CHAPTER-I

MUSLIM LEAGUE BEFORE 1935

A Brief History of the League from 1906 to 1935:

The turn of the 19th century brought with it a number of changes in the Indian political scene. These changes were reflected through events that occurred in the very first decade of the 20th century, e.g., the 'partition of Bengal in 1905', the formation of the All-India Muslim League in 1906, the Congress split of 1907, and the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909. Whereas the Indian nationalism was heading slowly towards acquiring a shape of its own that was to effect the future developments, the Muslims, at least a section of them, were also becoming aware of their existence as a minority community. The first decade of the 20th century, therefore, saw two main features in Indian political life:

1. The growth of nationalism in general throughout India; and
2. The incipient crystallisation of a distinct identity amongst the Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, no doubt, provided the background for this crystallisation when he openly advocated the existence of Muslims as a separate identity in 1880s and thereafter, yet his notions and ideas could not spread amongst the Muslims rapidly due to the lack of education amongst the Muslims, the large size of the country and so on. Moreover in his speeches and writings, much stress was laid on the religious aspect, and he based his doctrines on Quran which were too complicated to be read.
and understood by the majority of the Muslims at that time. It was only in 1910s and 20s that the crystallisation started amongst the Muslims.

The basic object of this chapter is to trace a brief history of the All-India Muslim League from 1906 to 1935, and to point out some of its striking features during the period, since during the years 1936-47, most of these features disappeared and were replaced by new ones.

The gradual expansion of English education amongst the Muslims and the efforts to the Aligarh Muslim University founded by Syed Ahmed Khan, showed their impact upon the Muslim politics as the 20th century opened. However, the Aligarh Muslim leaders failed to coup up with the changed economic and political situation. "Young western-educated Muslims were so disillusioned by the poor reward of political docility that they threatened to join the Congress. Some did."¹ This trend naturally caused a good deal of worry among the Muslim leaders and they began to think about consolidating the Muslim opinion in the country. And with this aim to mind they began to demand more militant action for the protection of their interests. In 1903, Ghulam-us-Jaqlin gave the following reason for the necessity of a separate political organisation: "Owing to the want of such an organisation the interests of the Muhammadan community have already suffered in a variety of ways and are still being trampled under foot."² He also

¹ F. Robinson. Separatism Among Indian Muslims. Vikas. 1975, p. 133
² Quoted in Ibid., p. 138
propagated that the Muslims could not join the Congress camp because it stood for elective principles and competitive examinations, and that if the Congress gave up these principles, then only there was the possibility of Muslims joining the Congress. While this trend of separatism - mild though it was - already prevailing in the country, the partition of Bengal in 1905 set the stage for the formation of the All-India Muslim League. Though the Government stated that the objective of the partition was, "purely administrative since the province was a unwieldy one and its boundaries were unscientific one and required adjustments," the partition had a two-folded affect so far as the Hindus and Muslims were concerned. The Hindus of Bengal got a further opportunity to raise their voice against Lord Curzon and the 'anti-partition' agitation started. With its vehement invective, its appeal to Hindu sentiments, its cry that Bengal as motherland, once rich and favous, had been torn into two, despite the protest of her children, its proposals for enforcing a positive boycott of foreign goods and launching of a 'swadeshi' movement, provided ample cover for the preaching of a revolutionary doctrine. In eastern Bengal, the boycott, with its accomplishments of intimidation and terrorism, was vigorously opposed by the Muslims and riots became more and more frequent. All this became so acute gradually that the

4. Ibid., p. 552.
Muslims had to adopt a pro-Government attitude and to seek its support for protection. The anti-partition movement in Bengal took a clear anti-Muslim form and was organised and run on Hindu lines. The Hindus appealed to Hindu goddesses like 'Kali' and 'Durga' and took oaths in the temples to undo the partition. It was advocated that the partition would benefit the Muslims of East Bengal.

The Muslims on the other hand welcomed the decision of Lord Curzon. Tremendous enthusiasm was shown in favour of the partition by the Muslims and they attended thanksgiving prayers, "to celebrate the establishment of a new province." This was but natural on the part of the Muslims because the 'swadeshi' movement had raised the communal feelings in Bengal to a very high degree and the Muslims were forced to believe that their interests could not be safe under the Hindus, domination. "We (Hindus) felt a retrospective hostility towards the Muslims for their one time domination of us, the Hindus; secondly, on the plane of thought, we were utterly indifferent to the Muslims as an element in the contemporary society." This all naturally made the Muslims more and more pro-British, and anti-Hindu.

In the meantime, it became clear that the British Government was contemplating to introduce further reforms.

to India, with an intention to give the Indian Government a more representative character. It was on 1st October, 1906, that a delegation of about 70 Muslims headed by the Aga Khan was received by the then Viceroy, Lord Minto, at Simla. The delegation had taken with it an address signed by nobles, ministers of various states, great land owners, lawyers, merchants and many of others of His Majesty's Mohammedan subjects.\(^7\) The delegation asked for a separate representation of Muslims in all levels of government—District Boards, Municipality, Legislative Councils. Though the Viceroy did not commit to anything, he assured the delegate that the interest of the Muslim community would be duly considered if any reform was introduced in future.

Encouraged by the assurance of the Viceroy, the Muslims now thought of having a political organisation of their own. On 30th December, 1906, the question of the formation of a central Muslim organisation was formally taken up. Viqar-ul-Wulk, who was proposed to the Chair by Salimullah, spoke of the necessity of the Muslims uniting, "in support of one another and working in loyal union",\(^8\) with the Government. Prominent among others present were, the Aga Khan, Nawab Salimullah and Mazhar-ul-Haq. The main objective of the League was to be not to be unreasonably bitter or hostile to any other community or party, the motto

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8. Nahaman ai Maitur. From Consultation to Confrontation, p.36.
being defence, not defiance. Viqar-ul-Mulk urged the Muslims to be prepared to, "fight and die for the Government if necessary." It was also resolved in the meeting that a 'provisional committee' consisting of 56 members including Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk as Joint secretaries, was to be formed to "frame a constitution for the League within four months from the date of its appointment." The Constitution of the Muslim League was finally adopted in 1907 at Karachi. It is interesting to note that the total membership of the League was restricted to 400 members, at the All-India level; 70 from the U.P., 40 from Bombay, 25 from Madras, 15 from ..., 70 from the Punjab, 15 from C.P. and Berar, 70 from the Eastern Bengal, 10 from Burma and 15 from other parts of British India or Indian States. The qualifications for the membership of the All-India Muslim League were also restricted. Every member was required to fulfil four conditions: First, he must be a British Indian Muslim subject; second, he must not be less than 25 years of age; third, he must be capable of reading and writing with facility any of the Indian languages; and forth, his yearly income, including the income of his parents must not be less than Rs. 500 per annum. At the time of its formation, therefore, the Muslim League was essentially an upper-middle class organisation and was controlled by the rich.

9. Ibid., p.37
10. Ibid., p.39
11. Ibid., p.52-53.
Muslims. Viqar-ul-Mulk (1841-1917) belonged to a family with a good social standing at the Mughal court, and he himself was awarded the title of Nawab in 1900. He was born and brought up in a religious and orthodox atmosphere and he grew up into a thoroughly religious man. The Aga Khan, (1877-1957) was born in the family of the Imam of Ismailis and had received western education at home from English tutors. He was very much charmed by the life and society in England and other European countries, and the main plank of his policy and programme was good relations with Britain, welfare of his followers and the interest of the Islam. Mohsin-ul-Mulk (1857-1907), though started his career in poverty, rose to the level of Deputy Collector in 1867 and by 1874 he went to the court of the Nawab of Hyderabad as Revenue Officer, mazhar-ul-Haq, (1866-1930), belonged to a wealthy family of landlords and Indigo planters and had been to England in 1877. In his capacity as the creator of the League and worker, "he nursed and organised the infant League."

The membership of the League was also very limited. The members were elected for a period of five years, and were eligible for re-election. After election, every member was to pay an entrance fee of Rs.25/- in addition to his annual subscription of Rs.25/-. The League was also to have a central committee consisting of not less than 30, and not more than

13. Ibid., Vol.I.
14. Ibid., Vol.III.
15. Ibid., Vol.III.
40 members. The 'committee' was to carry out the executive functions of the League, and its members were also required to endeavour to form provincial Leagues in each province. The office-bearers of the League were to comprise one president, six vice-presidents, one secretary, and two Joint-secretaries. The constitution of the All-India Muslim League, was not to be amended, or cancelled except at the annual meetings, and by a majority of vote of not less than two-third of the members present. 16

The formation of the all-India Muslim League, did not mean a complete parting of ways between the Hindus and the Muslims. As has been mentioned, the main objective of the League was to promote a sense of loyalty to the British Government, to look after the interests of the Muslims of India, and to try to bring about a better understanding and social harmony between the Muslims and other communities. Another noticeable feature of the League was, as was apparent from its constitution and its membership, that it was essentially an upper-middle class organisation and reflected the aspiration of those who were directly influenced by the British rule — the educated white-coloured Muslims and big 'zamidars'. The poor Muslim populace was by no means represented by the League. For its finances, the League was dependent on Princes,

such as the Aga Khan, and the Nawab of Aroot. And since this money plus the money collected through the membership fee and annual subscription was very small, no effective political work was carried out by the League during the first two years of its existence, except for sending memorandums and petitions to the Viceroy. Though, some provincial Muslim Leagues were formed in Bombay, the Punjab, Madras and Bengal, yet all these did not have any idea of the programme and the work to be carried out. What was true of the other provinces was also true of the United Provinces, where the Provincial Muslim League was formed in 1909.

The Government of India Act of 1909 finally conceded the right of separate electorate to the Muslims of India. Muslims were accorded not only the right to elect their representatives by separate electorates, but also the right to vote in the general constituencies. In addition they were also given weightage in representation. But the impotency of the League was clearly revealed when in the elections of 1910 the League made no real contribution, and those of its members that were elected to the Legislative Councils, were successful, "because of their personal reputation and prestige."  

The Delhi Darbar in 1911, and the announcement of the revocation of the 'partition' came as a shock to the Muslims of India. Not only the Muslims of Bengal and Assam, but the

17. Ibid., p.69-79.
educated Muslims throughout India looked at the decision as harmful to their interests. The consensus of opinion in the Muslim press was that the Government had sacrificed the interests of the Muslims in order to placate the Hindus. The League leaders present at the Darbar were thunderstruck by the announcement. As Viqar-ul-Mulk observed: "This policy of the Government is like artillery passing over the dead bodies of the Muslims without realising whether any life remained in the bodies and whether they would be hurt." Commenting on the announcement, Subrawardy expressed: "If we are silent, and less vocal, our silence is the silence of anger and sorrow and not that of acquiescence." Only the Aga Khan among the Leaguers welcomed the announcement, but that too in his personal capacity and not as the spokesman of the League. Consequently, he had to resign his office in 1912 that indicated the feelings of the League over the issue. The League, however, could not do anything against the decision of the Government and revealed its weakness. The British authorities, so it seems, did not pay much head to the League and neglected its demands when they were inconvenient to their own interests. Masses remained disinterested in the League and of its annual meetings, most of the delegates were invitees.

Prior to the year 1911, some other developments took place that made the Muslims more and more apprehensive towards

20. Ibid.
the intentions of the British Government. Under the provisions of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, Persia was divided into the sphere of influences of England and Russia. In 1911 Morocco was declared a French protectorate, and in 1912, Balkan War was declared. All this was of great concern for the Muslims, since all these areas were Muslim populated areas.

Within the Muslim League itself, a shift in the leadership was taking place. Dissatisfied with the conservative outlook of its leaders, like the Aga Khan and the others, the educated Muslims were now trying to capture the leadership of the Muslim League. The earlier spirit of co-operation with the British Government was also fading. In an article in the 'Comrade', the famous Muslim Journal, Maulana Muhammad Ali argued that Islam could not teach the Indian Muslims, "to keep aloof from a majority in this country even though its ideas are not their ideas and its gods not their gods." The leadership of the League now passed on to the hands of the enlightened Muslims like Ali Brothers, Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, who were willing to co-operate with the Hindus on many issues. This change was quite apparent at the meeting of the All-India Muslim League Council, held in Lucknow on 31st December, 1912, under the Presidency of the Aga Khan. The temper of the meeting was usually radical, and from the beginning it was overshadowed by the younger and radical Muslims. The main issue of the discussion was the revised draft of the creed and the constitution of the League presented by Wazir Hussain. The new draft

proposed the objects of the League to be: first, to maintain and promote among the people of India, feeling of loyalty towards the British Crown; second, to protect and advance the political and other rights of the Muslims of India; third, to promote friendship and union between Muslims and other communities for the said purpose. This draft constitution of the League was finally adopted at the 6th Annual meeting of the All-India Muslim League, held in Lucknow in March, 1913, under the Presidentship of Muhammed Shafi. But by no means did this change in the League Constitution bring the League nearer to the masses, since the membership fee was not lowered and the organisation was still controlled by the educated and landed Muslim 'elite', coming from the upper middle classes. The Ali-Brothers belonged to a rich 'Zamidar' family at Rampur, and had their education upto B.A. Shaukat Ali, after studying became a civil-servant before he entered politics, and Muhammad Ali, after studying at Linclon College, Oxford, started his career as a civil servant. Syed Zehur Ahmed, a very active member of the League, and later on its Secretary (1919-26), was a lawyer, and had a good practice at Allahabad. Hasrat Mohani, a member of the League Council, who played a very prominent role in the League during 1910-16, belonged to a rich 'zamidar' family at Unnao district and was a journalist himself. The

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
Iqbal Khan, the founder member of the League, had his education in Europe and England, and was one of the richest Muslims in India. He remained the president of the Muslim League from 1906 to 1910, with a small break in 1911. A.K. Fazlul Haq, who remained the secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League from 1913 to 1916 and took active part in the deliberations of the All-India Muslim League, belonged to a rich family, and started his earlier career as Deputy Magistrate. Fazl-i-Mussain, the founder member of the League and its joint secretary from 1906 to 1920, was deeply influenced by Western ideas, had stayed in London for few years, and was a lawyer at Dacca before he entered politics. The professional and educational background of the key members of the Muslim League during this period clearly demonstrate the fact that it was essentially an upper-middle class organisation, that mainly sought to protect the interests of its members, and was by no means a mass organisation. The year 1912, however, marked a shift in the League leadership, because now the control passed on to the hands of the educated Muslims from the hands of the landed interests. These educated Muslims were those who had received their education in India, and had not been to abroad, like the 'leftist leaders' in the Congress. This was mainly due to the increasing education amongst the Muslims, and their joining the free-lance professions in the want of government jobs.

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
II

The outbreak of the war in Europe in 1914, and the 
(speculated) fate of Turkey further added to the apprehensions 
of the League in particular, and the Muslims (masses) in 
general towards the British. It was believed that, in alliance 
with France and Russia, the British wanted to crush the Muslims 
of Turkey. The Muslims of Delhi declared; "it is a matter of 
great regret that the day which we feared and the calamity of 
which made us restless during the last weeks, have crossed us 
now. It means that the war has been declared between Great 
Britain and Turkey, and the hard and tender line of test and 
patience and fortitude of the Indian Muslims has come." The 
fear led the Muslims of India to co-operate more and more with 
the Hindus, and the Home-Rule movement started by Mrs. Annie 
Beasant received the whole hearted co-operation of the Muslims. 
Various associations were formed to support the cause of 
Turkey and funds were also collected for the purpose. The 
British were not only fighting the war against Turkey, but 
to add to the grievances of the Muslims, Muslims were also 
forced to join the war against Turkey, who formed a part of 
the Indian army. The Ali-Brothers and Maulana Abdul Kalam 
Azad were imprisoned under the Defence of India Act, and 
their papers were suspended under the Press Act. All this 
led the Muslims to think of seeking the co-operation of

29. quoted in: The Cambridge History of India, op.cit., p.796
Hindus, provided they were assured of some safeguards so far their religious and cultural rights were concerned. The League, now controlled by more or less by the liberal Muslims like Jinnah and others, mostly from the U.P., decided to hold its annual session in Bombay, where the Indian National Congress was also holding its session in 1915.

Consequently, in 1916, both the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League held their sessions together at Lucknow, and what came out was the 'Congress-League pact of 1916', popularly known as the 'Lucknow Pact'. The session was remarkable for the complete unanimity among the Hindus and the Muslims over the question of self-government. Also for the first time, the Congress accepted the right of separate electorates for the Muslims. "One third of the elected members (to the Executive Council) should be Muslims elected through separate electorate." M.A. Jinnah, though not the only person who got the Pact signed, worked in close co-operation with those willing for it, and was one of the principal architects of the Pact. Speaking at the Session he said: "Towards the Hindus our attitude should be of good will and brotherly feelings. Co-operation in the cause of our motherland should be our guiding principle... With regard to our own affairs, we can depend upon nobody but ourselves." The Lucknow Pact was largely a product of

concessions offered from both sides. The Congress conceded separate Muslim electorates and was even agreed to their introduction in the Punjab and the C.P. The Muslims got 50% representation in the Punjab, but had to sacrifice their quota in Bengal where they got 40% of the seats. In Muslim Minorities provinces, Muslims got a representation almost double of what they would have got on a purely population basis. Similarly, at the Centre, they obtained one-third representation in the Council through separate Muslim constituencies. The Muslims had to give up their right to vote in general constituencies, which was accorded to them by the Reforms of 1909. The Congress also went so far as to agree that no bill or resolution concerning any community should be carried out of three fourth of the members of that community voted against the bill.

The Lucknow Pact of 1916 was, like the Non-cooperation movement of 1920, one of the high marks of Hindu-Muslim unity. It revealed that it was possible for the middle-class English educated Hindus and Muslims to arrive at a settlement of the Indian constitutional problem. But since neither the Congress nor the Muslim League were, at that time mass movements only represented the upper-middle classes of the Indian society, "the Pact was essentially a deal between the young Muslim U.P. leadership and the Congress,"32 and,

32. P.Hardy. op.city., p.187.
therefore, failed to take into account the major cleavages between the Hindus and the Muslims—social, economic, religious. The Pact, by no means, ensured the unity between the Hindus and the Muslims, particularly the masses, and the agreement could not stand for a long period, as shall be seen. Moreover, only eight men were present at the League Council meeting, seven from Lucknow and one from Allahabad. At the Lucknow session, "apart from the President Mr. Jinnah, there were few delegates from Bombay. Madras was almost entirely unrepresented and the delegates from Bengal were few." It was also pointed out that, "the All-India Muslim League in its framework and organisation has inevitably led to the growth of political despotism—an exclusive ring of a few favoured personalities, who have coalesced into a form of dictatorship and have suppressed, however unconsciously, all healthy developments of political thought in the democracy of Indian Islam."

III

The European war of 1914-19, had its impact on the Indian political scene in general and on the Muslims of the land in particular. One significant impact of the war was, that now, so far as the Muslims were concerned, there started

33. F. Robinson, op.cit., p.252
34. quoted in Ibid., p.255.
35. quoted in Ibid., p.259.
the mixing of the religion with politics. Another significant aspect was that now the 'Lucknow Pact' was swept aside and the Muslim masses became more and more conscious of their existence as a separate religious identity. Muhammad Ali's 'Comrade', started in 1911, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's 'Al-Hilal' started in 1912, "came forward to awaken Muslims from the lull of loyalty to a furious indignation at the way western powers were trampling the rights and interests of the Muslims all over the world." Azad appealed to the Muslims: "Today those people (Hindus) who are engaged in a struggle for their country's progress and independence, are also waging a 'Jihad'. You should have been in the foremost in this 'Jihad'. Therefore, arise... You have not done anything in India, but now your God desires that you should do here too, what you are enjoyed upon to do "everywhere else." The appeal was essentially drenched with religious sentiments, and was meant to touch the hearts of entire Muslim community. The earlier alliance between the young Muslim leaders and the Congress was nowhere in the picture. The role of the 'Ulema' increased rapidly in the Muslim politics. As the war ended, the Muslim League was "overwhelmed by the New All-India Khilafat Organisation', and the domination of the 'Muslim landed elite' now began to fade.

37. quoted in Ibid., pp.43-44.
38. F. Robinson, op. cit., p.289.
The two major issues before the Muslims were: 1. The anticipated reforms by the Government; and 2. The Khilafat issue. The Montague-Chelmsford Report of 1919, made the Muslims feel that now there was a change in the attitude of the Government towards the Muslims. In a letter addressed to the Viceroy towards the end of April, 1919, Ali Brothers wrote: "Muslim loyalty and support had so often been assured to Government in our generation...that other communities had with some justice made our attitude towards Government almost a matter of rapprochement. It was strange return for all this loyalty and support that without any effective protest and often with the occurrence of His Majesty's Government, blow after blow was aimed at the temporal power of Islam...The Muslim press of India did everything in its power...of impressing Great Britain that if she desired to retain the good will of the Mussalmans, she must be a friend and keep the Khilafat on her side and deal more friendly with the Muslim Kingdom." The letter objected to the use of the Indian Muslim soldiers against the Khilafat, and requested the Government not to interfere in the affairs of 'Khilafah', not to force the Muslims in the prosecution of the war, not to punish any Muslim if he showed his sympathy towards the Holy Prophet, and to satisfy these demands of the Muslims at the earliest possible.

The Khilafat Movement was organised by the Ali Brothers, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to protest against the British Government's attitude towards Turkey. At the same time, M.K. Gandhi, disappointed by the reforms of 1919, and agitated by the Rowlatt Act of 1918, was contemplating to launch a nationwide agitation against the Government. He saw the possibility of the unity between the Hindus and Muslims against a common foe, and subsequently attended the First Khilafat Conference held at Delhi on 23rd November, 1919.

Gandhi, "took upon himself the task of urging the Muslims to launch a non-co-operation movement for forcing the British to yield to their demands regarding the maintenance of Turkey as the seat of Khilafat."

Other prominent Hindus who participated in the Conference, were Tej Bahadur Sapru, Motilal Nehru and Annie Beasant. The second Khilafat Conference was held at Allahabad, in June, 1920, Gandhi once again present, and on 22nd June, a message was sent to the Viceroy through the platform of the Muslim League that, "if the injustice done to Turkey were not removed by 1st August, they would launch a non-cooperation movement."

The Khilafat issue was so strong at this time that the Muslim League was also under the influence of the Khilafat Conference that "embraced conservative Muslims, the 'young Muslim Party', and members of the religious classes—for example, Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana

40. Khalid, B. Saveed. op.cit., p.53.

41. The Cambridge History of India. op.cit., p.901.
(1874-1944), of the Punjab, Nawab Zulfikar Ali Khan (1875-1933), Fazl-al-Haq of Bengal, Abdul Aziz Ansari, Maulana Hasrat Mohani (1818-1951), and Abdul Bari. "42

As a matter of fact, the Muslim League had already started discussing the Khilafat question during the war years. At the Muslim League session of 1917, held at Calcutta on 30th December, Abdul Latif Ahmed said: "The question of Caliphate is...one which...has been recently been treated in a filippant manner by men in authority, who sought to know, and by influential organs of public opinion, which ought to be taught better. It is not a shuttle-cock for European diplomacy to play with. It is a question which has got its seat in the very fiber in the faith of vast majority of the Mohammedans of the world, no less than of India."43 At the 1918 session of the League at Delhi, ten 'ulemus' from Sialkot, Amritsar, Delhi, Lucknow and Cawnpore were present, and it was stated that the religion and politics, "were one and the same in Islam", and that so far, "they (Ulema) had thought the Mussalmans had committed their religion to the custody of Ulema, and politics to the All-India Muslim League and kindered organisations; but when the call went out to them, they came out with open arms and pleasure to join their political body."44 At the Muslim League session at Amritsar,

42. P. Hardy, op. cit., p. 187-89.
44. Speeches of Moulvi Ghulam Mohiuddin, and Moulvi Kifayat Ullah. See ibid.
in December, 1919, a resolution was carried out, that expressed a sense of dissatisfaction and disappointment at the disregard shown by the Government to the repeated request made by the Muslims, regarding the question of Khilafat and the Holy Places, and it was made clear that no "settlement contemplating the dismemberment of Turkey would ever satisfy the Mussalmans of India, but (will) keep them in a state of perpetual dissatisfaction and discontent, for the grave consequences of which they shall not be responsible." The mood of the Muslims all over the world was expressed by A.K. Fazlul Haq, speaking at the Delhi Session of the League in 1918 in these words:

"The present age is full of anxieties for Muslims all over the world. The Great World War, which appears to be, ending so happily and triumphantly for the Allies, has unfortunately brought deep and gloomy forebodings to Muslim minds. Muslim countries are now the prey of land-grabbing propensities of the Christian nations, in spite of the solemn pledges given by these very nations that the world war was being fought for the protection of the rights of small and defenseless nations...we feel that the time has come when we should warn these statesmen that it is against all the rules of prudence to draw ceaseless drafts on the bank of loyalty. It is a trite saying but nevertheless the true that it is the last straw that often breaks the camel's

back. It will be a miracle if it is otherwise with the Indian Muslims."  

With the atmosphere thus ripe for a nation-wide agitation, on 8th September, 1920, Gandhi moved the famous 'Non-Co-operation Resolution' at the Calcutta session of the Congress, that referred to the broken pledges of the British Government given to the Muslims regarding the Khilafat and also the tragic events of April, 1919. The only way to save the country from such wrongs, according to Gandhi, was the establishment of 'Soaraj' (self-rule), and this, according to him, could be achieved by following the policy of progressive, non-violent non-co-operation. Jinnah and few others, who believed in constitutional agitation, did not agree with the non-co-operation formula, and Jinnah resigned from the Congress in 1920. Gandhi, however, continued his work, undertaking extensive tours of the country with Ali brothers, and for the time being it appeared that a complete unity between Hindus and Muslims had been achieved. "The Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs were the talks of the day, and non-co-operation which was an attempt to bring about a righting of these wrongs was the all absorbing subject." Yet, from the very beginning, some of the leaders maintained the Hindu-Muslim unity was not based on firm groundings...the Muslims

46. M.A. Zaidi, op. cit.
47. For the full text of the Resolution, see Indian Quarterly Register, 1921, Vol. III.
were not so much fighting for the freedom for India as they were fighting for the maintenance of the Khilafat in Turkey, whereas, for Gandhi the Khilafat was a weapon which he could use to accelerate India's advance towards 'Swaraj'. And with the passage of time it became evident that there never existed any true unity between the two communities. After the calling of the "non co-operation" by Gandhi owing to 'Chauri Chaura' violence, the Moplah Riots of 1921, and the riots in Bengal and Madras in 1922, the superfluous unity between the Hindus and the Muslims almost came to an end. The Treaty of Lussane, signed between Allies and Turkey, by which the latter got very favourable terms, also helped to cool the enthusiasm of the Muslims. "On 23rd March, 1924, the final and deadly blow was struck at the Khilafat movement by Ghazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha, who exiled the 'Khalifa' Abdul Mazid, and abolished the Khilafat." The Khilafat and the "non-co-operation movement" made it quite clear to the Hindus that the Muslims could become passionately interested in the freedom of their country only if it ensured safety and protection of their faith and religion in India.

So far as the Muslim League was concerned, the Khilafat movement and the huge participation of the masses in the agitation made the League feel that it only represented

49. P.Hardy, op.cit., p.56.
a very minor section of the Muslims—the educated, well
to do upper-middle class group—and that it had no control
over the bulk of the Muslim populace that remained disinte-
rested in the working and programme of the League. In its
presidential address to the Muslim League in 1921, at
Ahmedabad, Hasrat Mohani admitted that the League had done
nothing independently as a Muslim political organisation
for some years, as the attention of the Muslims were drawn
to the Khilafat issue which had been taken up by the Central
Khilafat Committee. And this was to be expected also,
since the League was a very small organisation at this time,
with very little resources at its disposal, and all that it
could do was to support the Khilafat issue and the Central
Khilafat Committee.

IV

The years 1924 to 1926 were the years when there
was no major political event in the country. In the ranks
and files of the Congress, there seemed to be a confusion,
resulting in the formation of the 'Swarajist Party' by some
leftist leaders. The Muslim League did not show any signi-
ficant activity. The rift between the 'young party', and
the old party remained and was rather intensified because
of the entry of 'Ulema'—the religious elite—in the Muslim

politics. The landed Muslim group were not interested in anything called the social reforms amongst the Muslim population, but, "it was the threat of becoming backward, rather than backwardness itself," that led the landed Muslims to organise for politics. The Hindu 'revivalist' movement, more intensified after 1922, with its stress on the use of Hindi instead of Urdu, further encouraged the Muslims to organise in various political groups. They, like Hindus, also started looking into their cultural past, and in turn produced a form of counter 'Muslim revivalism'.

But the difference between the 'Old Party'—a group of large landlords and successful professional men—and the 'Young Party'—a group of educated men who hoped for success in their profession," remained as it was. Whereas the former did not want to come out openly against the Government, the latter was determined to protect their interests, "and to protest against the Government riding roughshod over Muslim interests, because it was crucial to their own political survival that the Government should continue to respect them."

And this confusion, tension and rift amongst the Muslims were very clear when in 1927, the British Government announced the formation of a Commission under Sir John Simon, in November to review the Indian political situation, and to suggest some further measures of reforms.

52. F. Robinson, op.cit., p.346.
53. Ibid., p.349.
54. Ibid., p.349.
Since the Commission did not have any Indian representative, at the annual session of the Congress, in Madras in December, 1927, a resolution was passed advocating the boycott of the Simon Commission, "at every stage and in a very manner." The Congress also accepted the challenge of Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, "to produce a constitution acceptable to the various elements in India." The conflict between the 'Old Party' and the 'Young Party', in the Muslim League now came to the surface, and the League was divided. whereas, Jinnah, who was, "himself in favour of joint electorates and believed that political life of India should have been organised on party basis rather than on denominational basis," and a "considerable section of the League were" for boycotting the Commission, Sir Muhammad Shafi, and his group, who enjoyed the support of the Government, were against such a step. Thus there were two sessions of the Muslim League, in December, 1927. "That led by Jinnah held its session in Calcutta and decided on boycott, the other under the presidentship of Sir Muhammad Shafi (who had the support of the Government) met in Lahore and decided to co-operate (with the Commission)." In the Calcutta session of the League, it was decided that the League Council

55. V.P. Menon, Transfer of Power in India. Bombay. 1957, p.34.
56. Khalid, B.Sayeed. op.cit., p.64.
58. V.P. Menon. op.city., p.34-35.
59. Ibid.
should appoint a sub-committee to work with the Congress to frame a new constitution of India.\textsuperscript{60} It was also made clear that the League wanted: 1. the formation of a separate province of Sind, 2. introduction of reforms in the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan. 3. fulfilment of the above two demands if the Congress wanted the League to give its demand for separate electorate, 4. Hindu minority in Sind, Baluchistan and the N.W.F.P. should be given the same concessions as the Muslim minority in the other parts of the country. 5. Muslim representation on the Centre should not be less than one-third and 6. a guarantee that on communal matters no bill or resolution would be considered or passed if three-fourth majority of the members of the community concerned were opposed to it.\textsuperscript{61} No mention of the Punjab and Bengal was made in these proposals, and Sir Shafi argued that Muslim "majorities particularly where they were narrow as in Punjab and in Bengal, were being sacrificed in order to get more seats for Muslims than were due to them on the basis of population in Hindu majority provinces."\textsuperscript{62}

The Nehru Report of 1928, was an answer to the challenge thrown by the H.M.G. The Committee, headed by Motilal Nehru was called upon to draw a constitution for India. The report considered the viewpoint of the Muslims

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{60} \textit{Indian Annual Register}. Ed. N.N. Mitra. Calcutta (Hereafter I.A.R.) 1927. Vol. II.
\item \textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{62} Khalid, B. Saeed. op. cit., p.65.
\end{itemize}
and said that the fear of the Muslims that they would be dominated by a Hindu majority was baseless, and noted that, "once alien authority and intervention were withdrawn, from India, people would start thinking in the terms of the larger economic and political problems." But the report failed to satisfy the Muslims, and Jinnah in particular, while it conceded Muslim demand for the formation of the separate province of the N.W.F.P. and Sind, on the issue of electorates, it not only rejected separate electorates, but also weightage for minorities. Reservation of the seats at the Centre and in the provinces where they were in a minority was accorded, but there was no reservation of seats in the Punjab and Bengal, where according to Muslims, "though they enjoyed a small majority, they were educationally and economically so backward that without separate electorates, and reservation of seats, they would be in a extremely weak position." The Centre was to be constructed in the Unitary basis; and this further strengthened the Muslim fear of a Hindu majority domination there as well.

At the All - Parties National Convention, held in Calcutta, in December, 1928, which met to discuss the Nehru Report, Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League put forward his demands as amendments to the Nehru Report on 29th December, 1928. His basic demands were; 1. The Muslims should have

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63. Ibid., p.68.
64. Ibid., p.69
65. For the full details, see, Cambridge History of India, op. cit., pp.807-09.
33 1/3 per cent of the seats in the Central Assembly, 2. the 'residuary' powers should vest in the provinces and not at the Centre, 3. that the Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal should be represented on the basis of population, at least for ten years subject to the revision of these provisions. The Congress was not willing to compromise on these issues, and no settlement could be reached upon. At the Muslim League Session of March, 1929, a resolution was adopted that stated that, "the Congress stands committed to the policy and programme of complete independence by resort to 'civil disobedience' and non-payment of taxes; ... and whereas the reasonable and moderate proposals put forward by the delegates of the Muslim League at the Convention in modification were not adopted, the Muslim League is unable to accept the Nehru Report." At the same session, the demands of the League were given a concrete shape, and the 'Fourteen Points' were formulated by Jinnah. These 'Fourteen Points' were a further elaboration of the main demands of the League put before the Congress at the 'All-Parties Convention, and the fear of the Muslims was reflected more clearly in these points. Much stress was laid on the religious, economic and political liberties of the Muslims as a community, and an uniform measure of autonomy to all the provinces was also demanded.

The rejection of the League's proposals by the Congress had significant consequences on the Muslim politics.

It provided an opportunity to the various factions in Muslim political circles to unite together to consider their lot. The two factions in the League, one led by Jinnah and the other led by Shafi, got united together. In an interview to the Free Press of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said that Jinnah had told him about the agreement between him (Jinnah) and Shafi and that "the resolution passed by the Muslim All-Parties Conference was substantially the same as the resolution adopted by the All-India Muslim League's Calcutta Session." In a statement issued through the Platform of the Delhi Conference, it was stated that after meeting in Delhi, both Jinnah and Shafi, "expressed as satisfied with the view of each other and the proposals of unity appealed exceedingly hopeful." Jinnah, like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, believed that, "Indians must at first priority solve their communal problem. If India could not achieve her own unity, then she could scarcely expect to achieve dominionhood." At the All-India Muslim Conference, held at Delhi in January, 1929, under the presidency of the Aga Khan, it was demanded that the only form of the government suitable to the Indian conditions was a federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent States. It was also demanded that the Muslims should have the right to elect

their representative through separate electorates, that they should have weightage in the Hindu majority provinces and that the Muslims should have their due share in the Central and Provincial Cabinets. However, it must be noticed that this unity was not reached at without any problems. On the issue of the Nehru Report, the Muslim politicians were divided into four main groups. 1. The supporters of the Nehru Report; 2. Jinnah and his followers; 3. the Shafi Leaguers; and 4. Delhi Muslim Conference representatives. At the League's open session on 29th March, 1929, "serious differences became visible in the Muslim League's ranks." On the morning on 31st March, the Jinnah League itself split into two. One section led by Moulvi Muhammed Yakub and Ali Brothers walked out and held a separate conference with two other leaders of the Delhi Conference section at Hakim Jamal Khan's place.

The rejection of the Nehru Report by the Muslim League, the attack on Motilal Nehru and the League's decision to send a delegation to England to counteract pro-Congress propaganda, quickened the activities of the pro-Congress Muslims and this led to the formation of a New party called the Congress Muslim Party. It was organised by people like S.A. Brelvi, Yusuf Meheralla and some others who issued a circular in early

70. The Cambridge History of India, op.cit., p.807.
72. Ibid.
July 1929, which, along with other things, stated the aims of the Congress Muslim party to be, "to carry on vigorous propaganda in the Presidency (Bombay) in support of the national cause of the freedom and prepare the Muslims for taking a proper share in the coming fight for freedom." Speaking at the first meeting of the 'party', held at Bombay on 20th July, 1929, Maulana Muhammad Ali (not one of the Ali brothers) said: "If we study the present situation carefully, we shall at once see that much of the anti-Congress agitation is only skin deep and bolstered up to its present prominence by the Anglo-Indian Press. The Muslim community present a very sorry spectacle today. Torn by internal strife, ridden by illiterate selfish Mullahs, verging on the bank of economic bankruptcy, its future is very dark indeed unless the nationalist Muslims gird up to their loins and make a desperate effort to save it from the inevitable ruins. The Congress Muslim Party has been formed for this purpose." This meeting elected S.A. Brelvi as President, and Abbas Tyabji and Mohammad Ali as Vice-Presidents. It also appointed a working committee to set immediately to work to carry out the party's aims and objectives.

In the United Province also, a Conference of the All-India Nationalist Muslims was held at Allahabad on 27th July, under the chairmanship of Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad.

73. Ibid., 1929. Vol.II.
74. Ibid.
and it was pointed out that due to the selfish motives of some of the leaders of the Muslim community, there was a good deal of political confusion amongst the Muslims, and it was declared that the Conference wanted all the Muslims to work in harmony and close co-operation with the Congress, "and to create such relations between the majority and the minority communities as would lead the former to consider the right of the latter in a spirit of broad-minded patriotism." The Executive Council of the Conference, composed of Maulana Azad, President M.A. Ansari, the Treasurer; T.A.K. Sherwani, Secretary; and Arif Hasvi and Basit as Joint Secretaries.

The refusal on the part of the Congress to accept Jinnah's 'Fourteen Points', therefore, and twofolded effect on the Muslim League. On the one hand it provided a common ground to some of the conflicting interests in the League, or to be more precise, in the Muslim politics to have urged to unite under the banner of the Muslim League, thus increasing its strength, and on the other, it led to the drifting away of certain important nationalist Muslims from the League, who wanted to work in co-operation with the Congress. The possible answer to the question - why the Congress did not accept the 'Fourteen Points' of Jinnah? - Can be: 1. Before and after the Lahore Congress of 1929, when the 'Independence Resolution' was adopted, the Congress leaders were much too busy in

75. Ibid., p.350.
resolving the internal differences in the Congress itself, i.e. between the 'Left' group and 'right' group, to pay serious attention to Jinnah's demands. "There was... a possibility of eternal conflict between the village and the city influencing the relations of the Congress with the Trade Union Congresses." The situation was very tense since the world-wide depression had already begun in 1929, and, "the Indian working class had a very hard time, and was the helpless witness of a progressive deterioration in their own conditions." To accept Jinnah's demands would have certainly further intensified the rift in the Congress; 2. the Congress leaders like Motilal Nehru, whose political theories were based on Western ideas, failed to take into account the peculiar condition of India— religious, social, economic and so on— and tried to follow the practice of a Western nation like the United States. "Jinnah realised this mistake later. But the Congress persisted in following the same course." 3. If the Muslims were afraid of their security in the Hindu majority provinces, the Hindus were also afraid of their own security in the Muslim majority provinces, because it was realised that any 'central government' would have a very little control and authority over the provinces.

V

The year 1930 witnessed three major events; Firstly,

76. Nehru Jawaharlal, op.cit., p.198.
77. Ibid., p.199.
the Congress decided to launch a 'civil disobedience movement' throughout the country from 26th January, 1930, because the Government had not accepted the demand for a complete Dominion Status. The second was the Allahabad session of the Muslim League in December 1930, when, Iqbal, for the first time, presented his formula for the division of India into a Hindu State and a Muslim State. The third was the announcement by Lord Irwin in October, 1930, stating the decision of the Government to hold a Round Table Conference in London, to which the representative of British India, Princely States and Indian political parties would be invited. The launching of the Civil Disobedience Movement by Gandhi, and the breaking of the 'Salt Laws' by Gandhi, virtually led all the prominent Congress leaders behind the bars and Gandhi was arrested in May, 1930.

The Simon Report, though it agreed to the, "continuation of separate electorates everywhere and with the existing weightage in the Hindu majority provinces," did not concede the Muslims the enlargement of third quota of seats in the Punjab and Bengal on the population basis. In August, Fazl-i-Hussain explained to Lord Irwin that the Report undercut the 'fairly satisfactory' existing position of the Muslims. In the Muslim majority provinces of the

79. It will be discussed in details in Ch.IV.
Punjab and Bengal, "where their majority position has been secured by the official blocks, Simon recommendations would leave them with a minority of seats."\(^{91}\)

With all these objections, the Muslim League decided to participate in the Round Table Conference, when its first session started in November. The Congress was absent because of the C.D. Movement. The Aga Khan led the sixteen members delegation of the Muslims. Some of the prominent members were: Sir Muhammad Shafi, Choudhari Khaliquazzaman, Muhammad Ali, Dr. Shafat Ahmed Khan, Fazlul Haq, M.A. Jinnah, and Feroz Khan Noon.\(^{82}\) The launching of the C.D. Movement had led the Muslim leaders to believe that, "Mr. Gandhi is working under the influence of the communist Hindu Mahasabha. He is fighting for the supremacy of Hinduism and submergence of Muslims,"\(^{83}\) and it was with this notion in mind that they went to attend the R.T.C.

In the Conference there ensued a long and bitter conflict as to the number of seats that should be accorded to Muslims and other minorities in the provincial legislatures. Sir Muhammad Shafi demanded that the Muslims must be given 33 1/3 per cent representation in the Central Legislature because, although the Muslims constituted a

81. Quoted in Ibid.

82. Indian Round Table Proceedings. Indian Central Branch Publication Branch, 1931. Calcutta (hereafter IRTC).

little more over 25% of the population of British India, they were entitled to get weightage because they bore the major burden for the defence of the country. He also urged for the Muslim majority representation in the Punjab and Bengal, since the provinces were to be given autonomy. Speaking at the Planary Session Meeting on 20th November, Fazlul Haq said: "The moment we are convinced that in the future constitution of India not merely Muslims, but all the minorities... will be safe and secure, that all the various interests will have the fullest measure of self-determination and self-advancement, we shall not only register our consent, but we shall go much further than the most enthusiastic members of the Indian National Congress in demanding the fullest measure of responsible government for India."

He also made it quite clear that the Muslims would be satisfied with nothing less than the fullest recognition of their legitimate rights, and requested the British Government that in case of the failure of the Conference, "the task of framing the constitution will fall on British people. Let me warn the British Government most solemnly...that they must not forget the claims, the legitimate aspirations of seventy millions of Muslims as well as those of other

84. niC. p.150.
85. Ibid., p.149.
communities in India." In a representation put forward before the Federal Structure Committee in November, 1931, stress was laid on separate electorates and it was said that in any province, "no majority shall be reduced to a minority or even an equality. Provided that after a lapse of ten years, it will be open to the Muslims in (the) Punjab and Bengal and any minority in any other provinces to accept joint electorates, or joint electorates with reservation of seats, by the consent of the community concerned." 87

As it was, the Conference could not record any success. Gandhi when he attended the second round of the Conference, tried his best to arrive at a settlement with the Muslims. But he had no place in the meeting of 'those die-hard' politicians. His idealism made no impression on them and his frank attitude for peace and co-operation was of no use. With deep sorrow and 'deeper humiliation', he announced the failure of his efforts. The third round of the Conference, attended by a far smaller number of representatives than before, met from 17th November to 24th December, 1932. It was clear that the earlier enthusiasm amongst the representatives to the Conference was lost.

86. Ibid.
The failure of the Conference had two significant impacts. Firstly, The Muslim League, thinking that the Conference failed because of Gandhi's pro-Hindu policy, stiffened its attitude towards the Congress. This was reflected through the league's resolution of December, 1931, whereby the Muslim League "viewed with greatest concern the movement set afoot in certain provinces inciting tenants to refuse to pay rents, as calculated eventually to upset the principles of private property and to bring about a state of disorder and lawlessness in the country. The League expressed strong disapproval of all such movements." It was also pointed out that the Congress started all these movements with communal intentions, viz, to destroy the Muslim 'zamidars' of the U.P. and thereby weaken the position of the League. Another significant resolution that was passed in this meeting concerned the constitution of the Muslim League. So far, the objective of the League had been defined as the, "attainment of Swaraj for India by all peaceful and legitimate means." At this session a change was made and the creed of the League became, "the attainment of full Responsible Government for India by all peaceful and legitimate means, with adequate and effective safeguards for the Mussalmans." The membership fee was also lowered,
and every adult Muslim who signed adherence to its creed and paid one Rupee yearly as a subscription could become its member. The office of the President also to be held for one year by a person, and at the subsequent session fresh election was to be held for the same. The President was also made the head of the League's Executive Council consisting of a Council and a working Committee. The strength of the Council was also enlarged to twenty three members.  

The second important outcome of the failure of the Conference was the announcement of the Communal Award. The failure of the Indian political parties to reach at an agreement to solve the communal problem led the British Government to take the matter in its own hands, and on 10th August'32, Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald, announced the 'Communal Award'. As regards the electorates, the Prime Minister's statement said, that the "Government has to face facts as they are, and must maintain this exceptional form of (separate) electorate". Gandhi opposed the Award because it not only conferred the separate electorates to the Muslims, but also to the 'depressed classes'. He at once wrote to the British Premier that he would embark on, "a prepatual fast unto death, which could only and if during

90. Ibid.  
91. Quoted in Khalid, B. Sayeed, op.cit., p.77.
its progress the British Government of its motion, or under pressure of public opinion, revised their decision and withdrew their scheme of communal electorate for depressed classes". This led to the signing of the Poona Pact between Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar in September '32, that was also accepted by the Government. But the Muslims got separate electorates on the following basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Muslim % of population</th>
<th>Total seats</th>
<th>Muslim seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.P.</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Punjab</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The C.P.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.W.F.P.</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar and Orissa</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sind</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Communal Award, though it did not concede all the Muslim demands, was accepted by the Muslim League because it did, "represent a method which removes the obstacle from

the path of constitutional advance, thereby enabling people of India to concentrate their attention upon solving the many issues that still remain to be decided in the field of the Constitutional reform.94

The next step on the part of the Government was the issuing of a White Paper in March, 1933, containing the various points of view presented in the Round Table Conference. In April, a 'joint committee' of both the Houses was set up to consider the White Paper proposals, and to make recommendations regarding the future government of India. "The Committee sat for eighteen months and examined numerous witnesses and also consulted a fairly representative delegation from British India and Indian States."95 A bill was introduced, based on the recommendations of this Select Committee in 1934. On 4th August, 35, the Bill, having been passed by Parliament, got the Royal Assent, and thus came into being the Government of India Act of 1935.

One question that remains to be answers is: what was the strength of the Muslim League in 1934-35? What influence could it exercise over the Government? One can safely say that till 1935, the Muslim League did not play very significant role in the Indian politics. Jinnah,

95.  Khalid, B.Saeed. op.cit., p.79.
after the failure of the H.T.C. had left India in disgust only to come back in 1934. And when he came back, "he had very little support in the mid-thirties". So far as the Muslim Politics was concerned, so many local and provincial Muslim and Hindu-Muslim coalition parties like the Unionist Party in the Punjab, the Krishak Lok Party in Bengal, Ahrar Party in the Punjab, the All-India Muslim Conference, the All-India Nationalist Muslim Party, - leaving aside the various religious parties - had emerged, and there was no interaction or cohesion of political thought amongst these organisations. One important indication of the weakness of the League and its decreasing popularity is the change adopted in its constitution in 1931, whereby, "the quorum necessary for the 'session' was reduced from 75 to 50". Within the ranks of the League itself, there was no unity. Provincial Leagues did not work in harmony with the All-India Muslim League. At the Annual Session of the Bengal Presidency Muslim League, held in April, 1931, it was stated that, "the case of the Muslims of Bengal is altogether different from their co-religionists in other provinces...Infact the economic condition of the masses cannot be improved until the Hindu and the Muslim masses, who are at present divided by communal electorate, make common cause in a common electorate.

97. JAIP. 1931. Vol.II.
Separate electorate has brought neither strength nor prosperity in the masses of Bengal, who are being exploited by designing persons for their own selfish ends." The organisers of the Muslim League, "like the Dutch Army, were all generals, but no soldiers. Most of the leaders belonged to the little landlord class and none of them was prepared to spearhead the movement or to follow the others."  

The Ahrar Party in the Punjab and the Nationalist Muslims had passed resolutions in favour of the Civil Disobedience Movement, and, "it was obvious that they did not see eye to eye with the members of the League." In 1931, the Punjab Nationalist Muslim Conference, meeting at Lahore on 24th October, clearly stated that the Muslim League's policy could not be followed and that the freedom of the country was the first and the foremost task before every Muslim. "We refuse to be party to that sinister type of propaganda which would try to appeal to ignorant sentiment by professing to be Muslim first and Indian afterwards." This division amongst the Muslims had certainly weakened the position of Jinnah and the other League leaders. "Jinnah's standing was indeed reduced, and for several years, he was to occupy an awkward middle position between the politics of

nationalism and the politics of communalism. His lead has been rejected by the Muslims of the majority provinces, by the Muslim Congressmen, and of course by the Hindu nationalism.

When Jinnah emerged from his 'self-imposed' exile in 1934, he had very little influence. The Muslim League had become moribund. Whereas at this time, "Jinnah was still an advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity, the leaders of the Muslim provinces were content with the status quo." The provincial Muslim leaders could not agree upon a common programme that could be carried throughout the country; the prominent Muslim leaders of the two major-Muslim majority provinces, Sir Fazl-i-Hussain of the Punjab, leading the Unionist Party, and Fazlul Haq in Bengal leading the Krishak Lok Party, believed that an inter-communal programme was the best way to protect and further the Muslim interests in their respective provinces. The Muslim League, by 1934-35, had "become defunct. It was dominated by tilted gentry, Nawabs, landlords, and the Jee-Huzoors, who were generally well meaning gentlemen, but wanted to serve the (League) so far as it did not effect their position either socially or in Government quarters."

Broadly speaking, the mass meetings were not at all known to the League leaders. Its funds were not adequate enough even

104. C.Khaliquazamn, op.cit., p.137.
to maintain a decent office, and the funds were largely donated by Rajas and Nawabs. No extensive propaganda was carried out amongst the masses, and no one bothered about the League Sessions once they were over. When the Government of India Act of 1935 came into being, the League’s acceptance or the rejection of the Act in fact meant little to the British Government or to the other political parties in the country, because of the poor political strength and a limited following of the Muslim League.