2. After the termination of the war, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult suffrage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decided in favour of forming a sovereign state separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border the plebiscite is held.

3. It will be open to all parties to advocate their point of view before the plebiscite is held.

4. In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into for safeguarding
defence, commerce, and communication and for other essential purpose.

5. Any transfer of population shall only be on absolute voluntary basis.

6. These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India.

Communication between C.R. and Jinnah continued till July 8, 1944. Jinnah, though did not reject the formula outrightly, stated: "I was willing to place your formula before Working Committee Muslim League, although it was not open to any modification, but you did not agree allow me to do so. Hence no further step was taken." Rajagopalachari wanted that Jinnah should agree to support the formula in his personal capacity, to which Jinnah did not agree and C.R. thought that, "it is necessary to take public into confidence now. I am accordingly releasing entire correspondence." And the entire correspondence and the formula was published on 10 July.

It is important to note that the formula did not suggest the communal composition of the 'provisional'...
government, which was of supreme importance for the League. There was also no specification about the 'demarcation of districts', and C.H. appeared to be thinking not in the terms of 'administrative districts', but more vaguely of areas not necessarily co-terminous with the existing provinces. Another important feature of the formula was that it could only operate it and when the entire responsibility for the governance of India was transferred to the Indian hands—a condition that would have made it impossible for Jinnah to seek the support of the British Government. And one could hardly blame Jinnah for thinking twice before agreeing to the formula; the more so because it was not subject to any modification or alteration.

"Demarcation of 'contiguous districts' having absolute Muslim majority can be interpreted as attempt to deprive Pakistan of 11 Punjab districts and 12 Bengal districts including Amritsar and Calcutta. In Assam Sylhet is the only district with absolute Muslim majority," observed Lord Wavell, and commented: "Though Jinnah might have been less bresque, 'formula' could hardly have been accepted by him or the League without modification." The All-India Muslim League

Council, meeting at Lahore on 30 July, 1944, finally rejected the C.R.'s formula. Jinnah commenting on the formula said: "these proposals were not open to any discussion or the modification. It was on the basis of 'take it or leave it'. It seems that the Congress philosophy goes on better than British imperialism." He expressed his stand for not accepting the 'formula', besides technical points, on the grounds that, Rajagopalachari was an expelled member of the Congress, and as regards Gandhi, "who says he has subscribed to this offer, but according to Mr. Rajagopalachari it is a 'joint-contribution' and 'formula', the question arises, in what capacity can Mr. Gandhi's association be urged, for he also is not even a four-anna member of the Congress." So far as the technical objections were concerned, they related mainly to the flaws in the formula concerning the formation of the Provisional Interim Government. The formula did not state as to who would appoint a 'Commission' after the end of war, what would be its composition and powers, and who would impose its findings. "Then comes the last clause which is the height of ingenuity. These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain.

7. L.A.R. 1944, Vol.II.
8. Ibid.
of full power and responsibility for the Government of India. But it does not say to whom, now and when." Jinnah stated that, "Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Rajagopalachari are putting the cart before the horse when they say that all these clauses can have any value or can become effective if Great Britain transfers power to India." 9

Meanwhile, both Gandhi and Jinnah were under pressure from different quarters to come to an understanding so as to solve the political tangle. And on July 17, Gandhi wrote a letter to Jinnah requesting him for a meeting, "whenever you choose." 10 Jinnah in his reply on July 24, agreed for a meeting and suggested that it should take place at his residence in Bombay somewhere in August. But the talks could not start before September 9. When it became known that the two leaders had agreed to meet each other, mixed reaction was expressed. One view was that the move would lead to a better understanding between the Congress and the Muslim League, thus enabling them to solve the political problem. 11 The other view was that, "Mr. Jinnah will never come to an agreement during the war. While he is intransigent, he is on

9. Ibid.
the top; the moment he settles with the Congress, the latter will be on the top. Once he comes to a transitional agreement, the League will get merged in the nationalist movement and will never be able to dictate terms to the Congress. Another point of view was that Gandhi, "was entrenching Jinnah's position at a time when the League ministries in the Muslim majority provinces were in a precarious position."

During the course of the talks, Jinnah was insistent that his position was made very peculiar because Gandhi, "had come to discuss the Hindu-Muslim settlement with me in your individual capacity and not in the representative character or capacity on behalf of the Hindus or the Congress," whereas he could only speak on behalf of the Muslim League... At first the main point of discussion between the two was Naja's formula, but as the talks proceeded the 'Lahore Resolution of 1940', of the League became indefinite, and that it was very likely that, "at the end of our discussion, we shall discover that Naja not only has not put the Lahore resolution out of scope and mutilated it, but he has given him an idea of the provisional government, of its power, composition, to whom was it to be responsible and so on. As one goes through the

14. Jinnah to Gandhi, 10 Sept.
17. Jinnah to Gandhi, 14 Sept.
correspondence between the two, it becomes quite clear that there was no end to the confusion and points of disagreement between Gandhi and Jinnah. Gandhi could not agree that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations. "I find no parallel in history for a body of converts and their descendants claiming to be a nation apart from the present stock. If India was one nation before the advent of Islam it must remain one in spite of the change of faith of a very large body of her children." Jinnah on his part declared: "We are a nation of a hundred million, and what is more, we are a nation with our distinctive culture and civilisation, language and literature.... By all canons of international law we are a nation." Jinnah also did not agree that Gandhi represented the whole of India. "...but when you proceed to say that you represent nobody else but the Hindus, and so long as you do not realise your true position, it is very difficult for me to agree with you." 

Jinnah, firm on his stand that the Hindus and the Muslims were two separate nations, made it quite clear that there would be nothing called the 'matter of common interests' between Hindustan and

Pakistan. He declared that, "it will be a matter for the constitution making body chosen by Pakistan vis-a-vis the Constitution making body of Hindustan or any other party concerned. There can not be defence and similar matters of 'common concern' when it is accepted that Pakistan and Hindustan will be two separate independent sovereign states." To this Gandhi answered that he, "can be no willing party to division which does not provide for simultaneous safeguarding of common interests such as defence foreign affairs and the like." Gandhi though that such safeguards were necessary because they would provide some feeling of security to the peoples of the two states. It was quite obvious that the two would never agree. Jinnah wanted the Congress to give up its policy as declared by the August Resolution, whereas Gandhi wanted Jinnah to co-operate with the Congress and to discuss the issue of the partition after the independence was achieved. Gandhi argued that after independence, the question of the separation of the Muslim majority areas would be decided through the votes of the adult population of the areas, or through some equivalent method. "The League will however be free to remain out of any direct action

to which the Congress may resort and in which the League may not be willing to participate." 23 In his letter to Gandhi on September 25, Jinnah made it clear that he could not agree with Gandhi because the latter did not accept the Muslims of India as a separate nation and that the Muslims had an inherent right of self-determination. "I find that the question of division of India as Pakistan and Hindustan is only on your lips and it does not come from your heart." In his letter to Jinnah on 26 September, Gandhi finally gave up his attempts, saying that he, "cannot accept the Lahore resolution as you want me to, especially when you seek to introduce into its interpretations theories and claims which I cannot accept and which I cannot hope to induce India to accept."

The failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks produced an atmosphere of disappointment in the political circles. The Times, in its editorial on 19th September, commented: "The failure of Gandhi-Jinnah talks throws back in the melting pot the whole problem of Indian minorities. If the leaders of the two major political parties could have reached a common approach to the main question.... the result

would have been a forward step of some magnitude."
At the news that the talks had broken down, "profound regrets was expressed this afternoon by wellknown sympathisers with India," In Britain and Americal, it was felt that now that the two leaders had failed to come to an agreement, the public opinion should assert itself. Jinnah's approach to some of the questions was morelegalistic than practical. "There can be no settlement or compromise unless the parties are equally earnest."

The failure of the talks, however, went in favour of Jinnah. "Gandhi's approach to Jinnah on this occasion was a great political blunder. It gave a new and added importance to Mr. Jinnah which the latter exploitied to the full." Sir. B. Glancy of the Punjab wrote to Wavell on 3rd August, 1944:

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whenever Gandhi's intentions may have been, his advance to Jinnah has come at a most inopportune time...Jinnah's share in the political market had now begun to deteriorate. Thanks to Mr. Gandhi, Jinnah's importance has now revived." During the course of
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the talks, Gandhi had admitted to Jinnah: "I know that you have acquired a unique hold on the Muslim masses." The very fact that Gandhi had approached him was sufficient enough for Jinnah to claim that the Muslim League was the only representative organisation of the Muslims having the right to speak on their behalf. Gandhi probably did not realise that Jinnah would never come to an understanding on these terms, namely, independence, first and partition thereafter; for once the British had left the country, the League had no one to depend upon. Gandhi thought that after the departure of British, the communities might not like to separate, and had, therefore, suggested to Jinnah to hold a plebiscite in these areas to decide for or against separation. And Gandhi's hope was Jinnah's fear. "The fact that the Mahatma, so far as to discuss the machinery for the exercise of the right of self-determination was a feather in Jinnah's hat. Viewed in the long term strategy of the campaign for Pakistan, the Gandhi-Jinnah talks were another milestone, making further progress from the offer of Linlithgow in August, 1940, to the Grips Mission in March, 1942." During the talks Jinnah had stuck to his insistence that the Hindus and the Muslims were two separate nations, and when Gandhi was not successful, it only added to the arrogance of Jinnah, "Not
so very long, Mr. Gandhi had claimed that the Congress represented all peoples and communities of India, and was entitled to 'take delivery' of the Government without any prior agreement with any other party. Now he had at least admitted 'the prepondering influence and position of the Muslim League' in the Muslim politics and was prepared to discuss with its leader a programme of joint action. 30

Jinnah's rejection of the Gandhi's proposals was based on three main points. Firstly, he wanted the partition to take place on provisional basis, thus including a substantial ratio of Hindu population in Pakistan—43% in the Punjab and 46% in Bengal. The second objection was concerning the plebiscite. Jinnah held that only the Muslims had the right to vote. This might have been because Jinnah was not very sure of the strength of the Muslim League in the Muslim majority areas, and if the Hindus also voted, the League was likely to lose with a big margin.

Thirdly, Jinnah did not agree to anything called the matter of common interest between Pakistan and Hindustan. This expressed his fear that any 'board' or anything of the sort framed to control

30. R. Coupland. India; A re-Statement.
such matters would be dominated by a Hindu majority and, therefore, would weaken the cause for Pakistan. The joint board could have proved to be instrumental for unity, thereby brushing aside League's claim for Pakistan. Jinnah wanted the inclusion of the non-Muslim population in Pakistan, probably to ally the fear in the minds of the Muslims in the non-Pakistan against the Muslims in Hindustan. Gandhi's insistence that he was negotiating entirely in his personal capacity, also made Jinnah apprehensive. What was the guarantee that the A.I.C.C. leaders, after coming out from Jail would abide by the assurances given by Gandhi? Commenting on the failure of the talks, Dawn wrote: "The lesson of the talks is that Mr. Rajagopalachari had not really succeeded over Mr. Gandhi to the historical inevitability of self-determination for the Muslims of India." "Mr. Jinnah argued as a leader of the strong party, Mr. Gandhi as a leader of strong influence but not representative of anyone," and that was the reason why the talks failed.

II

The failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks, however, did not put to an end the attempts for


communal harmony. In the Budget Session of the Central Legislative Assembly, the Congress and the Muslim League members came to an understanding for co-operation in order to defeat the Government over the budget. Yekim Khan, a Muslim League member commented that, "the present Government had by their actions and misdeeds brought home to many people that Government were not serious when they asked the parties to join hands and that Government were also exploiting the differences." In an attempt to end the political deadlock, Bhulabhai Desai, approached the Viceroy on 20th January, 1945, and suggested complete Indianisation of the Executive Council, giving Congress and the Muslim League groups in the Central Legislature 40% each of the seats and the remaining 20% to the minorities. He discussed the issue with Liaquat Ali Khan, the Deputy leader of the Muslim League group in the Assembly. The conditions as laid down in the proposals of Desai, better known as the Desai-Liaquat Pact read as follows:

"The Congress and the League agree that they will join in forming as Interim Government in

33. Quoted in Laja Chand, op.cit., p.434.
34. Durga Das, op.cit., p.213.
35. Sir Maurice Gaurver and A.Appadorai, op.cit., pt. II.
The composition of such Government will be on the following lines:

(a) An equal number of the persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the Central Executive (the persons nominated need not be the member of Central Legislature).

(b) Representatives of the minorities. (in particular the Scheduled castes and the Sikhs).

(c) The Commander-in-Chief.

"The Government will be formed and function within the present framework of the existing Government of India Act. It is, however, understood, that, if the Cabinet cannot get a particular measure passed by the Legislative Assembly, they will not enforce the same by resort to any of the reserve powers of the Governor General or Viceroy. This will make them sufficiently independent of the Governor-General.

"It is agreed between the Congress and the League that, if such interim Government is formed, their first step would be to release the Working Committee members of the Congress."

The pact laid down that the popular ministries would be restored in the Section 93 Provinces.
The pack was another bold move in the direction of ending the political deadlock, but it could never materialise. Jinnah rejected the pact outrightly, saying, "that he knew nothing about the talks between Desai and Liaquat Ali Khan and that the proposals had been made without any authority from the League." 36 In other words it meant that Liaquat Ali had overruled the constitution of the Muslim League, whereby only the President was authorised to negotiate with any other individual or group. "Jinnah, Qaid-i-Azam expressed his strong disapproval to Liaquat for his conduct in this episode." 37 The Congress leaders were in Jail. "but on reading about it in papers, became furious, and poor Desai's political career was blasted." 38

Lord Wavell, who had a keen desire to solve the Indian political problem, was convinced, after the failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks, that no way-out could be possible if the Government did not take an active interest in it. Wavell, for one, had anticipated that the 'talks' would not bring any fruits, which was manifest when he called the Governor's Conference on 29 August, 1944, to discuss

36. V. P. Menon, op. cit., p. 179.
the steps the Government should take in case the talks failed. He was quite clear that if "nothing is done before the end of the war, we shall find ourselves in a very dangerous position." At the Governor's Conference "all the Governor's were emphatic that, failing agreement between the Indian Parties, a positive move was essential and that ... it should be made as soon as possible." Speaking at the annual session of the Associated Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta in December, Wavell expressed himself in these words: "I donot believe that we can solve our problems by mutual recriminations and by harping our past grievances and mistakes. Our best hope lies in working together without trying to lay down detailed conditions or to decide everything before we begin work."  

As the European war neared its end, the attention of the British statesman was diverted towards India and the Japanese war. The end of the European war and the subsequent fall of Japan meant the general demobilisation of the troops in India, increased unemployment due to the closing down of the war-industries, and the winding up of

40. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.167.
41. quoted in ibid., p.175.
the war-settlements, resulting in large scale
un-employment and discontent. And the surrender
of Germany on 7 May, made the British authorities
in India positively interested in ending the politi­
cal deadlock. "I (Wavell) am quite clear that ...
when the Japanese war ends we shall have to release
our political prisoners. They will find India
unsettled and discontented. Food will still be
short, demobilization and closing down of war­
factories and over-grown clerical establishments,
will throw many people out of employment. They
will find a fertile land for agitation, unless we
have previously diverted their energies into some
more profitable channels, i.e., into dealing with
the administrative problem of India and trying to
solve the constitutional problem." 42 The Viceroy,
therefore, thought not only in the Indian context,
but co-related to the problem with the problem of
the Empire. He set his mind to arranging a British
withdrawal from India as soon as the war was over.
"This, he was convinced, "was that British public
opinion now desired. "He calculated the calling
of the Simla Conference as a 'safety-valve' measure,

42.  Wavell, op. cit., p. 98.
and if the Indian leaders could agree to form a Central Government, and if the popular Ministries were restored in Section 93 Provinces, his attempt was a success.

The publication of the Desai-Liaquat Pact in January, and the Saoru Committee meeting in February, encouraged Lord Wavell to take some initiative; since these two political events to bring about a unity amongst the Indian political parties, though none of them succeeded, atleast showed that there was some willingness to come to an understanding amongst the Indian leaders. The policy of the gradual release of the Congress leaders resulted in weakening League's position in the N.W.F.P. where a congress Ministry was formed on 12 March, in Assam and in Sind. In Bengal too, the League Ministry fell down on 28 March and the province came under the Section 93. All this added to the political confusion and tension and made the attitude of the Muslim League more and more stiff.

To take up the matter with the authorities in London, Lord Wavell left India on 20th March.

43. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.180
44. Wavell, op.cit., p.117.
arriving London on 23rd, and began negotiations with the Secretary of State for India and others concerned. The British cabinet was too busy with other problems to pay any serious attention to Wavell and the latter felt very depressed.45 However, by the end of May, he was able to convince the British cabinet of his point of view. The forthcoming elections ceased this task, since the Prime Minister, "could not possibly risk India becoming a party issue and decided to give way with good grace."

Back in India, Wavell made an announcement on 14 June revealing his intentions to hold a conference of the various parties in India. "I have been authorised by His Majesty's Government to place before Indian political leaders proposals designed to cease the present political situation and to advance India towards the goal of full self government," said he, and added further, after explaining the main aim of the Conference to form a new Executive Council, that the "proposed new Council would represent the main communities and include equal proportion of Caste Hindus and Muslims. It would function, if formed, under the existing

45. Ibid., pp.122, 126-128.
46. Ibid., p.136.
constitution. But it would be an entirely Indian Council, except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who would retain his position as the war member.\textsuperscript{47}

1. To end the war against Japan. 2. To carry on the administrative responsibility of British India. 3. To consider the means by which such agreement could be reached. Another important task of the Conference was to consider the correct time for holding the general elections in India for the Central and Provincial Legislatures. Wavell also announced that orders had been issued for the immediate release of the members of the Congress Working Committee. "And so is launched a fresh attempt to help India to political freedom, which I initiated with a note to H.M.G. just 9 months ago. I suppose it is something of an achievement to have got it thus far, but whether it will crash on Indian intransigence, like the Grips and the other proposals, remain to be seen. I have certainly got a very difficult time ahead."\textsuperscript{48} On 14 June, L.S. Amery announced in British Parliament that:

\textsuperscript{47} For the full text of the speech see V.P. Menon, op.cit., Appx.II.

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"While His Majesty's Government are at all times anxious to do their utmost to assist India in the working out of a new constitutional settlement, it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of imposition by this country of self-governing institutions upon an unwilling India. Such thing is not possible..." 49

He added that, "His Majesty's Government, consider, after most careful study of the question, that the plan now suggested gives the utmost progress possible within the present constitution." 50

Both these announcements were treated by the sense of good will in India amongst Hindu as well as Muslim circles, and the hope was expressed that something fresh and meaningful would come out of these discussions. 51 But the reaction of the leaders both Hindu and Muslims, was rather different. Jinnah wanted Nwovell to explain his proposals in details as to him, which he wanted to place before his Working Committee. "Gandhi insists on the fiction that he is not a member of the Congress and

49. The Amrit Bazar Patrika, 16.6.45.
50. Ibid.
51. See the Hindustan Times, Dawn, The Times of India, The Statesman, etc. dt. 15-17 June, 1944
cannot represent them; he also objects to the terms 'caste Hindus'. It seemed from the newspaper reporting that the sky was clearing. The mist was dissolving and disappearing and a radiant sun seemed to be descending on the Indian horizon.

On June, 24, Wavell had separate interviews with Azad, the Congress President, Gandhi and Jinnah. Gandhi made it quite clear that "he represented nobody except himself, and though he would be prepared to attend the Conference if I wished, and sit in a corner, he strongly advised me that his presence in the Conference was undesired." Jinnah explained to Wavell that in any case the Muslims would be in a minority since the Sikhs and the Scheduled caste would be Hindus and would vote with them, and that the Viceroy would be extremely reluctant to exercise his power of veto. His insistence was that "the Muslim League had the right to nominate all the Muslim members." In the proposed Executive Council, he narrated the long history of all the bye-elections of last two years, "claiming that the Muslim League candidate had always been successful and that

52. Wavell, op.cit., p.142.
54. Wavell, op.cit., p.146.
55. Ibid., p.146.
therefore the Muslim League represented the whole of Muslim India. \(^{56}\) When informed about Gandhi's stand that he represented nobody except himself, Jinnah seemed rather upset at this and said it was another trick of Gandhi's; he pretended not to belong to the Congress when it suited his books, but when necessary appeared as the Director of the Congress which everyone knew he was. \(^{57}\)

With the background, the Simla Conference had its first sitting on 25th June, 1945. \(^{58}\) Despite the friendly atmosphere, nothing solid came out. On 27th June, Wavell had an interview with Jinnah. Jinnah informed that his conversation with Pant did not bring any fruit at all, "... they had been completely negative; the Congress had claimed the right to nominate two Muslims out of the Muslim quota to the Council, and that they had got no further than this." \(^{59}\) Concerning the nomination of the Muslim members to the Council, his stand was that, "they must be all nominated by the League and must all be Leaguers." \(^{60}\) Meanwhile the deliberations continued between the leaders over

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the issue privately, but no satisfactory result was expected. "Nobody seems to be willing to bend an inch. Jinnah is becoming more and more firm and determined on his stand." When the Conference met again on June 29, it was obvious that "the two main parties had failed entirely to agree. I (Wavell), therefore proposed my own alternative line of approach i.e. that party leaders should send in panels of name to me, and I should try to form an acceptable Council from them." Both the Congress and the League leaders wanted to consult their Working Committees, and therefore, the Conference was adjourned till July 14. It was evident that the Congress and the Muslim League had failed to agree. "No wonder, the conference comes to an end without any result. The two main parties are as apart from each other as they were." It became known throughout that the Conference was facing a crisis and the "question at issue was the manner in which the Muslim members of the Executive Council should be selected."

As has been already mentioned, the Muslim League was at a low ebb in many provinces. But the

62. Wavell, op.cit., p.150.
63. The Bombay Chronicle, 30 June, 1945.
64. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.206.
adjournment of the Conference once again inspired a new confidence in the Leaguers and they started working afresh to build their strength and prestige. The spokesman of the League started pressing more emphatically the claim that it was the League and the League alone that represented the Muslims. In the Punjab, the Muslim League and the Muslim Student's Federation showed greater signs of activity, and "a sub-committee has been formed to draw up a programme in preparation for an election campaigns."65 Throughout the country, the Muslim press insisted that "no Muslim should be appointed to the Executive Council except such as may be selected from the nominees of the Muslim League."66

The opinion was expressed in the Muslim circles that the Congress in the guise of nationalism "is playing the game of Hindus," and that "no Muslim will surrender to the dictates of the Congress, but would shed his blood to uphold the right of the League to nominate all the Muslim members to the Council."67 The adjournment of the Conference was considered to be a person as triumph for Jinnah,

and the League in the Punjab eagerly looked forward to the early replacement of the "Unionist Ministry... by a Coalition Ministry." In the United Provinces, too, the Muslims welcomed the stand taken by Jinnah at the Conference, "In general there is relief that the Pakistan issue is not compromised." The Unionists in the Punjab became alarmed at the situation and felt that they might have to give way to the League.

Realising that his behaviour at the Conference had the desired effect on the Muslims, Jinnah, in an interview with Preston Grover of the Associated Press, said, "if Mr. Gandhi will accept the basis of Pakistan, we need not trouble about the Conference.....There will be another Conference of our own," and told that the Congress and the Muslim League could work to achieve freedom and independence for all concerned. Over the issue of requesting Gandhi to attend the Conference, Jinnah bluntly pointed out: "Even in his interviews, he says that he can have no place in it. How can I take him to the Conference when he says he has no place in it." In an interview to the Associated

69. F.No. 18/6/45, Home Poll, N.A.I.
69. See ibid.
70. The Tribune, 28 June, 1945.
72. Ibid.
Press on 2nd July, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan declared that "the demand of the Congress for a share in the Muslim quota of seats in the Executive Council is most unreasonable and had no justification whatsoever,"73 and further stated that "on the question of the nomination of the Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council the position of the Muslim League has been made abundantly clear by Mr. Jinnah in his press conference."74 Liaquat Ali Khan expressed that "The All India Muslim League will go into wilderness rather than submit to any scheme which will in any way, destroy or unduly militate against the national demand of the Muslim-India-Pakistan," and that, "the Congress wants to engage the services of Lord Wavell to coerce Mr. Jinnah and the League."75 At a public meeting held in Peshawar on 1st July, complete confidence was expressed in the leadership of Jinnah.76 Speaking at the meeting, Sardar Abdur Rao Nishtar Rao said, "Putting on the grab of a national organisation, the Congress is employing underhand tactics to divide the Muslims. Keeping Maulana Azad at the head of the Congress and then not allowing him to

73. The statesman, 3 July, 1945.
74. Ibid. 4 July, 1945.
75. Ibid., 4 July, 1945.
76. The Sind Observer, 4 July, 1945.
act freely is a political stunt." It was becoming obvious by now that the League would not accept the inclusion of any Muslim in the Executive Council other than a Leaguer. At a meeting held in Simla on 6 July, complete confidence was expressed in the leadership of Mr. Jinnah and it was declared that, "no settlement to which the League is not a party will be acceptable to the Muslims of India." Some stand was taken by the Punjab Muslim League Ladies' committee and the Young Muslim Girls' Association.

At a meeting held in Ahmedabad under the Presidentship of Syed Ahmed Dehlvi, a resolution was passed repudiating the claim of the Congress at the Simla Conference to represent the Muslims and stated that the Muslim League along had the right to nominate Muslim representatives to the Council. Mr. Habib Ibrahim Rahimtoola, President of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, in a telegram to the Viceroy said, "At a meeting of 120 institutions representing every shade of Muslim public opinion held in Bombay yesterday, it was unanimously resolved to authorise me to reiterate to Your Excellency most emphatically that the one and the only organisation which can speak

77. The Times of India, 4 July, 1945.
78. The Statesman, 7 July, 1945.
79. See Dawn and the Tribune, July 6-7, 1945.
authoritatively for the Muslims of India is the All India Muslim League and that they have the fullest faith and confidence in the leadership of Qaid-i-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The influence of the League and of Jinnah suddenly "seems to be strengthened and that it seems to be confident of its victory in future elections."

Meanwhile, both the Congress and the League convened the meetings of their working committees, and the Congress working committee meeting from 3rd to 6th July elected a panel of names which were handed over to the Viceroy on 7th July by Azad. It included 15 names of whom five were Caste Hindus, five Muslims, two non-Caste Hindus, one Indian Christian, one Parsi, and one Sikh. The list submitted by the Congress was, however, "disappointed, a great proportion of them are 'stooges' of Congress from the minorities; and Azad's covering letter is aggressive and speaks of 'independence' as immediate goal after the defeat of Japan." The Muslim League Working Committee, met on July 6, and on July 7, Jinnah wrote to Viceroy making

82. The Tribune, 7 July, 1945.
83. Indian Annual Register, 1945, Vol.II.
three suggestions—first, that the Muslim League should not be asked to submit a panel, but that its representatives should be chosen on the basis of personal discussion between the Viceroy and himself, second, that all the Muslim members of the Council should be chosen from the League; and, third, that some effective safeguards, other than the Viceroy's veto, should be provided to protect Muslim interests from majority decisions of the Council. Jinnah was firm on his stand that none except himself, as the head of the Muslim League, could nominate the Muslims on the new Council. "I (Wavell) refused to accept this, and he refused to give me his list of names, though he left himself a loophole at this end by asking me to write to him...." In a statement issued from Simla on July 9, Jinnah claimed that the League was a 'third-party' in the country, and nothing "on this earth will make me accept any proposal which I think will prejudice or militate against our goal of Pakistan." On the same day, Wavell received a letter from Jinnah, "definitely refusing to send in names."

85. V.P. Menon, op.city., p.207.
86. Wavell, op.cit., p.152.
87. Ibid., pp.152-153.
88. The Statesman, 10 July, 1945.
Despite the refusal of Jinnah to give in the names, the Viceroy prepared provisional selection, including four Muslims from the Muslim League, and sent it for approval by the Cabinet at home. He thought of meeting the leaders once again, "as a last effort to get agreement," if the Cabinet approved the list. On the 10th he received the approval of the cabinet of his shadow Council. On the next day he had an interview with Jinnah, and showed him the names of the four Muslim Leaguers, and also of the Punjab Muslim, belonging to the Unionist Party. "He (Jinnah) refused even to discuss names unless he could be given the absolute right to elect all Muslims and some guarantee that any decision which the Muslims opposed in the Council could only be passed by a two - third majority - in fact a kind of communal veto. I (Wavell) said that these conditions were entirely unacceptable, and the interview ended." It was now quite evident that the Simla Conference was going to be a failure. On 11 July, Wavell, wrote: "I fear I have to record the definite failure of the Conference and so of this fresh effort to make progress in Indian Self Government."

90. Ibid.
91. Ibid., p.154.
92. Ibid.
The Viceroy spent next two days discussing the problem with leaders of the Congress and other parties. The final session of the Conference met on 14th July, at 11.00 a.m. Some of the Congress leaders like Rajagopalachari insisted to form a Government without the Muslim League's cooperation. "Jinnah made a long exposition of League point of view, its claim of Pakistan and its mistrust of Congress; he seemed at one time to raise his claim to parity inside the Council with all other parties combined. If he really meant this, it shows that he never, at any time, had an intention of accepting the offer."

There was a feeling amongst the League leaders that the "offer hits at the very roots of Pakistan...as the interim executive will work out the future constitution, the Muslim bloc will be in a minority if the Caste Hindus combine with Schedule Caste and others..." The Viceroy, at last declared the failure of the Conference: "I wish to make it clear that the responsibility of the failure is mine. The main idea underlying the Conference was mine. If it had succeeded, its success would have been attributed to me, and I cannot place the blame for its failure on any of the parties."

93. Ibid., p.155.
94. Maulana Hasrat Mohani's Interview to A.P. The Statesman, 11.7.45.
95. Wavell, op.cit., p.156.
Thus ended the attempt by Lord Wavell to solve the Indian problem. A wave of pessimism swept over the country, and both the Indian and the English press held Jinnah responsible for the failure of the Conference. The News Chronicle wrote: "The responsibility for the failure of the Simla Conference was not Lord Wavell's. It was Jinnah's and Mr. Jinnah's alone."96 "Mr. Gandhi wrecked the Gripp's proposals?" observed the Daily Mail, "and Simla was Mr. Jinnah's turn. As the leader of the Muslim League he duly wrecked the Wavell Proposals."97 Almost the same observation was made by the Indian press and the entire responsibility was thrown on the shoulder of Jinnah.98 Dr. Khan Sahib, the Premier of the N.W.F.P. expressed that, "The entire responsibility of the failure of the Simla Conference lay on the obstinate attitude of Mr. Jinnah."99 Everyone believed that "despite Lord Wavell's statement that the responsibility for the failure of the Conference was his, it was Jinnah's uncompromising attitude which had wrecked the Conference."100

Jinnah, in a statement issued from Simla on

97. *Ibid*.
98. *Ibid*.
14th July, '45 justified his cause in these words: "The Wavell Plan was aware and acceptance of the offer would have meant the signing of the League's death warrant." He expressed his belief that in the proposed Executive Council, the Muslims were likely to be reduced to a minority, since the other groups were likely to join the Congress on the issue of a united India. "Their vote will be against us and there is no safeguard except the Viceroy's veto, which cannot be exercised lightly as an every day business against majority decisions." His stand for not accepting the Wavell's proposals was mainly based on the points that can be summarised as follows:

1. That the League represented the great majority of the Muslims, which was proved by the number of Muslim seats it held in the legislature, and by the result of the Bye-elections. He could not accept the right of Malik Khizar Hayat the Punjab Premier, to nominate one non-Leaguer to the Council. "If we had accepted this position we would have betrayed our people." 2. Even though the minorities, the Scheduled castes, or the Sikhs, might not have agreed with the Congress on many issues, they would certainly

102. Ibid.
have agreed on the cardinal issue of Pakistan, and would have voted for a united India. 3. The explicit assurance given in the British proposals, to safeguard interests of the minorities, "the settlement of 'the future constitution or constitutions' would in fact be prejudiced; and the League could scarcely be expected to take this risk, if the only safeguard lay in the possibility of Governor General's veto being exercised."\(^{104}\) 4. To agree to the inclusion of a non-Leaguer Muslim in the Muslim quota, and that too from the Punjab, would have been interpreted as an admittance of the fact by the League that the very small section of the Muslims that did not back the cause of Pakistan, had more power than the League, thus wrecking Jinnah's cause for the partition. Even Lord Wavell recognised that "this intransigence represents a real fear on the part of the Muslims, including those who do not support Jinnah, of Congress domination, which they regard as equivalent to a Hindu Raj."\(^{105}\) To put it in the words of Prof. R. Coupland: "The moral of Simla was plain. The future dominates the present. The major communities cannot agree on any interim change in the main principles of

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item \footnote{R. Coupland, op.cit.}{104}
\item \footnote{Wavell, op.cit., p.156.}{105}
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the future permanent system. There can be no real progress, in fact, no real breaking of the deadlock, until the responsible spokesmen of India political opinion discuss and determine the shape of things to come. 106

Having seen that Mr. Jinnah was mainly held responsible for the failure of the Simla Conference, the point remains to be seen is—what was the reaction of the provincial as well as the All India Muslim League to this. One thing is quite clear that Jinnah certainly had achieved a position for himself that made him more assertive for future. The very fact that the Government did not want to form a Council to which the Muslim League was not a party was a clear indication of the growing strength of the League. Jinnah at once realised the increased influence of the League and its recognition by the British statesmen. Immediately after the conference, the Working Committee of the Muslim League meeting at Simla on 15 July, demanded that fresh elections to the provincial and central legislatures should be held at once, since the League was getting out of touch with public opinion and also because it wanted to prove its claim that it was the true representative of the Muslims in the country. 107

Speaking in Bombay on 6th August, Mr. Jinnah said: "we want to fight the elections so that they may once for all convince those who doubt our representative character....The name of the League is

107. The Times of India. 16 July, 1945.
resounding throughout the world and the Muslims have now awakened to a new consciousness of nationhood. If the Simla Conference had succeeded in by-passing the Muslim League, I would not have asked for money to fight the elections, but more than that I would have asked you for complete sacrifice for the realisation of our goal of Pakistan."  

Leaving aside a few exceptions who really did not matter much, the Muslims throughout the country appreciated the stand taken by Jinnah at Simla. In the United Provinces, "Jinnah and the Muslim League have the support of the vast majority of Muslims in the Province... Muslims in general support Mr. Jinnah's stand and his demand for elections to justify the League's claim to represent Muslim opinion."  

In Bengal, the Provincial Muslim League held a number of meetings in Calcutta and the surrounding districts in July to justify Jinnah's attitude, "and there is general support among his followers to the stand he has taken. A demand for early elections has been voiced from these quarters and preparations are being made by the League for the coming fight."  

108. Indian Annual Register, 1945, Vol.II.  
110. Ibid.
In the C.P. and Barar, though Jinnah and the League were criticised by Hindus, the Muslims supported the League and Jinnah. In the Punjab, "the Muslim press in general, however, was solid behind Mr. Jinnah, and he was able to maintain his stand and carry the working committee with him in his final decision to stay out of interim Government." A meeting of some 2000 Muslims was held in Ahmedabad that condemned the Congress policy towards the Muslims in general and expressed full confidence in Jinnah and the League. In Poona the failure of the Simla Conference gave a fresh impetus to the League's activities. Within a week, some 12 new branches of the League were opened in Poona, and about 10,000 new members enrolled. In Bombay city, a public meeting was attended by some 3000 Muslims was held on 21 July, when "resolutions were passed endorsing the stand taken by Mr. Jinnah at Simla Conference demanding elections before the introduction of Ministries in the Provinces. Similar resolutions were passed at the meetings held in Sholapur, Surat, Kaira, and East Khandest Districts." Similarly in Madras,

111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid.
though the Congressmen blamed the League for the failure of the Simla Conference, Muslims in the whole "appear to be behind Mr. Jinnah and various branches of the Muslim League have been busy, meeting and passing resolutions confirming faith in his leadership....Reports of similar meetings have come from other places in the mufasal and some branches have sent telegrams to the Viceroy affirming their faith in Mr. Jinnah." 115 A meeting of over 5,000 Muslims was held at Delhi in which complete confidence was expressed in the leadership of Jinnah saying that he had saved the Muslim community from falling into another Congress tap. 116 At Aligarh, a meeting of the Muslims held on 17 July, affirmed faith in Jinnah and it was stated that the Muslims of India would not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the achievement of Pakistan. In August, 1945, Jinnah was presented with a purse of rupees one lakh and with another purse of Rs. 3 lakh in Bombay, to contest the coming elections, and to strengthen the Muslim League. 118 Another meeting

115. Ibid.
of the Muslim League was held at Nagpur, expressing full confidence in Jinnah, and demanding early elections. Similar meetings were held at Jabalpore, Akola and Burhampur. 119

In the Punjab, where the struggle between the Unionist Party and the Muslim League had been acute, the League was able to make considerable headway after the failure of the Simla Conference. It must be remembered here that it was the question of the Muslim nominee from the Punjab that had led to the failure of Simla Conference, Jinnah and the Muslim League hastened their activities in the Punjab. "Since Jinnah succeeded by his intransigence in wrecking the Simla Conference, "wrote Sir. B. Glancy to Wavell," his stock has been standing very high with his followers and with a large section of Muslim population. He has been failed as the champion of Islam. He has openly given out that the elections will show an overwhelming verdict in favour of Pakistan." 120 Several League meetings were held in the Punjab and there was a severe criticism of the Congress and condemnation of Muslim 'traitors'.

Khan Abdul Wajiyum, ex-Deputy Leader of the Congress

119. Ibid.
Party in the Central Assembly, resigned from the Congress and joined the Muslim League. He was followed by Sir Feroz Khan Noon, who resigned from his post of Defence Member in order to assist the Muslim League in the Punjab elections. A new pro-League Jaat-a-Ulema-i-Islam was also formed and this organisation carried vigorous propaganda against Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni, and other nationalist Muslims. However, Sir Feroz Khan Noon joined the League formally in September, 1945, after some discussions with 'my Unionist Party.' On September 29, Mian Iftikharuddin, President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, resigned from the Congress, and joined the Muslim League. Pir Syed Fazl Shah, who claimed to be the spiritual head of a hundred thousand Muslim families in the Punjab, announced his decision to join the All-India Muslim League, on September 12, saying that, "I have come to the conclusion that the League is the only political organisation which can give a right lead to the Muslims."

At a meeting of the Punjab Muslim League held on 3rd August, Haja Ghazanafar Ali Khan, Deputy Leader of the Punjab Assembly, claimed that no more than one

122. Ibid.
123. The Sind Observer, 22 August, 1945.
125. Ibid., September 30, 1945.
per cent of the Punjab Muslims would vote for the Unionist Party, if freedom to vote was given to public." Challenging the claim of the Punjab Premier to be the leader of the province's martial class, he said, "Malik Khizar Hayat Tiwana will go the way of Mr. Churchill, who also was leader of all the armed forces and received the verdict at the hands of those very forces." On September 14, Sir Feroz Khan Noon, in an interview to the Associated Press stated that, "the Unionist Party has now cultivated its utility. When the Party was founded, there was no question of the transfer of power from Britain to India. But now when transfer is going to take place the Unionist Party is being positively harmful to the Muslim interests." So strong was the influence of the League in the Punjab by now that on October 27, Malik Khizar Hayat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, declared that he and all other Muslim members of his party are firm and uncompromising supporters of Pakistan. He further stated: "It may be stated categorically that there is no difference between the All-India Muslim League and the Muslim members of the Unionist Party on the question of the objective to be achieved..." We are

128. Ibid., September, 16, 1945.
129. Ibid., 28 October, 1945.
all united in support of the Lahore Resolution of the League...whether I remain in the Muslim League or not, I shall do all I can help my community's efforts to realise this idea."130

In the other parts of the country also, the League was gradually heading towards strength. Sir G. Cunningham from the N.W.P. Provinces wrote to Wavell on August 9: "I find that the failure of the Simla Conference has made people think and talk more about Pakistan issue....There seems to be little doubt that coming elections will be fought largely on the Pakistan issue in its crudest form."131 Addressing a meeting of the Muslims, held at Peshawar on 30th September, Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman declared that the League would assure a sweeping victory at the Polls."...we will see it is not the Muslim League but the Congress which is crushed in the N.W.F.P. and the Pakistan establishment."132 Sir Cunningham from N.W.F.P. informed Wavell on 9th October, that "a good many defections from Congress to the Muslim League have been reported in the last few weeks. Well educated Muslims of senior official type, who never took

130. The Tribune, 29 October, 1945.
131. Transfer of Power, op.cit., Vol.VI.No. 11.
much interest in the practice before, are becoming almost rapidly anti-Hindu, and, therefore, pro-Muslim League." 133

It is obvious, therefore, that the failure of the Simla Conference proved to be a great personal triumph for Jinnah. Those who doubted his leadership earlier, now realised how strong and powerful he was, since he could of his own, wreck down such a big Conference. The two-nation theory of Jinnah had found political expression. While the Congress could block any solution by the British Government short of complete independence, the League could block, if it so wanted, any solution or proposal that did not accept the 'partition'. The repeated demand for fresh elections from the League side showed that it was now definite about its success, in the elections, and that it had certainly gained strength. Lord Wavell wrote to Pathick-Lawrance on 12 August, 1945: "The C-I-C told me a few days ago that the general view amongst the Muslims seemed to be that Jinnah would win almost all the seats if elections were held immediately, and would do less well if they were postponed for a year...I think Jinnah would win most of the seats now, but I am not sure that the

postponement would worsen his position...the elections results might be better from Jinnah's point of view if he had time to raise money and create effective organisation. "Whatever plan Lord Wavell produce," reported Observer's correspondent, "will have to tackle bodily the communal bugbear, or it will fail as dismally as did its forerunners." He further added: "As Mr. Jinnah's Muslim League following appears to have increased rather than decreased after the breakdown of the Simla parleys, realists in the Congress inner cabinet are, it is believed, endeavouring to convert their colleagues to the idea of accepting Jinnah's demand, repugnant and distasteful though it is, in the hope that Britain will sooner be disposed to give India independence." The general Secretary of the All-India scheduled Caste Federation, Mr. P.N. Rajabhoj, stated in November that "in each and every province I founded tremendous awakening amongst the Muslims. They simply adhere the Muslim League and its leader Mr. Jinnah, and I am confidently say that the Muslim League is really very strong today, it is sure to sweep the polls everywhere." On 31st December, Mr. Geasy from Calcutta wrote to Wavell: "At Simla you tried to get

134. Ibid., No. 20.
agreement on the composition of a politically representative Viceroy's Council. The great effort failed by reasons of Jinnah caliming all the Muslims seats for Muslim League. You then, logically decided on elections throughout British India in order, inter-alia, to test out Jinnah's claim. I assume Jinnah will be able to substantiate this claim. On 12th December, Jinnah made a statement saying: "we could settle the Indian problem in 10 minutes if Mr. Gandhi would say, 'I agree that there should be Pakistan. I agree that one-fourth of the India composed of six provinces, Sind, Baluchistan, Punjab N.W.F.P., Bengal and Assam with their present boundaries should constitute Pakistan State: After that it would be a simple matter to sit down as friends and work out the details of a friendly and neighbourly life between the two great nations of this sub-continent." It was also pointed out that, "the League will win most of the Muslim seats at the elections...The political parties in India continue their statements and counter statements. I think that both the Congress and the League would welcome elections as a 'trial of strength' and a diversion."


138.

chapter, the results of the elections for the provincial and Central Assemblies in 1945, proved the strength of the Muslim League, and its claim of being a 'third-party' in the country. In the Central Assembly, the League won all the Muslim seats, and in the Provincial, it captured 446 seats out of the total of 495 Muslim seats. The Muslim parties, other than the League were virtually eliminated. 140

The failure of the Simla Conference, therefore, was an event of a considerable importance in the history of India. On the one hand it led to the increased reputation of the Muslim League and increased its strength, and on the other hand, it revealed quite clearly that the question of Indian political problem could not be solved without the co-operation of the League. The Qaid-i-Azam could not assert more firmly on the Congress, as well as on the British Government, his demand to partition the country, and the Muslim masses by large support him. "The Simla Conference offered a last opportunity to the forces of nationalism to fight a rear guard action to preserve the integrity of the country, and when the battle was lost the waves of communalism quickly engulfed it. Only the Hobson's choice of the partition was left." 141

140. For the elections result, see J.A.H., 1945, Vol.II.
141. V.P. Menon, op.cit., p.217.
Jinnah had undoubtedly strengthened his personal position by taking a decisive stand at the Simla Conference, he now felt optimistic about the outcome of the elections, and declared that the League would fight the elections on the issue of Pakistan, and that the League represented all the Muslims. Muslims with political interests began to realise that their interests lay with Jinnah and the League. Earlier, Jinnah had tried and failed to bring the Punjab under League's control. The easiest way of overcoming this provincial opposition was provided when he had a chance at Simla to get the League accepted by the Government as the sole representative organisation of the Muslims, or atleast to prove that the League had a decisive say so far as the decisions concerning the Muslim were there; and Jinnah awaited the opportunity very successfully. He came out elevated in the eyes of his community as the conquering hero.