CHAPTER THREE

THE MUSLIM LEAGUE STORY

The Muslim League story from 1937 onwards is quite hazy. All that is generally held and documented is that stung by the Congress refusal to accommodate two Leaguers in the UP ministry, Muslim League party launched a massive offensive against the Congress government, successfully generated a fear psychosis among Muslims about their fate in a 'Hindu' state and reaped a rich harvest by becoming a mass organization by 1939. The partition, it is argued, was a logical consequence of this phenomenon.¹ That the process of Muslim League becoming a mass organization could not possibly have been so smooth, without its own problems and complexities and entirely determined by what happened in 1937, is proposed to be demonstrated in this chapter.

Constructing the Muslim League story is no easy task. There do not exist many autobiographies (Khaliquzzaman is one of the very few to have attempted one), memoirs, private papers and recorded interviews of League leaders, at least not in India. Presumably many of them would have migrated to Pakistan after 1947.² There exist very few authoritative works on Muslim League focusing on the organization, its


² There does not appear to have been a tradition of recording memoirs among Muslim League leaders. This is in sharp contrast to the Congress tradition where most of the top leaders wrote extensively and left many written records. Gandhi (Autobiography), Nehru (Autobiography, Discovery of India and other works), Azad (India Wins Freedom), Subhash Bose (India's Struggle), Rajendra Prasad (Autobiography and India Divided), Ram Manohar Lohia (Guilty Men of India's Partition) are only some of them.

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composition, different strands within it, and its political ideological development. The all India, homogenous character of Muslim League, devoid of any regional variations, has been readily assumed, even though not stated explicitly.

For a good account of the public activities of Muslim League, British government records, League’s official publications and newspapers provide useful data. But a more comprehensive study of the organization must await the unearthing of more material. Two other important sources of information on Muslim League are biographies of Jinnah, and general works on communal politics. Given the Jinnah centred focus of the studies on the League, he occupies as important a place in the works on Muslim League as League does in his biographies. This is also indicative of the role that he played, or is


5 Hector Bolitho, Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan; Ayesha Jalal, The Sole Spokesman; Sharif-ul Mujahid, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation; Stanley Wolpert, Jinnah of Pakistan, among others.

6 Humayun Kabir, Muslim Politics; Bipan Chandra, Communalism in Modern India; Peter Hardy, Muslims of British India; Ram Gopal, Indian Muslims; Anita Inder Singh, Origins of the Partition of India, 1936-47; Mushirul Hasan, Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1870-1930, among others.
assumed to have played, in the political development of Muslim League. The narratives on communal politics also provide a comprehensive coverage of the League activities. Muslim League story in UP for the 1930s has to be extrapolated from these diverse sources.

3.1 Crisis

If Jinnah was hoping that the immediate post-election period was going to be one of consolidation for Muslim League in UP, he would certainly have been disappointed. In spite of having done well at the polls in UP, the League party found itself facing the grim prospects of divisions in its own ranks and being dismissed by British government and Congress. Instead of bringing about any consolidation, the post-election developments were to witness a phase of crisis for Muslim League in UP which was to last through the year.

As has been pointed out earlier, the political existence of League depended, at this stage, largely upon being granted the status - both by British government and Congress - of an organization representative of Indian Muslims. This acknowledgment was particularly crucial for League because such a status did not flow from the election results and could therefore not be assumed. In other words, in spite of performing well at the polls in UP, there was nothing in the election results at the all India level which even remotely imparted the much needed and desperately sought position to Muslim League. Unfortunately for League, this acknowledgment did not come about immediately after

7 In spite of contesting only 37 seats, Muslim League got 48.17% of the total Muslim urban votes polled (eight seats out of eleven contested) and 29.69% of rural votes (19 seats out of 26 contested). It emerged as the largest party of Muslims in UP surpassing its rivals - Congress (2% and 7.30% of Muslim urban and rural votes, respectively) and NAPs (3.71% and 9.71% for NAPA and 0.04% and 9.06% for NAPO) - by a decisive margin. Reeves, Elections in Uttar Pradesh, pp. 246-49.
the elections. Haig did not make League's participation a pre-condition for ministry formation. This amounted to an official acknowledgment of Congress's capacity to represent Muslims and thereby fulfilling the constitutional obligation of 'adequate minority representation' provided in the instrument of instructions in the Act. The British, needless to say, did not do it out of any love for Congress. Faced with the grim possibility of the constitution not taking off the ground, Haig would have been too relieved to see Congressmen willing to enter office. He would not want to do anything to delay or jeopardize the prospects of the formation of the Congress ministry by questioning Congress's credentials in providing the 'Muslim' component to the ministry. During the elections Muslim League had not been the government's favoured party - that position belonged to NAPs. Linlithgow had been apprehensive of League's capacity to whip up communal frenzy. About Jinnah also, there was general apprehension and distrust in the British government around 1937. Haig, on his part, saw no reason to elevate Muslim League to the status of the spokesman of the Muslims -

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8 Later the Lucknow session of Muslim League was to express dissatisfaction with the manner in which the Governors had used the 'safeguards' for minorities. A resolution condemned the Governors "for their failure to enforce the special powers entrusted to them for the safeguard of the interests of the Mussalmans and other important minorities." Pirzada, Foundations of Pakistan, Vol. 2, p. 279. The reference was to the acceptance, by the Governors, of non-League (Congress) Muslims for the ministerial posts. Elaborating the same point, Jinnah said in his Presidential address: "It has been clearly demonstrated that the Governor and Governor General who have been given the powers, and special responsibility, to safeguard and protect the minorities under the Constitution... have failed to use them, and have thereby been a party to the flagrant breach of the spirit of the Constitution and the instrument of instructions in the manner of the appointment of Muslim ministers. On the contrary, they have been a party to passing off men as Muslim ministers by appointing them as such, although they know full well that they do not command the confidence of the Muslim representatives or the public outside." Ibid, p. 268.

9 Brabourne, the Governor of Bombay, wrote to Linlithgow: "It is, of course, quite impossible to rely on anything Jinnah tells me .... His policy is to preach communalism morning, noon and night...". IE, 5 June 1937, p. 625. Linlithgow wrote to Zetland, the Secretary of State: "I do not quite frankly feel any deep confidence in him (Jinnah), and I suspect he is one of those political leaders who can play a personal hand and no other..." 9 September 1937, ibid, p. 944.
Jinnah's ultimate objective. So, if the British government did not bestow upon League the status of a representative Muslim organization, which it did not at this stage, and if Congress also did not concede the same, which it did not and could not without surrendering its claim to be a secular organization representing all Indians irrespective of religion, caste and province, there was little League could do to save itself from political oblivion.

This was not all. The crisis of league was not confined only to the indifference shown to it by the other principal actors in the political arena. The opposition by the Shia Political Conference\(^\text{10}\) and the formation, in Lucknow, of Azad Muslim League in opposition to All India Muslim League\(^\text{11}\) tended to suggest that not all Muslims of UP, at this stage, showed an inclination to rally behind Muslim League. The weekly note of the UP Intelligence reported that Azad Muslim League, formed with the objective of countering Muslim League and expressing solidarity with Congress, seemed to be gaining influence among poor Muslims of UP.\(^\text{12}\) Upon Jinnah's arrival in Lucknow for the annual session of Muslim League, Azad Muslim League staged a black flag demonstration of about fifty people. This led to a minor clash between the followers of the two Leagues.\(^\text{13}\) Desertion to Congress by Muslim Leaguers such as Suleman Ansari and Saiduddin Khan added to the crisis of Muslim League in UP.

\(^{10}\) The resolutions passed at the Shia Political Conference, held in Lucknow in October 1937, included setting up of a Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for India, joint electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims, invitation to all Shias to join Congress, and declaring Muslim League to be a non-representative body. *Fortnightly Report of the UP government*, October 1937, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

\(^{11}\) *The Leader*, 18 August 1937.

\(^{12}\) 461, 1937; *WRPA*.

\(^{13}\) 480, 1937; *ibid*.
That Jinnah's dictates would not be followed blindly by some UP Leaguers became clear when seven members of Muslim League Parliamentary Board requested Jinnah to respond favourably to the offer made by Rajendra Prasad to renew talks with Jinnah held earlier in 1935.\(^\text{14}\) Pressures to arrive at a settlement with Congress also came from outside the province. M.A.H. Ispahani, the businessman and a Muslim Leaguer from Bengal close to Jinnah, requested him to give "best consideration" to Rajendra Prasad formula and impressed upon Jinnah that "I will certainly welcome a settlement that is honourable and dignified."\(^\text{15}\) Jinnah's response was, however, evasive.\(^\text{16}\)

Pressure kept mounting on Jinnah, accompanied by threats of resignations.\(^\text{17}\) Jinnah's plight had been compounded by a loss of prestige on account of his alleged use of Quran and cries of 'Islam in danger' during Jhansi bye-election. It was felt that he no longer retained his earlier nationalist approach and that he had started moving towards extreme communalism. This meant a loss of some liberal support that Jinnah had enjoyed so far.\(^\text{18}\) The media also increasingly became critical of him.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{14}\) The Leader, 24 July 1937.


\(^{16}\) Letter to Ispahani, 1 August 1937, ibid, p. 85.

\(^{17}\) The Leader, 26 July 1937.

\(^{18}\) Syed Mahmud lamented in his election speech at Jhansi: "I am grieved at the way Mr. Jinnah and other leaders of the League are becoming more and more communal daily and raising slogans to delude the Muslim masses." Ibid, 5 July 1937.

\(^{19}\) Newspapers Bombay Chronicle and Amrita Bazar Patrika denigrated Jinnah for his election appeal in the name of Allah and holy Quran. The editorials expressed surprise that someone of the stature of Jinnah "should stoop so low." Ibid, 8 July 1937. The Tribune thought that as a result of "several defections from his party in UP" Jinnah was losing his credibility. Quoted in ibid, 19 November 1937. The language employed by a section of the media vis-à-vis Jinnah generally deteriorated. The Congress victory in the Bijnor bye-election was described by the Tribune as a "slap in the face of Mr. Jinnah." Quoted in ibid, 22 November 1937.
Perhaps the biggest blow that struck the UP League was a comprehensive defeat at the Bijnor-Garhwal bye-election. For the Muslim rural constituency of Bijnor and Garhwal in Rohilkhand and Kumaun divisions, respectively, Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim, the then Muslim League candidate, had been elected unopposed. Subsequently he resigned from League to join Congress and was made a minister in the Congress government. Since then he had been the main target of attack by Muslim League. Maulana Hasrat Mohani, in a speech, accused Hafiz Ibrahim of being a party to the prohibition of cow slaughter. In the face of fierce opposition by Muslim League, Hafiz Ibrahim resigned his seat and decided to seek re-election from the same constituency, this time on a Congress ticket.

The Bijnor bye-election, because of its nature, became a trial of strength between the two parties. Supporters of League and Congress often clashed with each other during the election campaign. A bomb was thrown at a Congress procession canvassing for Hafiz Ibrahim. Green flags were unfurled and religious appeals were made by both the sides. Non-Muslims also addressed the gatherings from the Congress side. Local leaders like Pandit Anusuya Prasad, provincial leaders like Mohan Lal Saksena and all India leaders like Nehru gave their active support in what had become the real test of popularity among Muslims. From Muslim League side Jinnah made passionate appeals for Muslim unity. The degree of hostility displayed towards each other during the election campaign was unprecedented. A Congress worker was stabbed by a Muslim

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20 Ibid, 4 October 1937.
21 Ibid, 23 October 1937.
22 Ibid, 26 October 1937.
23 Ibid, 23 October 1937.
Leaguer. Disturbed by this deterioration in public standards, Nehru complained of the stabbing to Nawab Ismail Khan, a known anti-imperialist and a Congress sympathizer within Muslim League. Ismail Khan replied that "the (League) volunteer in question had sufficient provocation to justify the act." In their election speeches Muslim Leaguers emphasized that Congress wanted to suppress and eliminate Urdu, would stop *tazia* processions from being taken out, would forcibly stop cow slaughter, and would force Muslims to wear *dhoris* instead of pyjamas. They also levelled charges against Congressmen of bribing the Ulema. Shaukat Ali was reported to have said in one of his election speeches that local officials like Tahsildars and Patwaris and influential Hindu landlords (who were not Congressmen) were not only campaigning for the Congress candidate but also threatening Muslim peasants to vote for Congress.

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26 These charges were listed in a letter of complaint written by Nehru to Ismail Khan, 10 November 1937, *SWIN*, Vol. 8, p. 194.

27 The charges, against the Congress leadership, of bribing the Ulema and Maulvis, had been made earlier also during the bye elections, for the Muslim rural constituency of Jhansi-Jalaon-Hamirpur in Bundelkhand, held in July. Its origins lay in a letter written by Nehru to Kidwai and allegedly intercepted by local Muslim Leaguers in Jalaon district. In his letter (5 July 1937) Nehru had stressed the importance of winning the Bundelkhand election and also lamented the lack of money. Sherwani, the Congress candidate, had appealed to Nehru for money and Nehru had expressed his inability to raise the necessary funds "for the simple reason that we did not have the funds." (SWIN, Vol. 8, p. 153.) Still keeping in mind the importance of the election Nehru had promised to arrange for some money. In the letter Nehru had listed the names of people who had agreed to contribute monetarily. This included Pant, Nehru himself and Diwan Shatrughna Sinha, a local Congress leader. The total amount thus raised came to about Rs. 750. Out of this amount, Nehru had paid some money to Congress workers. He also informed Rafi that the Ulema, campaigning for Congress "must be paid their travelling expenses." (Ibid, p. 154.) This letter, although sent through express delivery, did not reach Kidwai and was allegedly intercepted either by Rafiuddin, the Muslim League candidate, or some other local leaguer. (See Nehru's letter to the postmaster, Orai enquiring about the lost letter, 18 July 1937, *ibid*, p. 162; Nehru to Kidwai asking him to look into the matter, 18 July 1937, *ibid*, p. 162-63; Nehru to Rafiuddin Ahmad, 18 July and 4 August 1937, *ibid*, p. 163 and 173; and Nehru to A.M.Balu clarifying the matter, 25 August 1937, *ibid*, pp. 175-76).
complained that he was accused of snatching and tearing off a flag bearing Allah-O-Akbar on it in Najibabad town in district Bijnor.  

Congressmen did not lag behind. The intelligence report noted an increase in “rowdyism by some Congress workers” during the election campaign. A Muslim League meeting in the town of Najibabad ended in chaos while in Bijnor a League meeting was disrupted by Congressmen who threw stones at the dais and did not allow anyone to speak.  

Ismail Khan complained to Nehru that Ahrar leaders made passionate religious speeches verging on “obscenity and vulgarity.” According to the Star of India, a pro-Muslim League paper, cries of “Allah-O-Akbar” were heard at the Congress election meetings; Congress volunteers wore green clothes and inscribed Allah-O-Akbar on the tri-colour flag.  

The results were a shattering blow to Muslim League. Hafiz Ibrahim, the Congress candidate, won the election getting 77.57% of the votes as against a mere 22.43% by his Muslim League rival, Maulvi Abdus Sami. Muslim Leaguers put down the Congress victory to the use of religious symbols and the efforts of the Jamaitul-Ulema-i-Hind, branded by Leaguers as “a brand of unscrupulous and irreligious rogues.” Jinnah acknowledged the demoralization that had set in the UP League: “The United Provinces

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29 Nehru to Ismail Khan, 10 November 1937, SWJN, Vol. 8, p. 195.

30 467, October 1937; WRPA.


32 Star of India, 30 October 1937.

33 Reeves, Elections in Uttar Pradesh, p. 311.
has its difficulties because they (Muslims) have not got a band of leaders who could work together and keep up sustained efforts and unfortunately there is not a single man of outstanding position there who could command the respect and the confidence of the people generally. Anyhow this movement will throw up men and United Provinces will soon come into its own. There is nothing to despair. Loss of one or two elections is not going to make the slightest difference. It seems a temporary disappointment and we can not always win.\textsuperscript{35}

The Bijnor-Garhwal election was a significant one not only because it led to further deterioration in the Congress-League relationship but also because it crystallized and reinforced the prejudices held by the leaders of the two organizations against each other. Nawab Ismail Khan was convinced that a lot of the political hooliganism in evidence was a product of the “advent of democracy” that had been “let loose” in the country as a result of Congress accepting office. What made this democracy even more dangerous was the fact that Congress had chosen to grab power all by itself and used their majority status in the legislatures to treat Muslim League with utter contempt. This, along with the anti-League propaganda carried on even by non-Congress Hindus, had, according to Ismail Khan, convinced Muslims that the Congress government “virtually means a Hindu Government.”\textsuperscript{36} Ismail Khan informed Nehru: “The patience of the Mussalmans is well nigh exhausted and if they, therefore, hit back, it may be occasionally below the

\textsuperscript{34} Ispahani to Jinnah, 9 November 1937, \textit{Jinnah-Ispahani Correspondence}, p. 92. Star of India considered the Bijnor election to be a moral victory for League because it forced Congress to abandon Bande Mataram and cry Allah-O-Akbar instead. \textit{Star of India}, 8 November 1937.

\textsuperscript{35} Letter to Ispahani, 25 November 1937, \textit{Jinnah-Ispahani Correspondence}, pp. 94-95.

belt. You should not feel greatly horrified."37 This was how he sought to explain the Muslim League aggression displayed during and after the elections.38

Nehru found it inexplicable that Congress and Muslim League, essentially political rivals, should be seen and treated as representing Hindus and Muslims, respectively. Communal propaganda and activities created an atmosphere which was detrimental to the growth of healthy politics. "This seems to me a great disservice to any community and to the nation for progress comes through the development of a political mentality in a group. Nationalism is obviously a higher ideal than communalism in so far as politics is concerned."39 (emphasis added)

Bijnor-Garhwal election is also important in so much as it closed certain channels of communication which had existed between Nehru and those League leaders who had previously been sympathetic to Congress. Nehru’s admiration for Ismail Khan’s nationalism40 and latter’s “profound respect” for Nehru’s “sincerity of purpose and honesty of profession”41 had prompted them to write to each other to explore the areas of differences and remove misunderstandings. At the end of the correspondence they discovered that as leaders of the two organizations they had very little in common. The differences between Muslim League and Congress were not based on any political

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38 There had been plenty of it. K.M.Ashraf had been beaten up in the Aligarh Muslim University. (Star of India, 9 November 1937.) According to Nehru, Maulana Nasiruddin, a Congressman, was attacked in a train immediately after the Bijnor elections (Nehru to Ismail Khan, 10 November 1937, SWJN, Vol. 8, p. 193); Abdul Hakim, a Congress sympathizer and the deputy speaker in the UP Assembly, was shouted down at a meeting in Basti (Star of India 30 November 1937); slogans like “Hindus are infidels, we will enter paradise by killing them” were being used freely (Ibid, 10 November).

39 Nehru to Ismail Khan, 26 December 1937, SWJN, Vol. 8, p.200.

40 Letter to Ismail Khan, 10 November 1937, ibid, p. 196.

41 Ismail Khan to Nehru, 16 January 1938, Aziz, Muslims Under Congress Rule, p. 220.
misunderstanding, but on their past record, different ideological approaches and perceptions of politics and indeed very different political trajectories charted out for the future. Episodic commonalities could not wish away these aspects. Muslim League was a growing organization and had changed very rapidly from 1934 onwards. It was not (as some of the Congressmen may have imagined) drifting involuntarily but marching very consciously towards extreme communalism. Nehru’s reference to nationalism obviously being a higher ideal than communalism would have made little sense to League leadership.

To return to Bijnor election, apart from the election defeat, Muslim League leadership was also encountering problems in setting up branches. It was reported that the efforts to organize branches of Muslim League in Jhansi district met considerable opposition from local Muslims. The Leader was convinced that a “definite rupture” in UP League was imminent. It also reported that for the Bulandshahr bye-election, to be held in December, League was not able to organize regular election work as most of their supporters had “deserted the field by joining the Congress.” If any further proof of a disintegrating League was needed, it was provided in Meerut where the district conference of the Jamaitul-Ulema-i-Hind, held on 30 October, was attended by 4000 Muslims. Muslim League meeting, held the next day, attracted only 200 to 300 Muslims. In what could be termed as the first round of the battle between Congress and Muslim League, the former had clearly emerged as the winner.

42 512, 1937; WRPA.

43 The Leader, 26 July 1937.

44 Ibid, 12 December 1937.

45 502, 1937; WRPA.
3.2 Initial Consolidation

The end of 1937 began to offer glimpses of the possible consolidation of Muslim League in UP. To be more precise it was the Lucknow session of Muslim League held in October 1937 that initiated a phase of political strengthening for League, even though there were significant overlaps between the phases of crises and of consolidation. The Lucknow session was a landmark in Muslim League politics because it facilitated a coming together of different groups within Muslim League and diverse strands in Muslim communal politics under the umbrella of Muslim League. It was also at the Lucknow session that the agenda of the League was articulated fairly sharply. The session was referred to as the “opening of another glorious chapter of Muslim history in India” by Star of India, a newspaper from Calcutta which functioned as a spokesman of ‘Muslim viewpoint’ in politics.46 Haig called it a declaration of war against Congress47 and the Pioneer accused Jinnah of leading his community back to the barren fields of isolation.48

There was much about the Lucknow session which signified a definite consolidation for Muslim League. In a nutshell it was at the Lucknow session that League took a decisive leap forward in two directions - anti-imperialism and anti-

46 Star of India, 18 October 1937.

47 “Muslim opinion seemed to me very uncertain at the moment and irritable. The (Lucknow) Conference discharged its irritation in full measure against the Congress....But the sense of uncertainty has for the time being at any rate been removed, for the Muslims have now been given a very strong and definite communal lead which seems to have inspired a great enthusiasm, and will obviously have a most important bearing on political developments in the near future. War has been declared unmistakably between the Congress and the Muslim League.” Haig to Linlithgow, 24 October 1937, TE, p. 1069.

48 “The Pioneer asks if Mr. Jinnah is not leading his community back to the barren fields of isolation. If we might answer, we would not say ‘barren field’ but to the fortress of security under the crescent and the star.” Editorial in The Star of India (henceforth SOL), 16 October 1937.
Congressism.\textsuperscript{49} The two strands were linked together through communalism, that is to say, both were motivated and fostered essentially by communalism. This meant that the Lucknow session set in motion the process of Muslim League transforming itself into a definite, uncompromising, communal organization. All these were to have implications in the years to follow.

3.2.1 Overcoming Dissensions

This consolidation occurred at many levels. First, there was a tiding over of internal dissensions. As has been pointed out earlier, in spite of the best efforts of Jinnah to achieve unity in the ranks, Muslim League remained divided among broadly three strands which could be identified as loyalist, exclusivist and anti-imperialist. Although the three had agreed to come together under the League umbrella, each refused to merge its identity into the other. Each strand was also working towards transforming Muslim League in its own direction.

\textsuperscript{49} It may seem like making an obvious point but should nonetheless be highlighted that the two ideas - of anti-imperialism and anti-Congressism - did not spring overnight or were created by the leaders of the Lucknow session. Expressions of both variety had been simmering among Muslims both within and outside League. The political pressure being exerted on League leadership to take a clearly anti-imperialist stance have been noted earlier. But forces against Congress were also very active. An appeal made by the Mopla leaders to the voters of Jhansi during the bye-election held in July before Congress accepted office, makes interesting reading: "Congress out to destroy Islam...Brethren of Jhansi! Awake and do your duty by Islam. All India is watching your efforts. We, 15 Lakh of Muslims of Malabar, in whose veins courses the blood of the pioneers of Islam from Arabia, pray to success of your fight against the ruthless forces which are out to divide and destroy, the house of Islam which has the proud heritage of 15 countries. May Allah crown your fight against such an enemy with overwhelming success! Amen!" \textit{SOL}, 14 July 1937. Similarly, the editorial of \textit{the Star of India} commented on the Congress decision to form the government: "the Congress is now in government in a majority of Indian provinces and in each of them the Muslims are in the unhappy position of compulsory dependence on the mercies of men who, their much talked of idealism not withstanding, have never looked with sympathy on Muslim aspirations. The fate of those Muslim minorities now and henceforth will be in the keeping of some who have been open, of others who have been clever enough to shield their anti-Muslim proclivities under a flow of sugary words, and of a few others who may truly and honestly see no difference between the interests of the Muslims as a community and those of the Hindus." \textit{Ibid}, 20 July 1937.
The loyalists, mainly landlords, some of whom (like Chhatari and Yusuf) had temporarily abandoned Muslim League before the elections and had received a setback afterwards, were now trying to explore ways of either returning to the League fold or trying to forge ties with it. The exclusivists, or the followers of Jinnah (like Zahirul Husnain Lari) were trying to push Muslim League ahead as a communal organization without coming close either to Congress or British government, wanting to remain more or less equidistant from both. The third group - anti-imperialists - consisted of Congress sympathizers such as Wazir Hasan, Suleman Ansari, Ali Zaheer, Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan on the one hand and anti-Congress Leaguers like Shaukat Ali and Maulana Hasrat Mohani on the other. They were also called the ‘left wingers’ within Muslim League. This strand had expressed dissatisfaction with the slogan of ‘full responsible government’ and had favoured the adoption of a sharper and more unambiguous expression of anti-imperialism. Some of them also worked towards cooperation with Congress. When that did not come about, most of Congress sympathizers - except Khaliquzzaman and Ismail Khan - joined Congress, thereby weakening this strand within Muslim League.

Jinnah had resisted the change in the creed of Muslim League, but Lucknow provided an opportunity for the convergence of these various strands. Creed of League was, therefore, changed to ‘full independence’ at the Lucknow session. This must have pleased those desirous of independence. Moving the resolution, Hasrat Mohani explained that the new creed of Muslim League was ‘full independence’ and not ‘complete independence’ (as in the Congress resolution at Lahore in 1929) because “its interpretation by the Congress had made it meaningless.”

50 The independence resolution

also contained a clause regarding safeguarding the rights and ‘interests’ of Muslims. This, explained Hasrat Mohani, had been done to satisfy the moderates. It was for the same reason that there had been no reference to the severance of the British connection. “It was possible within the terms of the resolution to remain within the British fold, if necessary.”

Anti-imperialists and moderates were not the only ones to be pleased. Chhatari expressed satisfaction at the new turn that Muslim League had taken and promised support: “I can assure the Muslim public that every member of the Independent Party wholeheartedly agrees with and supports the policy and programme of the League.”

Why did the loyalist landlords feel so agreeable towards the change in Muslim League in an anti-British direction? Perhaps it was the clarification made by Hasrat Mohani regarding the possibility of achieving independence within the British fold. Or, more likely, it was their perception that they desperately needed the support of Muslim League as an ally in the Legislative Assembly against the Congress government. Congress had already threatened to implement their agrarian programme. Muslim League’s anti-imperialism could, therefore, be put up with so long as it did not bring League closer to Congress. The manner in which the Lucknow session proceeded must have been reassuring to Chhatari as it completely ruled out any proximity developing between League and Congress.

Indeed if there was one theme which dominated the session, it was that of anti-Congressism. A resolution strongly condemned the Congress government for imposing

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51 Ibid.

52 In the UPLA the Agriculturist party had changed its name to Independent party in August 1937. Proceedings of the UPLA, Vol. 1, p. 95. Also The Pioneer, 3 August 1937.

53 Interview to the Press, ibid, 20 October 1937.
the “positively anti-Islamic and idolatrous” song, Bande Matram, on Muslims.\textsuperscript{54} Jinnah's presidential address concentrated almost entirely on attacking Congress. He was emphatic that “No settlement with the majority is possible....” He accused the Congress leadership of double standards: “Those who talk of complete independence the most mean the least (of) what it means.” He charged Congress with alienating Muslims by pursuing a policy “which is exclusively Hindu....” Obviously taking almost direct digs at Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, and Gandhi, Jinnah declared:

The Congress High Command speaks in different voices. One opinion is that there is no such thing as Hindu-Muslim question and there is no such thing as Minorities’ question in the country. The other high opinion is that if a few crumbs are thrown to the Mussalmans in their present disorganized and helpless state, you can manage them. They are sadly mistaken if they think that the Mussalmans can be imposed upon..... The third opinion is that there is no light to be seen through the impenetrable darkness; but as the Congress goes on acquiring strength and power so the past promises of the blank cheques remain unfilled and unsigned.\textsuperscript{55}

Interestingly Congress was no longer rebuked for its economic radicalism or socialism but for being a Hindu party which, on becoming a government, had ushered in a ‘Hindu Raj’.

What made Jinnah so bitter against the organization of which he had been a member till 1920? Was it a part of his new strategic design or did he feel simply let down by Congress? Was he retaliating against Congress for making overtures to Muslims or was he merely stating the truth when he accused Congress of being a Hindu party and government? The question of Congress having become a Hindu force requires a detailed elaboration and will be taken up later. But the other questions can be examined here. Jinnah could not possibly have been upset about Congress refusing to

\textsuperscript{54} Pirzada, \textit{Foundation of Pakistan}, Vol. 2, p. 278.

cooperate with Muslim League (as he pointed out in his speech), because, as has been
examined earlier, Jinnah himself did not want it and did all he could to stop
Khaliquzzaman from reaching out to Congress leadership. It is therefore more likely that
he was reacting to the Congress decision to launch the Muslim mass contact
programme. He may also have been reflecting the general deterioration in the Congress-
League relationship during the two bye-elections. More importantly Jinnah’s new mood
was indicative, not so much of hurt as of initiating a new strategy. His priorities of
bringing about Muslim unity have been spelt out earlier in this thesis. That he had not
been successful in it may have also conveyed to him the futility of pursuing open ended
politics. Clearly it was not enough to bring Muslims of different shades and opinions on
a common platform. They had also to be homogenized through the instrumentality of a
defined ideology powerful enough to accommodate Muslims from diverse political
streams. In other words strong communalism would have appeared to Jinnah the only
instrument with which to unite together both the loyalists and the anti-imperialists. Such
a strategic design demanded re-defining not only the League’s agenda but that of
Congress as well. Congress had to be declared a Hindu organization which was,
therefore, essentially incapable of representing Muslims.

3.2.2 Support from Bengal and Punjab

There was another way in which the Lucknow session contributed to League’s
consolidation. Notable among those present at the session were the premiers of Punjab
and Bengal. Jinnah’s pre-election efforts at making inroads into the two most important
Muslim majority provinces had proved futile. Under the circumstances the coming
together of A.K.Fazlul Huq and Sikander Hyat Khan, the premiers of Bengal and
Punjab, respectively, was nothing short of a feather in the cap for Jinnah. Among other
things, it amounted to an acknowledgment, by the regional leaders, of Jinnah as the all
India leader of Indian Muslims. Why did the two regional bosses shun Jinnah’s overtures before the elections? Having ignored him earlier, why did they come around to accepting his terms in October 1937? To take up the Bengal story first.

In the period between the declaration of the 1935 Act and the elections, different loose political formations among Bengal Muslims had crystallized themselves into two political parties - United Muslim Party (UMP) led by Nazimuddin and dominated by landlords and businessmen, and Krishak Praja Party (KPP) led by A.K.Fazlul Huq and representing the interests of the tenantry. Formed in 1936, KPP had grown out of Nikhil Banga Praja Samiti which had been founded by Fazlul Huq in 1929. KPP represented Muslim tenantry and was a non-communal body in so far as it had a sizable Hindu presence in it. The class character of the two parties was such that the two could not possibly merge into each other. When efforts were made to bring the two groups together, conflict arose as to who should be the leader of the united Muslim party. In essence, the conflict was about who would be the premier of Bengal. The question remained unresolved and reduced all negotiations to naught. Muslim League in Bengal did not count very much and represented only a handful of non Bengali-businessmen based in Calcutta (e.g., the Ispahani brothers). For gaining a successful entry into Bengal politics Jinnah had to, therefore, conduct negotiations with both KPP and UMP or, at any rate, with any one of the two organizations. In a bid to mobilize maximum Muslim support, Jinnah invited as many as 40 prominent Muslims from Bengal to attend the first meeting of All India Muslim League Parliamentary Board to be held in Lahore in June 1936. Only two of them - M.A.H.Ispahani and Abdur Rahim Siddiqui - attended. Apparently ‘Muslim politics’ in Bengal at this stage showed a greater
inclination towards settling provincial matters and cared little about inter-regional communal solidarities.\footnote{56}

Jinnah now decided to intervene more directly by actually going to Bengal. His immediate concern was to bring the two groups into the League fold or, failing to do that, have an electoral understanding with at least one of them. Jinnah was understandably more keen on KPP because of it being a more popular party in Bengal and its leader Huq being an old Muslim Leaguer. Huq initially showed an inclination towards Jinnah's initiative but the younger members of the party demanded the acceptance, by Muslim League, of the abolition of zamindari in Bengal without any compensation to the landlords. This was unacceptable to Jinnah as he had not, as yet, abandoned the hope of a settlement with the UMP, with its strong landlord presence and access to financial resources, so vital for fighting the elections. KPP also wanted to reserve its right to contest the general (non-Muslim) seats, maintain its separate identity in Bengal and carry on its own radical programme.\footnote{57} In other words, for a settlement, Muslim League in Bengal would have to merge itself into KPP and not hope for the contrary. Also, it was not possible to have a united front of Muslims in Bengal; Jinnah would have to choose between KPP and the UMP. As it happened, Jinnah succeeded in arriving at an understanding with UMP which agreed to liquidate itself into Bengal Muslim League Parliamentary Board. Thus ended all possibilities of a League-KPP rapprochement. Enraged by Huq's defiance, Jinnah called him a "rift in the lute."

\footnote{58} In the elections the two parties were pitched against each other. The election campaign was

\footnote{56} For information regarding the pre-election negotiations in Bengal, see Humaira Momen, \textit{Muslim Politics in Bengal: A Study of Krishak Praja Party and the Election of 1937}, (Dhaka, 1972), pp. 46-51; and Shila Sen, \textit{Muslim Politics in Bengal, 1937-47}, (New Delhi, 1976), pp. 73-78.

\footnote{57} Humaira Momen, \textit{Muslim Politics in Bengal}, pp. 48-49.
fierce. Muslim League accused Huq of being a Congressman: “Muslim voters Beware! Do you want Congressmen to rule Bengal? If not, send Fazlul Huq to the wall, smash up the PP (Praja Party).”

Election results were such that various contestants were forced to reconsider their earlier positions. A total of 119 Muslim seats were shared among Muslim League (43), KPP (36) and Independents (36). Congress, though with the largest number of seats (47 general and five reserved), was an unlikely contestant for forming the government, given the prevailing indecision of the CWC on the question of office acceptance discussed earlier. Congress support for a KPP ministry under Huq’s leadership could not materialize because of differences over the release of political prisoners. The result was a coalition government led by Fazlul Huq and supported by Muslim League and non-Congress Hindu legislators. In his cabinet of eleven, Huq gave ministerial positions to five Hindus and four Muslim Leaguers. However, the selection of ministers was strongly resented by KPP members on the grounds that nine out of the eleven ministers were landlords and six of them had actually been elected from special constituencies. Prominent leaders of KPP issued a statement to this effect. “This was the beginning of Fazlul Huq’s rupture with the Krishak Praja Party” and his increasing vulnerability forcing him to cement his alliance with Muslim League.

58 SOI, 2 November 1936.

60 Negotiations were held between the two to explore the possibility of Congress helping Huq form a government with its support. Talks failed as Congressmen insisted on a speedy implementation of the release of political prisoners. Huq was unwilling to promise this as this would involve early confrontation with the Governor. Shila Sen, Muslim Politics in Bengal, pp. 90-93.

These, then, were the specific reasons which prompted Huq to submit to Jinnah’s dictates. The very texture of politics and society in Bengal motivated him to seek and nurture cross-communal political formations. The decision of not leaning on all India communal forces paid rich dividends to the extent that he was able to form a government in Bengal giving adequate representation to non-Congress Hindus. But, during the election campaign, his party had not been able to live up to its non-communal character. Constantly accused by Muslim League of being an ally of Congress and having to face a Muslim electorate, KPP had contested the elections as virtually a ‘Muslim’ party. The pressures of communalism had begun to surface. Even after the elections, though he was able to form a government, to be able to sustain a stable support base he had to choose between his radical agrarian base in KPP and his alliance with Muslim League. It was, therefore, his inability to successfully resist the pressures of communalism combined with a desire for a lasting political alliance with Muslim League which threw Huq into the extended arms of Jinnah.

Their meeting was reported in the newspapers as a “memorable re-union” and was portrayed as the coming together of two titans. “They embraced each other amongst cheers of Allah-O-Akbar. Thereupon Huq announced that he and his party would forever remain under the banner of the League without any reservation.” Huq’s speech at the session was a continuation of the anti-Congressism unleashed by Jinnah: “None could be more selfish, deceptive, hypocritical and scheming than a Congressman”, he declared. As example of the Congress’s hypocrisy, Huq cited the insistence by

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63 _SOI_, 16 October 1937.
64 _Ibid_, 18 October, 1937.
Congressmen on acceptance of a salary of Rs. 500 for the Congress ministers. Another ‘act of hypocrisy’ by Congress was the very decision to accept office which, according to Huq, was the Congress reaction to the presence of eight Muslim premiers. In other words, Congress decision to accept office merely reflected their wish to throw most of Muslim premiers and ministers (32 in all the provinces) out of the ministries. Watching the treatment meted out to Muslims in Bihar and other provinces, he declared, there was no choice left for Muslims but to unite under one banner. He reminded Muslims that Islam was in danger and promised his audiences that if Muslims were ill-treated in Muslim minority provinces, the Bengal ministry would retaliate by oppressing the non-Muslim minorities in Bengal.

The Punjab story was similar to Bengal in some ways. The Unionists, Ahrars and Khaksars were some of the ‘Muslim’ groups active in Punjab with the Unionist party, consisting of a group of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh agriculturists, formed in 1923 by Mian Fuzli Husain and Sir Chhotu Ram, as the most powerful amongst them. A provincial

65 The Congress Working Committee had decided, in its meeting in March 1937, to fix the salary for Congress ministers to be not more than Rs. 500, in the event of the Congress accepting office (Zaidi (ed.), The Encyclopaedia of the INC. Vol. 11. 1936-38, p. 274.). Later, in its meeting at Wardha in August, the CWC stipulated Rs. 100 as house allowance and Rs. 150 as motor allowance, in addition to a salary of Rs. 500. (Ibid, p. 288.) UP’s Premier and ministers were drawing a salary of Rs. 2500 per month before Congress took office. Interestingly the ‘salary bill’ had come up for a lot of discussion in the UP Legislative Assembly and there too Congressmen were criticized by the opposition for indulging in ‘hypocrisy’ by accepting a low salary (Proceedings of UP Legislative Assembly, Vol. 1, pp. 50-54.). Gandhi’s personal opinion was that a salary of Rs. 500 was too high and he did not approve of any allowances in addition to the salary (Gandhi’s letter to Patel, 19 July 1937, Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CWMG) vol. 65, p. 419.).

66 Back home in Bengal, Huq was to get into trouble for his reference to retaliatory action against Hindus of Bengal. Hindu members of his ministry questioned him on this. Huq replied with a clarification that he had never referred to Hindus as kafirs (infidels) or as men who had no future, as had appeared in the press. He also said that he did not talk of retaliatory action against Hindus and that the misreporting was because of a wrong translation of his Urdu speech. The word he had used in his speech was satana which could not be accurately translated into English. He used this word only as a mild form of teasing and not as retaliation. Huq, then, reassured Hindus that he would safeguard all the legitimate ‘Hindu interests’ so long as Pant was willing to take care of Muslims of UP. SOI, 20 October, 1937.
Muslim League had been formed in Punjab as early as 1907 but it was mainly a Lahore based party without any presence in the rural areas. Fuzli Husain had not encouraged Jinnah to make inroads in Punjab and had asked him to keep “his finger out of the Punjab pie.” However, after his death in 1936, efforts were made to bring the two organizations into some kind of an alliance by people like Jahan Ara Shah Nawaz and Ahmad Shah Daultana, who had a foothold in both the parties. But the effort did not work. Iqbal, the president of Punjab Muslim League Parliamentary Board, felt that the Unionists were “not in a mood to disband their party and to join the Muslim League.”

Apart from Muslim League being a weak organization in Punjab, Jinnah too had not been able to inspire much confidence and enthusiasm among Punjabi Muslims. As a result Muslim League was able to contest only eight out of 86 Muslim seats in Punjab and win two. Unionist party, on the other hand, acquired a comfortable majority by capturing 99 out of a total of 175 seats and formed a government under the leadership of Sikander Hyat Khan.

In less than six months time, Sikander Hyat arrived in Lucknow for Muslim League’s session and signed the Jinnah-Sikander pact. According to the pact Muslim Unionists were to join Punjab Muslim League; candidates for the bye-elections were to be put up and supported jointly by both the parties; and the provincial League


68 Anita Inder Singh, Origins of the Partition of India, p. 4. Disgusted by Fuzli Husain’s contemptuous treatment, Jinnah is reported to have left Punjab swearing never to return to the province again saying “It is such a hopeless place.” Ian Talbot, Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement, p. 104, fn.

69 Malik, Sikander Hyat Khan, p. 76.

70 When Jinnah visited Punjab in June 1936 to preside over the provincial parliamentary board of the League, there were only eight to ten people to receive him at the Lahore railway station. Ibid, p. 79.
parliamentary board was to be reconstituted. The pact enabled Muslim League to break out of its moribund state in Punjab and set about acquiring a foothold in rural Punjab. There was much to be gained from the pact as far as League was concerned. The question is: what compulsions did Sikander Hyat have to sign a pact he did not need and could have easily done without? Loyalism was a strong component of Sikander Hyat’s politics and the change in League’s creed to ‘full independence’ should have acted as a deterrent. According to Emerson, the Governor of Punjab, Sikander had decided to go to Lucknow only to persuade Muslim League leadership against passing the independence resolution. Moreover, in signing a pact with Muslim League, there was also a risk to the stability of his ministry which had a sizable Hindu and Sikh component in it. Why, then, did Sikander sign the pact with Jinnah?

Many explanations have been offered. Muslim wing in the Unionist party had continued to pressurize him to approach Jinnah and have a closer relationship with Muslim League. This may have set the scene for the pact. Another possible explanation is that he may have been frightened by the increasing Congress activities in Punjab and found the right ally in Jinnah to counter the mass contact programme launched by Congress in Punjab in April 1937. Emerson, the Governor of Punjab, certainly thought so. In Emerson’s view, Nehru’s visit to Punjab in October and his strong anti-Unionist speeches drove Sikander into the camp of Jinnah. Nehru’s attack on the Punjab ministry, wrote Emerson, “has certainly caused great resentment among the

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71 Emerson’s letter to Linlithgow, 21 October 1937, IE, p. 1058.
72 Malik, Sikander Hyat Khan, p. 76.
73 M.A.H. Ispahani writes in his memoirs: “...Congress had started its mass contact campaign in the provinces including the Punjab and Muslim public opinion everywhere was veering around the Muslim League. As an astute politician, Sir Sikandar realised the potential danger to his ministry. He knew that the Unionist Ministry by itself could not withstand the tide of Congress totalitarianism, unless he secured the support of a Muslim organization functioning on an all-India level.” Ispahani, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah as I Knew Him, (Karachi, 1976), p. 50.
supporters of (Punjab) government and probably some bewilderment....” He concluded: “The outstanding impression left by Jawaharlal’s visit was that of domination and arrogance on the part of the Congress....It is this domineering and arrogant spirit which is causing most bitter resentment and which affected the Muslims most at Lucknow. I think it strongly influenced Sikander in taking the step which he has taken.”

Alternatively, it could have been an attempt to gobble up Punjab Muslim League. The pact may have subordinated Sikander Hyat to Jinnah in all India matters but it established his supremacy in Punjab by eliminating opposition and a possible source of irritation to his government. It also fitted very well with certain aspects of his politics. Components of landlordism, loyalism and quasi-communalism were intertwining elements in Sikander Hyat’s politics. The alliance with Jinnah consolidated the third without damaging the first two in any way. It may also have been an acknowledgment by Sikander Hyat of the potential strength of Muslim League under Jinnah’s leadership. Muslim League may not have been much of a force in 1937 but it certainly had a future. Therefore in aligning with it Sikander may have been guided by long term political considerations.

Finally, it was the realization by both the regional leaders, Fazlul Huq and Sikander Hyat Khan, that the all India forces could not be kept at bay for long. The federation scheme might or might not be implemented but Muslim League had started developing as a platform for Indian Muslims. The all India communal solidarity might prove too formidable for their cross-communal regional alliances and sweep Muslims under its fold. An alliance with Muslim League was perhaps the only safeguard against a strong

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74 Letter to Linlithgow, 21 October 1937, IE, p. 1056 and 1058. Ian Talbot, however, disagrees with this argument on the ground that the threat from Congress was an exaggerated one and that Muslim League was hardly in a position to provide any safeguards against it. Talbot, Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement, p. 89.
and developed communalism capable of overtaking such fragile alliances as existed in Punjab and Bengal.

3.2.3 The British Support

Yet another aspect of the League’s consolidation was a certain nod of approval and a pat on the back received from British government. The British viewed the political developments in Lucknow with great interest and felt that a powerful Muslim League could go a long way in meeting some of their political priorities.\(^{75}\) Interestingly, this was in spite of Muslim League developing an anti-imperialist platform. Also, Linlithgow, the Viceroy, had not been very favourably inclined towards Jinnah and his politics.\(^{76}\)

Then, why did the British government feel so kindly disposed towards Muslim League? What may have pleased the British about the Lucknow session was that League took a position which was totally incompatible with that of Congress. This may have established Muslim League’s status, in the British perception, as that of the enemy’s enemy. Jinnah, in his meeting with the Viceroy shortly before the Lucknow session, had impressed upon him the necessity of paying “sufficient attention” to Muslims, and warned that if the British government did not, “there was a real risk of the Muslims being driven into the arms of the Congress.”\(^{77}\) The trends at Lucknow would have convinced Linlithgow that both he and Jinnah were heading in the same political direction and whereas the anti-imperialism of Muslim League was unlikely to pose any

\(^{75}\) “I have no doubt whatever...that the significance of the (Lucknow) meeting, and the attitude adopted in it by the Muslims are of great importance,...and that its reaction on the all India politics, and the general position may, if Muslims can but hold together and work to a common policy, be expected to be considerable.” Linlithgow’s letter to Zetland, 27 October 1937, IE, p. 1075.

\(^{76}\) “I do not quite frankly feel any deep confidence in him, and I suspect he is one of those political leaders who can play a personal hand but no other, and whose permanent control on the allegiance of their followers is frequently open to question.” Linlithgow’s letter to Zetland, the Secretary of State, 9 September 1937, Ibid, p. 944.

\(^{77}\) As reported by Linlithgow in his letter to Zetland, 9 September 1937, Ibid, p. 944.
threat to the British, anti-Congressism was indeed a potent weapon in their favour. 

"From our point of view desirable an agreement between all parties may be in principle, I am not sure such a consummation is entirely to be welcomed. But the alternative - absorption of Muslims by Congress - would be equally undesirable."78

In a letter to Haig, the Viceroy wrote: "I am myself inclined to your view that (assuming always that Muslims will always hold together) the very strong and definitely communal character of the Lucknow discussions is likely to have an important bearing on future political developments."79 Linlithgow might have been hinting at the possibility that Muslim League could oppose the Congress government a lot more effectively than the British could. British government had been used to treating Congress as a protest movement. But Congress's entry into the formal structures of authority had rendered the earlier methods of handling Congress worthless and ineffectual. Specially the song Bande Mataram and the tri-colour flag had created an awkward situation for the British government. These two had, during the Congress movements, been symbols of rebellion and had been treated as such. But their status had changed overnight. Under Congress governments these became symbols of authority and government power. Bande Mataram began being sung in the Legislative Assemblies and the tri-colour flag began being hoisted on top of the government institutions. This created a problem of legitimacy for the Governors in the Congress provinces.80

78 Linlithgow to Zetland, 27 October 1937, ibid, p. 1076.

79 Letter to Haig, 28 October 1937, ibid, p. 1081.

80 The students of Allahabad University had hoisted the Congress flag on one of the hostel buildings and were planning to do so on main university building also. There was a likelihood of a strike if the Vice-chancellor, Iqbal Narayan Gurtu, disallowed this. Haig, as the Chancellor of the university, had been invited to preside over the silver jubilee celebrations of the university and both, Haig and the Vice-chancellor, were apprehensive that the students might hoist the Congress flag at the celebrations. Haig wanted to "decline to take part in any ceremony in which the Congress flag was flown in any formal manner." (Letter to Viceroy, 15 October 1937, TE, p. 1026.) But the Vice-chancellor thought that it would be "extremely
Muslim League’s resolution against the singing of Bande Mataram and the decision to launch an agitation against the unfurling of the tri-colour flag on government buildings tended to bring a sense of joy to the British government. Muslim League had taken upon itself a task which suited the British very well. Commenting on League’s resolution on Bande Mataram passed at Lucknow, Linlithgow made his position very clear: “That is all to the good from our point of view, for it is clearly preferable that the pressure should come from independent quarters rather than from Government and I am glad to think that the Muslims should appear to be waking up to the significance of the song, given its history, from their point of view. I am not without hope that a somewhat similar situation will shortly develop in regard to the Congress flag.” The interests of the two, the British government and Muslim League, had begun to coincide in a big way!

There was yet another reason for the British extending active support to Muslim League. Treating religion as a fundamental unit of division in the Indian society had been an important part of British thinking. It was also a part of their strategy of countering nationalism and nationalist politics. This strategy had evolved from late 19th
damaging to the jubilee celebrations” if Haig backed out from presiding. Linlithgow strictly forbade Haig to attend the celebrations. He reminded Haig that the tri-colour flag should be treated as the symbol of only one party and therefore “neither the Viceroy nor the Governors can in any circumstances allow themselves to be associated with any particular political party, or to appear in public at a ceremony at which a party emblem is the principal emblem flown.” (Letter to Haig, 25 October 1937, Ibid, p. 1070.) Dilemmas of this kind were to occur often during the tenure of the Congress ministry.

81 Letter to Zetland, 27 October 1937, TF, p. 1073.

century onwards and had taken many forms. In 1937 this strategy entered a new phase of extending active support to communalism. Writes Bipan Chandra:

After 1937, the British shifted from balanced to uncontrolled communalism, encouraged total communal division, gave virtually open support to the Muslim League especially in its anti-Congress role and tolerated its efforts to acquire a mass character. In the period after 1937, communalism increasingly became the only recourse of colonial authorities and their policy of divide and rule. This was because nearly all other divisions, antagonisms and divisive devices promoted and fostered earlier by the colonial authorities had lost political force and had become politically non-viable from their point of view.

Their efforts at promoting landlord unity through NAPs had crashed in the electoral arena. In the face of formidable Congress opposition Muslim League appeared as the only effective counterpoise. In the pre-Lucknow period sections within Muslim League had shown a certain pro-Congress proclivity. Now that anti-Congressism was officially asserted from its platform, the British government could provide all out support to Muslim League in its anti-Congress ventures. Therefore, supporting League was not just a question of tactical necessity but also a long term strategic design. October 1937 was by no means the starting point of the British policy of encouraging communalism, but only an important stage in the development of British policy towards communalism.

3.2.4 The Results

The offshoots of the League's consolidation did not take long in manifesting themselves. Within a space of only ten days - between 9th and 18th of December - Muslim League won three bye-elections from Moradabad, Saharanpur and Bulandshahar, getting 55, 59 and 66% of the votes, respectively. All the three were rural constituencies where League had previously not been very successful. The elections

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83 For an elaborate account of the British policy towards communalism, see Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, pp. 245-86.

84 Ibid, pp. 256-57.
were polarized between Congress and Muslim League and witnessed heavy polling. During the general elections all the three seats had gone to independent candidates. For the Bulandshahar seat, the League candidate had got only 15% of the votes as against 66% in the bye-election. The independent candidate who had won the Moradabad seat during the general elections joined Muslim League and contested the bye-election on the League ticket.85

It was also at the Lucknow session that significant changes were made in the constitution of Muslim League so as to enable it to meet its objectives. Membership fee was reduced from one rupee to two annas. The principle of indirect elections to the Council of League was introduced and the membership of the Council was increased from 310 to 465 with 70 from UP.86 It was also decided to open a women’s branch of Muslim League with the Rani of Nanpura as its president.87 A membership drive was launched which started showing good results. The UP intelligence reported a noticeable increase in the activities of Muslim League in most districts. Meetings were held to enlist members. About 3000 persons attended a meeting in Aligarh.88 By the end of the year the reported enrolment was 3000 in Gorakhpur, 2000 in Ballia, 1600 in Sultanpur and 700 in Ghazipur in east UP.89 Another 1000 were enlisted in Sitapur and 2000 in Meerut. Bareilly also responded enthusiastically to Muslim League’s campaign.90 Later, in January 1938, UP Muslim League observed a Muslim League week throughout the

85 Reeves, Elections in Uttar Pradesh, pp. 294-96.
86 Ibid, 20 October 1937.
87 488, 1937; WRPA.
88 495, 1937; ibid.
89 3 and 24, 1938; ibid.
90 14 and 24, 1938; ibid.
province in order to enrol as many members as possible. According to an estimate available with the Viceroy, a total of 174 new branches of Muslim League had been formed in the immediate post-Lucknow period all over India. Of these, as many as 90 were formed in UP. One lakh members had also been enrolled in UP.

It was emphasized at League meetings that Congress government was soon going to introduce a bill to prohibit cow slaughter and attack various other religious rights of Muslims; that Gandhi had sworn to stop cow slaughter at the point of the sword; that women in Russia lived promiscuously and Nehru wanted Indian women to live the same way, this was intolerable to Muslims. In other words, the various possible apprehensions of Muslims under a supposedly 'non-Muslim' government were stirred up by Muslim League activists, and joining League was posited as the only means through which Muslims could protect themselves from the tyranny of the 'Hindu' government. The activities of some of the local Congressmen may have also made Muslim League propaganda look credible.

However all this is not to imply that by the end of 1937 Muslim League had emerged as the representative body of Muslims or that Muslims had decisively rallied behind it. Consolidation did not necessarily mean League becoming a hegemonic force

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91 Gopinath Srivastava, When Congress Ruled, p. 108.

92 Quarterly Survey of Political and Constitutional Position in British India, No. 2, November 1937 to January 1938, p. 30, (henceforth Quarterly Survey), Linlithgow Papers, (on microfilm), Roll no. 142, NMML.

93 Meeting at Badaun, 411, 1937; WRPA.

94 Meeting at Lucknow, 4, 1938; ibid.

95 Meeting at Gonda, 3, 1938; ibid.

96 One Rameshwar Prasad Sharma along with other Congress workers visited Jhansi district and asked the villagers not to sell cows to the butchers. The intelligence reported that his efforts to stir up communal feelings were likely to cause trouble. The District Congress Committee,
among Muslims. It only meant that League, after its Lucknow session, acquired a degree of cohesion, organizational solidity and initiated a process of popularizing itself. It also meant that things began to go well for the leadership, compared to the pre-election and the immediate post-election periods when the organization appeared to be disintegrating. However, a general consolidation of a large body of Muslims under its banner was something which was yet to take place.

3.3 M.A. Jinnah: Making of an Ideologue

Today primary Leagues have been established almost in every district and every town and every village. They are gathering the precious stones, rubies, sapphires and diamonds, the scattered energies and talents of the Muslim community, and when you have got an artistic jeweler to set them it will be a jewel you will be proud of. 97

Who else but a contented Jinnah would have made this statement? And when else but at the beginning of 1938, especially after the Lucknow session and League victories in the three bye-elections? And where else but at Aligarh, a town he was to later refer to as the “arsenal of Muslim India”? Replying earlier to Ispahani’s complaints of dissensions in the ranks of Muslim League, Jinnah had expressed the hope that “we shall be able effectively to deal with it at Lucknow in a most authentic manner; it is not very far off.”98 The Lucknow session of Muslim League had lived up to his optimism and placed the League in a position from where it could build itself further.

It was indeed ironical that the League’s communal march was being led by a man who had, in the first two decades of the century, not only condemned communalism but

However, disowned all responsibility for his activities and was contemplating taking disciplinary action against him. 437, 1937; Ibid.

97 M.A. Jinnah’s speech at the Aligarh Muslim University, 5 February 1938, Jamiluddin Ahmad (ed.), Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah, vol. 1, (Lahore, 1942), p. 37.

98 Letter to Ispahani, 10 September 1937, Jinnah-Ispahani Correspondence, p. 89.
also preached, practised and upheld the values of Indian nationalism. This was indeed a
journey from one end of the spectrum of Indian politics to the other. What was it that
propelled Jinnah along this course? Two recent works on Jinnah offer very different
explanations. Ayesha Jalal’s work, well known for its dramatic statement on the roles
played by Congress and Jinnah in the high politics of India’s partition - “It was
Congress that insisted on partition. It was Jinnah who was against partition” - has
attempted to hit the conventional wisdom on partition on its head. Her central argument,
that Jinnah did not want partition, that he was merely using it as a bargaining counter to
gain concessions from Congress leadership, certainly has the merit of novelty.
Her contention that practising communal politics for Jinnah was a mere “political tactic” and
not any “ideological commitment”, though a lot less novel and contentious, does go
some way in explaining the crucial question of Jinnah’s transformation. Having divested
Jinnah’s communalism, so pronounced particularly in the post-1937 period, of any
ideological content, and relegated it to the realm of a mere “tactic”, Jalal refuses to see
any sharp breaks in Jinnah’s politics, ideology and political goals. The only things that

Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan, (Cambridge, 1985).

100 Jalal, The Sole Spokesman, p. 262. Also, “So absolute partition was Congress’s order of
the day.” Ibid, p. 280. However, the preceding and following discussion in her narrative makes it quite clear that it was not the partition of India but that of Bengal and Punjab that was being debated and discussed. And it was no great discovery made by Jalal that Jinnah was against the partition of the two Muslim majority provinces. He wanted to include the two undivided provinces in his Pakistan. Congress, on the other hand, insisted that, in the eventuality of India being partitioned, Punjab and Bengal too would have to be partitioned since the two provinces contained a significant proportion of non-Muslim population. Through a clever manipulation of words and the context, Jinnah’s opposition to the partition of the provinces has been portrayed by Jalal as his opposition to partition per se. It is in this way that a fairly old and conventional argument has been made to look like a sensationally novel thesis.

101 Her reviewer, Francis Robinson, credits Jalal with having provided “hard evidence” to the
“old speculation” that Pakistan was merely a bargaining counter rather than a non-negotiable aim. Modern Asian Studies, 20, 1, 1986, pp. 611-18.

102 Jalal, The Sole Spokesman, p. 5.
changed were his tactics and strategy. By insisting that no ideological transformation occurred in Jinnah’s career, Jalal gets away without having to address herself to perhaps the most important question of Jinnah’s political career, viz., the contradictory positions occupied by Jinnah during the initial and latter years.

Briefly, Jalal’s argument is that there was much in common between Jinnah’s political priorities and those of Congress. Aspirants for all India structures of political power, both had a common interest in combating the “particularist” political formations being thrown up at the provincial level. Hoping to be together with Congress in the common pursuit, Jinnah suffered a major shock in 1937 when his “overtures” to Congress were “rebuffed” by the latter. This forced Jinnah to redefine his tactics. Although still looking to share power at the centre, Jinnah put forward his demand for Pakistan, hoping that this would compel both the British government and Congress to take his claims seriously. But an insistence by the Congress leaders on a quick transfer of power, and the failure by Mountbatten to fully understand the “inwardness of Jinnah’s true aims, mistaking Jinnah’s shadow for the substance of his demands”, created conditions which led to the partition of the sub-continent.

Needless to say, there are many problems with Jalal’s thesis. To explain a momentous event like the creation of Pakistan as purely the result of a ‘default’ is too preposterous to be acceptable. Her claim that the partition of India occurred even though

103 See Asim Roy, “The High Politics of India’s Partition: The Revisionist Perspective” in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), India’s Partition, p. 110. In this review article of Jalal’s book, Roy constructs two historiographic trends on the partition - orthodox and revisionist, and lumps the entire body of scholarly works in the former category. He, then, posits Jalal’s work in the “revisionist perspective”, as a corrective to all that had been written before. Ibid, pp. 102-32.

104 Jalal, The Sole Spokesman, p. 4. This snubbing by Congress in 1937 is, however, a fairly conventional explanation for the League’s break with Congress, and does not befit those providing a ‘revisionist perspective’ to the existing knowledge on the subject. The question of “overtures” by Jinnah and their “rebuffing” by Congress has been examined in Chapter 2.

none of the principal actors - the British government, Jinnah and Congress - wanted it, does tremendous injustice to the larger social and political forces which went into its making. The creation of Pakistan should best be understood as the product of the ideology of communalism and a political mobilisational process through which this ideology was transformed into an irresistible social force. Jinnah played a crucial role in the articulation and transmission of this ideology. It is simply not important whether Jinnah wanted or did not want the partition. What is more important is what he was saying and doing through the 1940s. Also, Jinnah's involvement with politics was not just confined to negotiations and high politics. He played a much more important role as a mobilizer and an ideologue. Jalal seems quite oblivious to this facet of Jinnah's politics. Indeed there is little space for the role of ideology in her discourse.

Secondly, her contention that as a “centrist” leader Jinnah had much more in common with Congress than with the regional leadership might be a valid argument in so much as it explains Jinnah’s relationship with the regionalists. But it does not establish the case of a common cause with Congress. As actors in the all India arena of politics, Jinnah may have had the same ‘aim’ as Congress, but this did not amount to having common ‘interests’. The point is that people with a common ‘aim’ do not necessarily and automatically become allies. It is more likely that they become competitors and rivals. Throughout the 1930s and later, Jinnah and Congress emerged as contestants and competitors rather than political allies. Aspiring to control the ‘Muslim space’ with their separate mass contact programmes, Jinnah and Congress fought each other precisely because they had a common aim and not despite it. In fact, Anita Inder

Singh's argument that the Congress leaders did not fully realize the extent to which Jinnah differed from them acquires tremendous significance in this context.  

Thirdly, the claim that Jinnah was in any way trying to reach out to Congress leadership is simply not true. There is no evidence for this claim and plenty of evidence on the contrary. As has been stated earlier in Chapter two, the opposition to the federation scheme did not bring Jinnah near Congress. He did not articulate his opposition to the federation scheme from Congress platform or in a language resembling that of the Congress. Earlier, he had made his differences with Congress very clear at the Round Table Conference in 1931 by suggesting that the British should satisfy the aspirations of "those parties who have checked, held in abeyance the party that stands for complete independence." He reminded Nehru in early 1937 that the Muslim India constituted a third force which would not rally behind either Congress or British. He warned the Congress to leave Muslims alone. He castigated Khaliquzzaman for hobnobbing with Congress. He resisted the efforts of some of Muslim Leaguers in UP to bring League closer to Congress. He reprimanded Congress leadership for contesting the Muslim seats in the bye elections and frowned upon the Muslim mass contact programme launched by the Congress leadership. In fact, ever since he left Congress in 1920 on account of serious differences with Gandhi, there was nothing in his political behaviour to suggest a desire to return to Congress fold. In 1929, he declared a "parting of the ways" with Congress. Jalal's argument that Jinnah had meant his parting with

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108 Quoted from the proceedings of the Indian Round Table Conference in ibid, p. 194.
Congress to be temporary, hoping to finally return to 'his' organization, remains at best a conjecture, devoid of any empirical backing. In Jalal’s treatment, there has been a definite glossing over of Jinnah’s strenuous efforts to charter a separate political path for himself throughout the 1920s.

Returning to the theme of Jinnah’s transformation, one finds Wolpert’s biography of Jinnah a lot more responsive to this question than Jalal. The various shifts in Jinnah’s political career have been taken up adequately and elaborately, though not always accounted for, by Wolpert. The strength of his book lies in its active involvement with three very crucial themes of Jinnah’s career - his early nationalism, a gradual transition to communal politics, and finally his crusading for the cause of Pakistan.

But the real merit of Wolpert’s book lies in its forceful denunciation of the myth that Jinnah did not want Pakistan. He is able to demonstrate, with the help of British records, Jinnah’s own utterances and activities, statements of British officials and the comments of contemporary observers, that Jinnah was pursuing his Pakistan idea with a single minded determination and would scuttle any proposal (e.g., Rajaji formula of 1944 and Bhulabhai Desai-Liaqat Ali pact of 1945) which fell short of accepting Pakistan in principle. Had Jinnah wanted to use Pakistan as a bargaining counter, there were many opportunities for him to do so, but he consciously rejected all of them as they did not offer an independent Pakistan to him.

However, Wolpert’s book is guilty of portraying Jinnah almost to the exclusion of the larger context in which he was operating, i.e., the structure of Muslim League

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politics. In other words, Jinnah has been shown to be far too independent in making his political choices. Having assigned to Jinnah the status of being the maker of his own destiny and that of Indian Muslims, Wolpert tends to overlook the role of the organization of which Jinnah was the leader and also fails to locate Jinnah in the changing contexts of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

To come back to the question, Jinnah's transformation can best be understood by turning the focus on (a) Jinnah's own evolution in the changing political context of the first four decades of the century, and (b) the changing texture of 'Muslim politics' in this period necessarily influencing anybody who was operating within it. In other words, a closer look at Jinnah, 'Muslim politics', and the general political context in the first four decades of the century might contain a clue to the mystery of Jinnah's transformation.

Peter Hardy has suggested that the formation of the All India Muslim League in 1906 with official blessings and the introduction of separate electorates for Muslims through the Indian Council Act, 1909, "laid out the arena for Muslim political activity in British India." In years to come, the question of separate electorates was to remain the single most important issue around which 'Muslim politics' was to articulate itself. Similarly, Muslim League was to be the most important, though not the only, platform on which the contentious issues concerning Muslims of India were to be debated and discussed. These two developments (formation of Muslim League and the creation of separate electorates) also signified the important role British policy was going to play in the unfolding and the evolution of 'Muslim politics' in India.


112 As mentioned earlier, the term ‘Muslim politics’ is contentious and should, therefore, be used with great caution. Quite often terms like Muslim League politics, Muslim politics and Muslim communal politics tend to be employed somewhat interchangeably. It is important to keep in mind that these terms cannot substitute each other, at least not till 1937. There was a lot more to Muslim politics than just Muslim League politics, and every shade of dominant
Jinnah, to begin with, located himself outside this arena of politics. It is fairly well known that Jinnah, at the beginning of his political career, was a staunch Congressman and did not have anything to do with Muslim League for the first seven years of its existence. At the 1910 session of Congress at Allahabad, he was the mover of the important resolution condemning separate electorates.\textsuperscript{113} He had also opposed the Act of 1909, containing separate electorates, and had warned that, as a result of the reforms, Hindus and Muslims would drift away from each other, which would be to the detriment of both.\textsuperscript{114} When he finally joined Muslim League in 1913, he made it quite clear that

Muslim politics was not communal in the sense in which it became after 1940. Yet there was a certain degree of overlap in these categories. However, after 1937 these terms did become synonymous, as would be examined in this chapter.

There is perhaps another justification for the use of the term Muslim politics. The official acknowledgment of Muslims as a political category from 1909 onwards did result in politics being organized around religious lines. The term ‘Muslim politics’ continued to be inclusive of various constituencies in politics e.g., loyalty, landlordism, communalism, nationalism etc. Quite often, these constituencies expressed themselves in different political formations, although within the large gamut of ‘Muslim politics’. Sometimes they also tended to merge into each other. It should however be remembered that merely the contextual creation of the categories of Muslim politics, Muslim interests etc., did not lead to their ‘objectification’, i.e., these categories did not become real.

Finally, there is yet another advantage in the use of the term. Till 1937, a large number of Muslims did not decisively commit themselves to either nationalism or communalism, integration or separatism, loyalty or anti-imperialism. Their politics remained unclear, open ended and mostly in grey arenas. They made experiments with different kinds of politics and wandered around in the political corridors of uncertainty. It was a melting pot situation and the only definite aspect of their politics was that it was located firmly within the gamut of ‘Muslim politics’. To understand and explain this politics, the term ‘Muslim politics’ comes in quite handy.

\textsuperscript{113} Kailash Chander, \textit{The Tragedy of Jinnah}, (Lahore, 1941), p. 38.

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Ibid}, p. 12. In yet another forceful denunciation of the separate electorate, Jinnah wrote to the Viceroy: “To single out 62 million from a population of 300 million for exclusive and exceptional treatment on account of their religion would be an attempt impolite enough to be perilous. If the Mohammedans under special and exceptional circumstances require their proper rights to be safeguarded by special measures, the same consideration and protection should be offered to the Hindus under similar circumstances. To leave the Mohammedan majority where it exists, and to seek to provide checks against the Hindu majority alone must, to the latter, appear an act of intolerance on the part of the government, which they are entitled to resent.... they (the Hindus) have every sympathy with the Mohammedan aspirations and feel bound to point out that these aspirations have never been ignored but always been promoted by the political activities of the Hindus and other communities.... It is not honest and fair to the Mohammedans to encourage delusive hopes and keep them in darkness as to the true cause of
this should not imply “even the shadow of disloyalty to larger national cause to which his life was dedicated.” Indeed it is quite likely that he may have been persuaded by his Congress colleagues to join Muslim League in order to strengthen the nationalist group in League.

It was with the Lucknow Pact of 1916 that Jinnah made his formal entry into the world of ‘Muslim politics’. Under Jinnah’s initiatives, Muslim League was transformed from a loyalist party into an organization desirous of self government. Jinnah could claim in 1917 that as a result of his efforts “in its general outlook and ideals as regards the future, the All India Muslim League stands abreast of the Indian National Congress and is ready to participate in any patriotic effort for the advancement of the country as a whole.” In March 1919, he tendered his resignation from the Imperial Legislative Council as a protest against the passing of the Rowlatt Bill. The Lucknow pact, it should be remembered, was not just the result of the efforts of men like Jinnah and Tilak. It was also the product of a certain political climate which was marked by a shift in the British priorities. The support to the Aligarh movement, sympathetic treatment of the Simla their backwardness of which they are becoming conscious and for which the remedy is largely in their own hands.” Quoted in ibid, pp. 38-39.

V.N. Naik, Jinnah: A Political Study, p. 4.

115 Lucknow pact was signed between Congress and League at their joint session held in 1916. Separate electorates were formally accepted by Congress. Muslims were given weightage in the legislative bodies in the provinces where they were in a minority. The weightage given was double their proportion in the population in those provinces. Muslim League, in return, agreed to give weightage to non-Muslim minorities in the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal. The Muslim share in Punjab and Bengal was to be 50% and 40%, respectively. Thus as a result of giving weightage to Hindus, the Muslims lost their majority status in Bengal, though this did not happen in Punjab where they retained half the seats. Muslim representation at the centre was fixed to be not less than one third. The importance of the Lucknow pact lay in the fact that most of the principles were incorporated in the GOI Act of 1919. This was the first and the last formal agreement between the two organizations. Jinnah had played a crucial part in bringing the two together. The essence of the pact lay in the mutual acknowledgment by both, of each other’s capacity as the representative organizations of Hindus and Muslims respectively. This was to have implications for the future.

deputation led by Aga Khan, formation of Muslim League with official blessings and
the introduction of separate electorates were all symptoms of a certain alliance that was
building between the British government and the Muslim elites. But there was also an
increasing awareness among the Muslim elites that the government favour was being
gradually withdrawn. The fear that the policy of protectionism, practised hitherto, might
give way to an open competition must have created anxiety among Muslim landlords
and professional men. The 1892 Council Act, the Nagri resolution and finally the
annulment of the partition of Bengal drove home the shift in the government priorities.
Britain’s open hostility to Turkey after 1911 reinforced these fears.\textsuperscript{118} The lesson was
obvious: the alliance with the government had reached a point of saturation and this
necessitated the need to look for new allies. To quote Robinson: “Seen in this light the
All India Muslim League’s move towards the Congress from 1913 makes good sense. It
explains why Muslims should have been such active parties in the rapprochment and
why two years later they should have been the initiators of the deal with the Congress
over political reform.”\textsuperscript{119} The idea behind looking for reasons other than Jinnah’s
initiatives is not to belittle his efforts but merely to emphasize the context in which he
was operating. Jinnah’s political fate was inexorably tied up with the fate of ‘Muslim
politics’ and often the shifts in his politics reflected the shifting concerns of the larger
world of ‘Muslim politics’. (Jinnah’s attitude towards the Khilafat agitation would be a
notable exception. It might be argued that the process of Jinnah’s integration into
‘Muslim politics’ was still in its infancy, allowing a certain autonomy of action to
Jinnah.)

\textsuperscript{118} Francis Robinson, \textit{Separatism Among Indian Muslims}, p. 349.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Ibid}, p. 350.
However, two developments in the years 1918-19 proved to be of crucial significance in Jinnah's transformation. One was the emergence of Gandhi on the political scene and the second was the declaration of the Government of India Act of 1919. Their cumulative impact was to result in Jinnah's estrangement from the nationalist politics and his relative marginalisation from politics in general. Under Gandhi's leadership, Congress began to break out of its moderate phase and enter into a new - more radical - phase. Constitutionalism was to give way to agitation and non-cooperation. Also the process of the transformation of the Congress into a mass organization was set in motion. Jinnah, representing the politics of 19th century moderates, displayed an almost instinctive aversion to Gandhian methods. Jinnah had assumed the leadership of the Bombay branch of All India Home Rule League after the internment of its leader, Annie Besant, in 1917. Presiding over its session in 1920, Gandhi changed its name to Swaraj Sabha, the Hindi equivalent of Home Rule League. This was done, Gandhi explained, to enlarge its appeal "beyond the English speaking few to Hindi speaking many."\textsuperscript{120} The aim of the Sabha was changed from self-government within the British empire to "complete Swaraj for India according to the wishes of the Indian people." Jinnah, quite characteristically, tried to urge the necessity of constitutional methods and a moderate programme, and, failing to do that, resigned in October 1920. The Congress session at Nagpur in December 1920 witnessed another clash between the two. Jinnah resisted Gandhi's recommendations of initiating the non-cooperation against the government and declared: "Your way is the wrong way, mine is the right way. The constitutional way is the right way."\textsuperscript{121} But Gandhi prevailed over Congress. Jinnah was the only major dissentient to the resolution supporting the non-

\textsuperscript{120} Hector Bolitho,\textit{ Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan}, p. 83.

\textsuperscript{121}\textit{Ibid}, p. 85.
cooperation. Jinnah's was a lonely voice among 14582 delegates, with 1050 Muslims. This may have been the last straw.

Significantly, Jinnah was not the only one to disapprove of the new changes. The entire generation of the liberal moderate leaders found themselves quite out of place in the new Congress. S.N.Banerjea, T.B.Sapru, Jayaker, Chintamani, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri as also Annie Besant disapproved of Gandhian methods and as a result got distanced from Congress. But Jinnah may have been the most determined of the whole lot. He was also one of the few who took recourse not to secular liberalism but liberal communalism. When Gandhi wrote to him, inviting him to return to take his share in “the new life that had opened up before the country”, Jinnah refused:

If by new life, you mean your methods, and your programme, I am afraid I cannot accept them, for I am fully convinced that it must lead to disaster.... Your methods already caused split and division in almost every institution that you have approached hitherto ...people generally are desperate all over the country and your extreme programme has for the moment struck the imagination mostly of the inexperienced youth and the ignorant and the illiterate. All this means complete disorganisation and complete chaos. What the consequence of this may be - I shudder to contemplate.

Jinnah left Congress, never to return to it.

The second important development was the declaration of the GOI Act, 1919. Creation of ‘dyarchy’ and an increase in the franchise gave a much greater measure of autonomy to provinces - legislative, administrative and financial - than they enjoyed ever before. The Act was therefore a swinging of the political pendulum to the provincial arena “just as their authors intended”, the intention being to “lock politics out

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122 Letter to Jinnah, 25 October 1920, CWMG, Vol. 18, p. 372. Noticing Jinnah's estrangement, Gandhi had also written to Ruttie, Jinnah's wife, to “...coax him (Jinnah) to learn Hindustani or Gujarati. If I were you, I should begin to talk to him in Gujarati.... Will you do it?” Letter to Mrs. Jinnah, ibid, Vol. 17, p. 361.

123 Mohammad Ali, Quaid-i-Azam as a Constitutionalist, p. 18.
of the centre.” The result was the taking over of political reigns by provincial bosses, though only in the Muslim majority provinces. Jinnah became marginalised. The developments in Congress had pushed Jinnah to the periphery of nationalist politics when he lost the battle to Gandhi. The Act of 1919 pushed him further into insignificance, as now he had to compete with the provincial leaders from Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah, seeking an all India constituency in politics but clearly out of the all India organization had to perforce go into oblivion. The only alternative for him was to try and build an alternative all India platform but the circumstances did not allow this as a significant part of his ‘Muslim’ constituency was busy fighting the Khilafat battle under the leadership of Gandhi.

The years 1923-24 were of some consequence to Jinnah as they seemed to provide a much needed elbow space for him to make an entry into his lost fort. The non-cooperation was withdrawn, the Khilafat alliance broke down and in 1923 “Muslims lost the power to dictate Congress policy, and the Muslim front in Indian politics fell to pieces.” The 1924 session of Muslim League was held in Bombay, Jinnah’s city. From 1924 onwards, Muslim League sessions began to articulate a series of issues and demands regarding the future constitution of India, which were to form the cornerstone of Muslim League’s political existence for many years to come. Separate electorates and one third representation for Muslims in the legislatures had been agreed upon at

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125 The Act of 1919 also shifted the centre of gravity from the towns to rural areas by creating rural constituencies and extending franchise to rural population. This promoted landlordism. (Jalal and Seal, “Alternative to Partition”, p. 425.) Landlordism tended to cut across purely communal solidarities in politics. It remained a dominant force in the Indian politics till 1937. Jinnah may have lost out, not just because of ‘provincialisation’ but also because of landlordism which pushed forward leaders like Fuzli Husain in Punjab.

126 Robinson, Separatism Among Indian Muslims, p. 5.
Lucknow in 1916. These were ratified at the League sessions. Some new demands were added to it. Retention of the majority status for Muslims in the provinces of Punjab and Bengal (Lucknow pact did not provide this) and the creation of new Muslim majority provinces of NWFP\textsuperscript{127} and Sind\textsuperscript{128} were significant additions. Also it was being demanded that any constitutional reforms in India should be based on a federal basis, with maximum autonomy for the provinces and minimum authority to be exercised at the centre.\textsuperscript{129} In years to come these were to become the linchpin of Muslim League’s political agenda and the basis on which any settlement could take place. Jinnah, at this stage, represented a trend in Muslim League which was willing to compromise on the question of separate electorates provided other conditions were met.

Although Jinnah had managed to regain a foothold into politics, there were many more crucial decisions to take. One important question was: who should be his allies in politics? A polarization of politics along communal lines and the emergence of communalism as a formidable force created a dilemma. He witnessed Motilal Nehru, his most likely constitutional ally, fight a losing battle against the Hindu communal combine of Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya and often giving into Hindu communal pressure.\textsuperscript{130} He might well have dreaded the prospects of undertaking a similar battle with Muslim communalism, with even worse results. The other


\textsuperscript{128} Resolution no. xiii at the 17th session of the AIML held at Aligarh in December 1925, \textit{ibid}, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{129} R.J.Moore, "The Making of India’s Paper Federation, 1927-35", in Phillips and Wainwright, \textit{The Partition of India}, p. 56.

\textsuperscript{130} For a perceptive analysis of these developments, see David Page, \textit{Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control}, (Oxford, 1982), pp. 129-40. For Motilal Nehru’s compromises in Punjab and Bengal, see pp. 129-31; for attacks on him from the Hindu communal quarters, see p. 135; and for Motilal Nehru’s own dilemma, see p. 139.
alternative, that of pushing ahead the bogey of Muslim communalism (which he did with remarkable frankness after 1937), contained the risk of decisively parting company with Motilal Nehru, something Jinnah may not have been prepared to venture at this stage. Yet another alternative, that of completely going over to Motilal Nehru (given their constitutional proclivities), was rendered unfeasible, as it implied practically abandoning his ‘Muslim politics’, a project very dear to him. Jinnah’s predicament in this period has been captured very well by David Page:

..the further he (Jinnah) moved towards Congress dissidents, the further he moved away from the most powerful elements in the League. This was a paradox which could not be resolved. To support Nehru was to support a policy of non-co-operation and Hindu-Muslim unity: To support his opponents was to support a policy of co-operation and Hindu-Muslim antagonism. Jinnah could not have his cake and eat it.\(^{131}\)

Jinnah, therefore, opted for the middle path. The Delhi proposals,\(^ {132}\) initiated by Jinnah, were essentially an attempt to retain acceptability among the nationalist circles without getting isolated in Muslim League. The essence of the Delhi proposals was that separate electorates could be dispensed with if the ‘feared’ disadvantages of joint electorates for Muslims could be neutralized. In other words, Muslims could be persuaded to give up their insistence on separate electorates, provided they did not have to pay too high a price for it. It was a scheme of retaining the possible political advantages of separate electorates without actually having it. So, if one third representation for Muslims in the central legislature, retaining the Muslim majority in

\(^{131}\) Ibid, p. 126.

\(^{132}\) For a detailed account of the Delhi proposals, see Mushirul Hasan, “The Communal Divide : A Study of the Delhi Proposals”, in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India, pp. 281-301. The importance of the proposals lay in the fact that for the first time a substantial gathering of Muslims agreed to forego separate electorates if certain other demands were accepted.
the provincial legislatures of the delicately balanced provinces of Punjab and Bengal\textsuperscript{133}, creation of a new Muslim majority province of Sind by separating it from Bombay Presidency, and the extension of the new reforms to the Frontier Province and Baluchistan could be guaranteed, separate electorates could be done away with. The Delhi proposals were accepted by Congress at its Madras session and this paved the way for their inclusion in the proposed draft constitution.

The declaration of the ‘all white’ Simon Commission, constituted to review the GOI Act of 1919, led to a split in the ranks of Muslim League between those who wished to boycott the Commission (Jinnah group) and others, led by Mohammad Shafi, a prominent Muslim Leaguer from Punjab, who felt that they should instead present the ‘Muslim case’ before the Commission and cooperate with it (Shafi group). The two groups held different sessions in Calcutta and Lahore. The Calcutta session of Muslim League, attended among others by Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Maulana Azad and Madan Mohan Malaviya, ratified the Delhi proposals and diluted them further by not insisting on retaining Muslim majority in Punjab and Bengal Legislative Councils. The Punjab Leaguers were conspicuous by their absence and were formally dissociated from the parent body by the Calcutta League. Certain dissenting voices, protesting against a hasty acceptance of joint electorates, were silenced by Maulana Azad who emphasized

\textsuperscript{133} According to the census of 1921, Muslims constituted 55.3% of the total population of Punjab with Hindus and Sikhs consisting of 31.8% and 11.1%, respectively. For Bengal, Muslim and Hindu proportion of population stood at 54% and 43.3%, respectively. Punjab and Bengal were different from other provinces in the sense that here the majority had only a slender numerical advantage. This had serious implications for the allotment of seats to different religious groups in the legislatures. If weightage was provided to Hindu and Sikh minorities, Muslims would certainly lose their majority status. If seats were reserved for Hindu and Sikh minorities strictly according to their proportion of population, Muslims would still lose their majority status because of disproportionate allotment of seats to Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians. If, on the other hand, the majority status of Muslims was to be retained, it would deprive Hindu and Sikh minorities of their legitimate share in the legislatures. Makers of Nehru Report were thus confronted with the formidable task of trying to retain Muslim majority in these legislatures without reducing the share of the minorities.
the advantages of the new proposals for Muslims. The new proposals, declared Maulana, acknowledged the numerical strength of Muslims for the first time. The Delhi proposals gave the Muslims "five provinces, of which no less than three (Sind, the Frontier Province and Baluchistan) contained a real overwhelming Muslim majority. If the Muslims did not recognize this great step, they were not fit to live. There would now be nine Hindu provinces against five Muslim provinces; and whatever treatment Hindus accorded Muslims in the nine provinces, Muslims would accord the same treatment to Hindus in the five provinces. Was not this a great gain?" 134

The Calcutta session was indeed a high point of political generosity displayed by Muslim League. Never before (and certainly never after) had Muslim League agreed to make such substantial concessions. Separate electorates were dropped and majority for Punjab and Bengal was not referred to. There was a resolution against any conversion by force or by means of "material inducement", or of minor boys, unless accompanied by the conversion of the parents and the family. The Calcutta League agreed to conversion only by "faith and persuasion." The resolution also showed an accommodating spirit on the questions of music before mosque and cow slaughter. 135

The Lahore session of Muslim League, presided by Mohammad Shafi and attended among others by Iqbal and Hasrat Mohani, rejected the Delhi proposals. 136 Iqbal moved a resolution deploring the loss of Muslim majority in Punjab and Bengal legislatures and "urged the Government to remove this injustice done to the Muslims...." 137 This was


135 Ibid, pp. 120-21.

136 Resolution II, Lahore session of AIML held in December 1927, ibid, p. 135. This was in spite of the fact that Mohammad Shafi had attended the Muslim Conference which had recommended the Delhi proposals. Ibid, pp. 118-19.

137 Resolution vi, ibid, p. 135.
passed unanimously. The session also affirmed its commitment to separate electorates, creation of Sind and reforms in Frontier Province and Baluchistan.

The All Parties Conference held in Delhi made agreement difficult. Although Malaviya had been won over to Congress position at Madras, it was B.S. Moonje, a Hindu Mahasabhaite from Maharashtra, who put up a stiff opposition to the separation of Sind and other issues. Jinnah retaliated by reiterating the Delhi proposals. The deadlock that followed could not be resolved. The resultant Nehru Report\textsuperscript{138} was a compromise formula, meeting the demands of various groups half way, not even attempting the impossible task of satisfying both Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha.

In fairness to Jinnah, it was perhaps not possible for him to dilute the Delhi proposals further, without being completely cut off from his bastion of ‘Muslim constituency’. The Delhi proposals had been accepted by the Calcutta League only because of the absence of the likely opponents holding their session at Lahore. Jinnah was aware that League, in its full strength, could not be persuaded to give up separate electorates, and he had made it clear at the Calcutta session of the League.\textsuperscript{139} Already,

\textsuperscript{138} Nehru Report was prepared by a committee of thirteen people headed by Motilal Nehru. Some of its recommendations were Dominion Status, joint electorates, adult universal suffrage, reservations for Muslims where in minority with right to contest additional seats but no weightage, no reservation for any group -whether majority or minority - in Punjab and Bengal, separation of Sind from Bombay and its constitution into a separate province and reservation for Muslims in the central legislatures in accordance with their population with right to contest additional seats. Ravinder Kumar and Haridev Sharma (ed.), \textit{Selected Works of Motilal Nehru}, Vol. 6, (New Delhi, 1994), pp. 7-96. For sections dealing with the communal question, see pp. 26-48.

\textsuperscript{139} “We have got a majority in this house, but shall we be able to carry the majority in the country? Nothing will please me more, but at the same time, it will be fair to say that I am not so sure that I am satisfied that the majority of Musalmans throughout the country are in favour of it (the Delhi proposals). That remains to be decided; and it will be our business to try our best to make the people understand and to convince them, to carry them with us, because on merits, I am convinced that this proposal is the finest thing that can happen to Musalmans and to India.” Jinnah’s speech at the Calcutta session of Muslim League, Pirzada (ed.), \textit{Foundation of Pakistan}, Vol. 2, p. 123.
within two months of the declaration of the Delhi proposals, some of the members had backed out and the proposals had been rejected by “every important provincial group” among Muslims.\footnote{Page, Prelude to Partition, p. 149.} Jinnah understood perfectly well that there was no room for him to retreat further without irretrievably losing the key to ‘Muslim politics’.

The Congress leadership, on their part, had gone as far as to neutralize Malaviya’s opposition. Motilal Nehru’s experience would have dictated that this was the greatest hurdle to cross. But the main opposition to the Delhi proposals came from Moonje of Mahasabha, over whom Congress had no control. It was not possible to appease him; he could only be ignored.

Jinnah, who was away in England when the Nehru Report was released, made a final bid, on his return, for inclusion of the Delhi proposals, but to no avail. Dejected and disappointed he retreated to the ‘shell’. Waiting for him eagerly in the ‘shell’ were Agha Khan, Mohammad Shafi, Fuzli Husain, Mohammad Ali and many ex-khilafatists, disillusioned with Congress. This, then, was the background to the formation of All India Muslim Conference.\footnote{For information on the All India Muslim Conference, see K.K.Aziz (ed.), The All India Muslim Conference: A Documentary Record, (Karachi, 1972).} The Conference was a weaving together of different strands within ‘Muslim politics’, which had got distanced from one another. So, constitutionalists like Jinnah, ex-khilafatists like Ali brothers and collaborationists like Shafi and Agha Khan assembled together on the same platform. Jinnah was a feather in their cap and, after a phase of uncertainty, they would have been glad to retrieve him from the clutches of nationalist rebels agitating for independence. They would have undoubtedly been poorer without his services. Jinnah, on his part, declared a ‘parting of the ways’ with Congress and formulated the famous fourteen points which put the
Muslim communal demands firmly on a platform, free from any ambiguity and representing a greater consensus than ever before.

Two questions arise at this stage. Why did Jinnah perform a volte face? Why did the Nehru Report not accept the Delhi proposals? To take up the first question first. Nehru Report, it is now clear, did not produce a uniform response among Muslims, differently placed as they were in the provinces of Punjab, Bengal and UP. The strongest criticism of the Nehru Report came from the ‘Muslim bloc’ in UP where the opposition was to Dominion Status and the Report’s strong advocacy of a strong unitary centre as against a federal one. Given the fact that the proposals regarding Sind, Frontier Province and Baluchistan were included, and the Muslim majority in Punjab and Bengal was virtually ensured because of the introduction of adult franchise, why was Jinnah still opposed to the Nehru Report? The answer is perhaps to be found in the kind of politics Jinnah represented and its incompatibility with the general political context outside. ‘Muslim politics’, mild nationalism (mild by Congress standards in 1928-29) and liberal constitutionalism were the intertwined strands, like overlapping circles, which had dominated Jinnah’s politics. After his relative detachment from Congress and the collapse of Khilafat, he proceeded cautiously to seek allies and create acceptability for his kind of politics. He would have been happy to perform the role of a vigilant critic, if included in the Simon Commission. But Irwin gave him no importance, as he understood, after the split in Muslim League, that Jinnah was no longer the key figure in ‘Muslim politics’. The other alternative was Congress. Jinnah may not have been important to Congress, but he was the key man in the gamut of ‘Muslim politics’ if

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143 Page, *Prelude to Partition*, p. 165.
negotiations with Congress were to take place. But a shift to Congressism required a price to pay. This then was the dilemma. The Delhi proposals contained the possible advantage of an alliance with Congress, but also the very real risk of Jinnah losing his key position in 'Muslim politics'. Once Nehru Report lapsed and became a dead letter, Jinnah's prestige sank further. It became clear that for concessions they would have to look towards the British which meant negotiating with the Simon Commission. This was the victory of the 'Sha fi path' as against the 'Jinnah path'. And the key person for pursuing this line of action was Fuzli Husain. The Simon Commission, unlike Nehru Report, did not commit itself to the separation of Sind and ruled out the granting of the status of a province to the Frontier Province and Baluchistan. The report of the Simon Commission also did not propose the retaining of the majority status for Muslims in Punjab and Bengal. In other words, the Simon Commission accepted much less of the Delhi proposals than did the Nehru Report. But Fuzli Husain played his role a lot more successfully vis-à-vis the British than Jinnah could vis-à-vis Congress. David Page gives an interesting account of how Fuzli Husain used his position, his Punjab connection, proximity to the Viceroy and promises of support to the government in future, to ensure suitable amendments in the Report. The report of the Simon Commission, when it was released, went a long way in meeting the fourteen points, articulated from the platform of All India Muslim Conference. Jinnah's role in all this was no more than formulating the fourteen points.

This entire political experience contained significant lessons for Jinnah. As far as gaining concessions was concerned, it was the British connection and the politics of collaboration that paid; the politics of nationalism, very much the salt of Jinnah's grain, did not. Fuzli Husain's negotiations with the British government proved more effective

144 Page, Prelude to Partition, pp. 208-15.
than Jinnah’s boycott of the Simon Commission. Moreover, Indian nationalism had, during 1928-29, taken a decisive step forward by declaring unambiguously for ‘complete independence’. Jinnah’s liberal constitutionalism which, unlike Motilal Nehru’s, admitted of greater proximity to the British, could no longer be accommodated in the new Indian nationalism desiring a total severance from the British connection. (Jinnah would declare for independence only in 1937, under very different circumstances.) Chasing a rapidly marching Indian nationalism, while carrying the baggage of ‘Muslim politics’, was proving to be difficult and the gap between the two was increasing. On the other hand, within his own house, he faced the risk of being outsmarted by others. The alternative left for Jinnah was to play their game and beat them at it.

In brief, Jinnah’s crisis was that, in the context of 1928-29, it was no longer possible to carry on ‘Muslim politics’ and combine it with the politics of liberal constitutionalism and Indian nationalism. These three strands became the principal contenders for Jinnah’s political proclivity. In this process, Indian nationalism increasingly found itself being edged out by the politics of Muslim exclusivism in Jinnah’s political universe. This was also the larger dilemma facing many others. It was proving to be increasingly difficult to pursue Indian nationalism and exclusively ‘Muslim politics’ together. The two had acquired a different logic and followed very different (though not as yet antagonistic) political trajectories. The choices were becoming clearer, and joining both was certainly not one of them. It is therefore not a coincidence that the scenario of prominent Muslims being the members of both Congress and Muslim League, so common in the 1920s, became a rarity in the 1930s.145

145 M.C.Chagla in Bombay Presidency; Saifuddin Kichhlu in Punjab; Hakim Ajmal Khan in Delhi; and Wazir Hasan, Ali brothers, T.A.K.Sherwani and Nawab Ismail Khan among others in UP were members of both the organizations. In Bengal also, there were many Congressmen
The second question (Why did the Nehru Report not accept the Delhi proposals?) can be understood only by grasping the complex nature of contemporary politics in which consensus became an impossibility. Significantly, the Report was not the handiwork of Congress alone. The Committee had been constituted by the All Parties Conference and had representation from all the important political parties. Congress, being the largest political party, played the most important role. Both, the Chairman of the All Parties Conference (M.A.Ansari) and of the Committee (Motilal Nehru) were Congressmen. But Congress did not have the monopoly to carry its acceptance of the Delhi proposals into the Report. The Akalis in Punjab, for instance, were justifiably opposed to the reservation of seats for the Muslim majority of Punjab. Hindu Mahasabha was determined to resist the creation of Sind and one third representation for Muslims in the central legislatures. Young Congressmen like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Bose were keen on an emphatic declaration for complete independence instead of a lukewarm Dominion Status. The Nehru Report was, therefore, essentially an act of maintaining a balance without giving in fully to the demands of any group. This is however, not to deny, that Motilal Nehru’s own political experiences in the 1920s would certainly have influenced the making of the Report.146

in the Bengal Muslim League. (See Ispahani’s letter to Jinnah complaining about the presence of many Congressmen in the Bengal League, 11 August 1937, Z.H.Zaidi (ed.), Jinnah-Ispahani Correspondence, p. 86.

146 Between the signing of the Lucknow pact in 1916 and the writing of the Nehru Report in 1928, Motilal Nehru may have learnt two crucial lessons on the basis of his experiences. The first lesson would have been vis-à-vis the Muslim legislators elected through separate electorates. The Lucknow pact had maintained the majority status of the majority groups in the provincial legislatures (except in Bengal) in spite of providing weightage to the Muslim minorities to the tune of doubling their seats. They had been able to do this by fixing the share of nominated seats to be not more than 20% under any circumstances. The GOI Act of 1919 increased this share to almost 30% thereby depriving the majority groups of a majority in the legislatures in all the provinces except CP (where the Hindus constituted almost 95% of the total population.) In UP Legislative Council for instance, out of a total of 123 seats, there were 29 Muslim seats, 60 non-Muslim (general or Hindu constituencies), 10 special and 23 nominated seats. Motilal Nehru, the architect of the programme of council entry, may have
Aware that his role as a mediator had exhausted itself, Jinnah now pinned his hopes on the Round Table Conferences, about to be held in London. At the first two conferences, Jinnah tried to play a dual role. On the one hand he tried to distance himself from the loyalists and asserted his claims to nationalism by putting forward the case of responsible self-government. On the other, he also pleaded for concessions for Muslims as a reward for holding "in abeyance the party that stands for complete independence."\(^{147}\) Even there he was marginalized to the extent of not even being invited to the third conference. Having reconciled himself to a self imposed semi-exile in England, Jinnah nevertheless tried for a place in the British parliament first from the Labour and then the Conservative party. Both the attempts at acquiring a ticket failed.\(^{148}\)

At this stage Jinnah may well have thought that his political innings was over. But once he returned to the 'crease' after being requested by Liaqat Ali Khan that his 'Muslim India' needed him, Jinnah knew that he would have to play the game differently with new ideological equipment and a lot more certain approach compared to earlier hoped to bring the councils to a stand still by expecting the support of the Muslim legislators. But because of the rural thrust of the franchise and the seats, the Muslim seats were invariably occupied by Muslim landlords who showed a greater inclination towards aligning with the legislators nominated by the government. This became evident when a motion of no confidence in the government, moved by the Swarajists in the UP Council, was defeated even without the opposition of the official nominated candidates (Page, Prelude to Partition, p. 77). The disadvantages of separate electorate and also weightage to minorities must surely have dawned upon Motilal Nehru. The second lesson related to Hindu communalism. Hindu communal opposition proved to be more lethal than Muslim loyalism in the legislatures. The assault launched by Malaviya and Chintamani threatened to reduce Motilal and his party to a virtual non-entity. Moreover, as far as the larger Congress organization was concerned, this meant opposition from within. This might have dictated to him the necessity of proceeding cautiously and not doing anything to provoke the already hostile Hindu communalism. (Later, in the 1930s, with the strength of the civil-disobedience behind them, the Congress leadership was able to take a tough stand against Malaviya on the question of the Communal Award. See the Background.)

\(^{147}\) Quoted from Anita Inder Singh’s article. See foot note no. 108.

\(^{148}\) Wolpert, Jinnah of Pakistan, pp. 125-26 and 130.
vacillations. He would have to assert his claim within ‘Muslim politics’ and give it a certain coherence. And he did.

The purpose of the above analysis is neither to condemn Jinnah for being a communalist, nor to exonerate him from any charges of betraying Indian nationalism. The purpose is, firstly, to stress that a transformation in Jinnah’s politics did occur; secondly, to emphasize that the transformation was not just the product of any single episode like the Khilafat movement or the Nehru Report or the coalition controversy in UP; and thirdly, to demonstrate that his transformation was a long drawn out process involving the nuances of the contemporary political and constitutional issues and Jinnah’s own response to them. One shaped Jinnah’s politics as much as the other. Jinnah was both ‘a bird in a storm’ as well as a conscious agent fashioning his own politics. He was to retain both the attributes throughout his political career.

3.4 Movement Unleashed

By the beginning of 1938, Muslim League in UP was well set to initiate a mass movement of Muslims against the Congress government. It seemed to possess almost all the major ingredients required in the making of a movement. Muslim League now had a programme, a defined ideology, a platform and a leader who could inspire his audiences.149 Jinnah had now been accepted as League’s unquestioned leader as never before. Manifestations of any resistance to his leadership had petered out. An infrastructure had been built up in the form of branches all over UP. The movement was initially geared towards further expansion and popularization. This happened through

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149 Bipan Chandra writes: “The basic elements of a movement are: political objectives, programme and ideology, strategy and methods and techniques of political struggle, social base and class or social character.” “Elements of Continuity and Change in the Early Nationalist Activity” in his Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India, p. 123. It is precisely in this sense that the activities and politics of Muslim League are going to be understood and discussed in this section.
propaganda which concentrated almost exclusively on attacking Congress. 1938-39 were easily the most turbulent years of the movement, so far. This paid handsome dividends and by the time the Congress ministry resigned in October 1939, Muslim League had claimed for itself the status of being the representative organization of Muslims. Whether it had become a mass force of Muslims by 1939 is a contentious issue. But it had reached a point where the British government, regional groups and also sections within Congress had begun to acknowledge it as the spokesman of Muslims. For an organization which had claimed no more than 5% of the Muslim votes only two years ago, this was a great achievement indeed. How did this come about?

Historiographically, the earliest explanation came from Reginald Coupland. Writing in early 1940s, Coupland thought that the assumption of power by Congress alone was largely responsible for the deteriorating communal relations and consequently Muslim League’s transformation into a mass force. It was, thus, the dominance of the “totalitarian doctrine” within Congress, the decision to bring Muslims into the Congress fold and similar “aggressive tactics” which frightened Muslim League and Muslims. The secular campaigns and the unleashing of ‘economism’ by Congress leaders

150 From dismissing the League in 1937 as an organization which had no basis, Nehru actually went as far as conceding to Jinnah in 1939: “The Congress has always considered the League as a very important and influential organization of the Muslims and it is because of this that we have been eager to settle any differences that may exist between us.... You have rightly pointed out on many occasions that the Congress does not represent every body in India. Of course not.... In the ultimate analysis it represents its members and sympathizers. So also the Muslim League.” Letter to Jinnah, 14 December 1939, SWIN, Vol. 10, pp. 399-400. Another prominent Congress leader, C.Rajgopalachari, had begun contemplating an agreement with Muslim League on the basis of complete parity. Later, in 1942, he would come out with the famous ‘Rajaji Formula’ acknowledging Muslim League as the representative organization of Muslims. For the Rajaji formula, see Ram Gopal, Indian Muslims, pp. 300-303.

151 Haig, UP’s Governor, had already provided his side of the explanation in a series of letters to the Viceroy. He thought that Muslim League’s increasing popularity was a result of having undertaken a vigorous campaign against Congress. This hatred against Congress had nothing to do with the performance of the Congress ministry or any visible persecution of Muslims in UP. It was politically motivated and a result of the fact the League had been denied a share in power. Haig Papers.
overlooked the vital fact that “a Moslem’s religion pervades all his life, including his politics.”

Thus the Congress insistence on hoisting its flag on government buildings and the Wardha scheme of education provided fodder to Muslim League’s campaign of hatred against Congress. Significant part of the campaign was the publication of a series of reports listing charges of ‘atrocities’ inflicted on Muslims by the Congress regime. Coupland was not “concerned to justify or to refute the charges made. The relevant point is that Moslems of character and influence believed them, and it is difficult to brush aside a statement of Moslem fears so earnest, yet so temperate.”

The fact of the matter was that “Congress, however genuinely national and non-communal its intentions might be, was a Hindu organization (in many ways).... The psychological and philosophical background of the Congress movement, its modes of thought and conduct, the quality of what was known as ‘Congress mindedness’ were essentially Hindu, emphatically not Moslem.”

Moreover, often the real attitude of the rank and file of Congressmen was not different from that of Hindu Mahasabha.

The significance of Coupland’s analysis lies in the fact that it subsequently provided a framework for many historians. The acceptance of Muslim League’s popularity by the end of 1939, not a point settled in itself, and explaining it in terms of a cause-effect relationship between the Congress actions and League’s reactions has been a widespread tendency among many historians. Implicit in this approach is a denial of any kind of autonomy of politics to Muslim League. Although minor variations have occurred...

152 Coupland, The Constitutional Problem in India, p. 182.
154 Ibid, pp. 192-93.
155 Ibid.
156 The Congress ‘centred’ approach also fails to explain League’s increasing popularity in the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal, which had a non-Congress, in fact anti-
within the ‘Congress centred’ approaches, there has generally been a reluctance to make any major paradigmatic departures from Coupland’s framework.\footnote{157}

Lance Brennan has made significant corrections to Coupland’s framework. It was not Muslims as a whole but Muslim elites who were threatened by the Congress assumption of power. What fed into their threat perception was not so much a ‘Hindu’ Congress but an economically radical Congress government threatening to snatch away most of their privileges accumulated in relation to land and government jobs.\footnote{158} In an interesting story on the rise of Muslim League, Sunil Chander finds the “threatened elite” approach to be inadequate and focuses instead on the growth of League’s “grass root activism”, development of a cadre and religious appeals.\footnote{159}

An interesting departure from the above approaches has been provided by Francis Robinson’s latter works. Though not confined to the ministry period, it posits a very interesting alternative to all these approaches by highlighting the role of ideas, fostered by Islamic tradition, in the development of Muslim separatism in the 20th century. The strength of his argument lies in giving due importance to religious ideas and structures, not allowing Muslim separatism to be explained solely by political factors and searching

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for the roots of 20th century phenomena in the functioning and unfolding of the socio-religious forces in the 19th century and even earlier. Robinson's work is refreshingly innovative and quite forthright in its denunciation of any attempt to locate the explanation of such monumental developments within the span of two or three years only.

The purpose of this section is not to necessarily agree or disagree with any of the views expressed above; nor to attempt an alternative explanation for the emergence of Muslim separatism. It merely describes the nature of Muslim League's activities during 1938-39 and proposes that it is best to look upon the various activities of the League as parts of a movement. Jinnah's new strategy, activism at the grass root levels, political activities of the League leaders both inside and outside the Legislative Assembly and publication of reports of the enquiry committees should be seen as veins and arteries of the movement, linked to each other and not as sporadic spontaneous outbursts.

To begin with, there was an unprecedented increase in League meetings held in district towns. This was indicative of the extent to which local activism had been

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161 Between 1938 and 1939, three reports were published by Muslim League. First was called the Pirpur Report, known after the name of its chairman, Raja of Pirpur. A committee had been formed as a result of a resolution passed at the Council of All India Muslim League in March 1938 in Delhi. The Committee was asked to collect evidences of "hardships, ill-treatment and injustice" meted out to Muslims in UP, Bihar, Orissa, CP, Madras and Bombay and prepare a report. The report was submitted at the end of 1938 at the Patna session of Muslim League. The second report (Shareef Report), submitted in December 1939, was confined only to Bihar. The third report called "Muslim Sufferings Under Congress Rule" was prepared by Fazlul Huq. It was published in December 1939 and contained a list of Congress 'atrocities' in Bihar and UP. See K.K.Aziz (ed.), Muslim Under Congress rule, 1937-39: A Documentary Record, Vol. 1, pp. 307-86, 388-419 and 420-564.
generated.\textsuperscript{162} The focus of this activism was geared towards mobilizing Muslims in towns, establishing unity among Muslims of different castes and classes, criticizing

\textsuperscript{162} UP intelligence reported League meetings in Etah and Mainpuri (Agra Division), Basti (Gorakhpur), Hardoi (Lucknow) and Bareilly (Rohilkhand) in February 1938. WRPA. Muslim League activities, anti Congress speeches and propaganda were reported from a number of districts including Rae Bareli (Lucknow) and Faizabad in March 1938. 87, 1938; \textit{ibid}. League meetings were held in Saharanpur (Meerut), Meerut and Lucknow in March where the advantages and disadvantages of joining Congress were discussed and debated. Several meetings were held in Etah where Maulvi Mahmud Shah Qadri, Secretary, Agra League delivered a “bitter anti-Congress and anti-Hindu” speech. “The speech met with a good response...many Muslims promised to join the League.... (It has also) caused considerable resentment among the Hindu community.” At a League meeting in Kanpur Mohammed Faruq blamed the Congress ministry for the communal riot in Kanpur. 114, 1938; \textit{ibid}. More meetings were held in Kanpur, Lucknow, Bijnor (Rohilkhand), Faizabad, Sitapur (Lucknow), Muzaffarnagar (Meerut), Ghaziabad and Meerut. Instances of communal violence from other areas were pointed out. The audiences were asked to join Muslim League to protect themselves from the “Brahmin ministry”. 125, 1938; \textit{ibid}. Muslim League activities were reported from a number of districts including Muzaffarnagar, Sultanpur (Faizabad) and Unnao. Congress was accused of being anti-Muslim, it was decided at Muzaffarnagar that League volunteers would parade daily and, at Sultanpur, the speaker pointed out that at least 20 riots had taken place during the Congress regime and Muslims had suffered badly in these riots. 135, 1938; \textit{ibid}. Muslim League meetings were reported in Agra and Fatehpur (Agra). A resolution was moved at Agra asking the municipal board to issue all orders to Muslim employees in Urdu only. An “objectionable anti-Hindu” speech was made by Ghulam Mustafa in Fatehgarh. 166, 1938; \textit{ibid}. Meetings and processions were carried out in May in Allahabad, Ballia (Banaras), Gorakhpur and Hardoi. Slogans like ‘cinema boycott’, ‘Congress boycott’, ‘Congress Muslims boycott’ and ‘toddy khana boycott’ were shouted. Toddy and liquor shops were picketed in Ballia and Sultanpur (Banaras). Hardoi witnessed morning and evening parades by Muslim League volunteers. 182 and 212, 1938; \textit{ibid}. Kanpur District Muslim League Conference was held in June and attended by 2500 people including members of the depressed classes. Tenants were asked not to help Congress any more. Similar meeting were reported from Fatehpur, Shahjahanpur (Rohilkhand), Allahabad and Banaras. 230, 1938; \textit{ibid}. A combined procession of Muslim League and Khaksars was taken out in Bahraich (Faizabad) after Friday prayers. Meetings were held in Jaunpur (Banaras), Kanpur Meerut, Shahjahanpur, Agra, Bulandshahar (Meerut), Ghazipur (Banaras) and Aligarh (Meerut). Anti-Congress speeches were made. \textit{ibid}. In Etah, Agra and Etawah (Agra) League meetings were organized to counteract K.M.Ashraf’s Muslim mass contact campaign. Muslims were asked to rally behind Muslim League. 259, 1938; \textit{ibid}. More meetings were held in Aligarh, Unnao, Etah and Gonda. Muslims were urged to take up arms against Congress. 267, 1938; \textit{ibid}. At a League meeting in Saharanpur, it was stated that the Congress Muslims were being paid by the party. 292, 1938; \textit{ibid}. At a meeting in Aligarh, Maulana Samdhan explained to 4000 strong audience that the tenancy bill was being introduced only for the benefit of the Hindu tenants. Similar views were expressed in Bareilly. 299, 1938; \textit{ibid}. Marches continued to be held in August. A conference was held in Kanpur. Congress leaders were accused of preparing to accept the federation scheme. Huq ministry in Bengal was congratulated for its good work. A procession was taken out in Bijnor to celebrate the defeat of the motion of no confidence against Huq ministry. 307, 1938; \textit{ibid}. League meetings were held in Ballia, Gorakhpur and Basti. Raja of Mahmudabad appealed to Muslims to learn the art of fighting with lathis. 325,1938; \textit{ibid}. Maulana Yakub Ali from CP addressed a meeting of a thousand people in Ghazipur in September and advised his audience not to buy anything from the shops of non-Muslims. He also added that if Muslims were touched by the worshippers of many gods, their prayers would not be accepted. He also
various measures of Congress government as anti-Muslim, attacking symbols of communal harmony and syncretism like Hindustani language, invoking the glory of Muslim past and the need to revive it, and promoting social and economic segregation from Hindus. An important feature of the League campaign was the frequent visits by ‘outsiders’. League activists from different districts visiting other areas and sometimes leaders coming from other provinces (mainly CP and Bihar) was a common practice. These leaders brought with them instances, from their districts or provinces, of Congress ‘tyranny’. Quite often instances brought from other areas, rather than any actual experiences of the audiences, became the mobilizing factors.

made a reference to Congress trying to establish ‘Ram Raj’. Similar meetings were held in Basti, Banaras, Mainpuri (Agra), Agra and Gorakhpur. 339 and 347, 1938; ibid. League propaganda reported from Fatehpur, Moradabad and Basti. Raja of Mahmudabad made a “strong” speech in which he visualized Congress and British in arms on one side and Indian Muslims with their infants and carrying naked swords on the other. Muslims were old enemies of Hindus with whom they could not come to terms. 355, 1938; ibid. Protest meetings were held in Kanpur, Dehradun (Meerut), Saharanpur, Agra and Basti against M.N.Roy’s book The Historic Role of Islam. A ban on the book was demanded amidst cries that the publisher of the book should be beheaded. 356, 1938; ibid. A League meeting in Badaun in October began by invoking the glory of the Mughal days and stressed the need to conquer India again, as it was impossible for the eaters of dal to defeat the eaters of beef. 365, 1938; ibid. A Danda (stick) party of “mischief mongers” was formed by Muslim Leaguers in Bijnor in order to defend Islam by the use of danda. 372, 1938; ibid. At Muslim League Political Conference held in Hardoi in October and attended by about 5000 people, Mubashir Husain Kidwai, MLA, stressed the necessity of fighting both the British and Congress. Other speakers denounced Congress for its hostile attitude towards ‘Muslim culture and language’ and for trying to destroy the Muslim solidarity through their Muslim mass contact programme. At yet another conference in Hardoi, Zafar Ali Khan described Nehru, Pant and Madan Mohan Malaviya as survivors of Brahminism. In Saharanpur it was said that Gandhi, Nehru and other Congressmen were trying to destroy Islam. 382, 1938; ibid. In Etah, the attempt by a Congress Muslim to deliver a pro-Congress speech in a mosque was foiled by the Muslim National Guard volunteers. At another League meeting in Bijnor, discrimination against Muslim students in schools was alleged. 406, 1938; ibid. A visit by Sampurnanand, education minister, to Faizian High School, a Muslim institution, was interrupted by Muslim Leaguers. He was not allowed to speak and the function was cancelled. The Leader, 3 November 1938. A council meeting of Muslim League considered the issuing of fatwa by Ulema forbidding Muslims to join Congress. Ibid, 22 November 1938. UP intelligence reported the observance of ‘Urdu Day’, ‘Mohammad Ali Day’ and ‘Independence Day’ (17 October when the independence resolution was passed at the Lucknow session of Muslim League) by the League activists in many districts of UP. 6 and 16, 1939; WRPA. This pattern of frequent meetings continued in 1939 along the same lines and emphasizing the same issues.
Rumours played no mean role in the mobilization. For people who did not have a first hand experience of Congress leaders’ actions and statements, these stories could easily become a rallying cry. At a League meeting in Lucknow, Mustasar Ullah quoted Gandhi as saying that Muslims would be forced to give up cow slaughter “at the point of the sword” under the Congress government. A little later, an article in Aftab, an Urdu newspaper, confirmed this allegation. At Etah, Mohammad Shah Khan Qadri, Secretary, District Muslim League, Agra, accused Gandhi of promoting Shuddhi and Sangathan. At a League meeting of 500 in Kanpur, Abdul Malik from Lucknow informed his audiences that, in Alamnagar in Lucknow, one mosque had been given to Hindus. He held the Congress ministry responsible for the loss of this mosque and appealed that an agitation, similar to that of Shahidganj mosque, should be started in UP. At a Muslim League meeting in Unnao, Maulvi Said Mohammad reported Nehru to have said in Delhi and other places that Muslims in India could only live as slaves of Hindus, otherwise they would be turned out of the country. In June 1938, it was said at a League meeting in Ghazipur, that in Bhagalpur in Bihar, blood of pigs was forcibly thrust down the throats of Muslims. At another League meeting in Banaras in September 1938, the speaker informed the audience that khadi and charkha movement had thrown 4.5 crore Muslim weavers out of work. Star of India carried a report based

163 14, 1938; WRPA.

164 34, 1938; ibid.

165 114, 1938; ibid.

166 125, 1938; ibid. This was, however, only half a rumour. In a legal case involving a piece of land, where local Muslims had constructed a mosque, the chief court had granted the ownership of the land to Mrs. Bakhshi, one of the two parties in the case. 331, 1938; ibid.

167 135, 1938; ibid.

168 251, 1938; ibid.
on a "very reliable authority" that all Muslim employees working in different departments of AICC were going to be "axed". The CWC was soon going to "evolve a formula" to "get rid of those selfless and energetic Muslim young men without any fuss." It is difficult to demonstrate what impact this may have produced on listeners and readers but it was certainly likely to have prejudiced them against Congress.

Media also played a fairly important role in this process. Star of India, an eveninger from Calcutta, unleashed a vigorous campaign against Congress. Star, an English newspaper from Allahabad and Hamdam, an Urdu paper from Lucknow, joined in. There were other papers too, like Awaz, an Urdu weekly from Banaras, and Aftab, another Urdu paper. The media became particularly active during times of communal violence. The focus generally was on portraying violence as the handiwork of Hindus, with a desire to annihilate Muslims, under their own regime.

169 355, 1938; ibid.
170 SOI, 29 March 1938.

171 On the face of it, there was nothing 'Muslim' about this paper. It had come into being incorporating the Calcutta Evening News and Bengali and was edited by L.P. Atkinson. That it had a non-Muslim editor was its declared claim to impartiality. The year 1937 witnessed its rebirth and it started functioning as a spokesman not just of Muslim League but also the Punjab and Bengal governments. During the early 1930s it had run into a financial crisis. Since 1936 M.A. Isphahani had begun financing it. It was generally rated as "the finest Muslim Daily of all times." K.K. Aziz (ed.), Historical Handbook of Muslim India, 1700-1947, Vol. II, (Lahore, 1995), p. 668.

172 Although Medina from Bijnor was sympathetic to Congress, Madari from Allahabad was known for its anti-Muslim stance. Congress government had contemplated taking action against Star, Hamdam and Madari for making false allegations and creating hatred and ill feelings among the people. Upon furnishing an apology they were all let off without any action. Proceedings, UPLA, Vol. 9, pp. 823-24. The Congress policy was generally criticized for its "softness" by neutral quarters in the Assembly, and the government was urged to take strong measures against communal newspapers. Ibid, Vol. 16, pp. 698-700. Congress government used to take out Ittilat and Samachar in Urdu and Hindi, respectively, for an elucidation of the government position and for replying to accusations from the communal press. Ibid, Vol. 18, pp. 35-36.

173 The Hindu communal media was doing just the opposite, blaming Muslims for the violence. The activities of Hindu communal media will be discussed in the chapter on Hindu communalism.
government had adopted a policy of leniency but intervened sometimes. Star published their own version of the communal violence in Allahabad during February-March 1938 and drew inferences from it which were found objectionable under section 153(A) of the CRPC (Creating disaffection among two classes of His Majesty's subjects). On the violence during Moharram, Star wrote: “On the morrow of the said festival, he (Hindu) struck simultaneously at Banaras, Banda, Barabanki, Allahabad and elsewhere with a ferocity till now unknown amongst human beings. It is wrong to call them riots which are a two sided affair. These were a determined, organized and pre-arranged assault of a six times strong community upon the weaker one.” Another paragraph, found to be objectionable, said: “Even if they (the casualties in the violence) are equal to or slightly less than the Hindus’ are, the Hindus are the gainer because for every Mohammedan bumped, six Hindus have to be eliminated to maintain the ratio intact.... A thousand year old slaves, they (Hindus) were offered for the first time in their miserable lives a great opportunity....” Yet another paragraph said: “Had they (Muslims) believed in anything of the sort, 800 years was a sufficiently long time for them to clear up the entire Aegean Stable of Hinduism and there would have been no Mr. Pant to indulge in cheap ribaldries at the expense of the Mussalmans.” Many instances of this kind can be cited.174

Historiographically four issues have been considered crucial in catapulting Muslim League to a prominent position. (a) The agitation against singing of Bande Matram; (b) League’s opposition to the Wardha Scheme of education; (c) the controversy regarding

174 'Star Editor Case', published in SQI, 10 May 1938.

Hindi and Urdu and; (d) the agitation against hoisting of Congress flag at public buildings. It is, however, important to note that not all these issues were equally significant or equally fiercely fought in all regions. Campaigns were not launched uniformly in all provinces. If the agitation against Bande Matram had its roots in Bengal, the opposition to the Vidya Mandir scheme (a variant of the Wardha scheme implemented in CP - this was a policy framework based on the guidelines provided by the Wardha scheme) was confined only to CP with only scattered noises of protest elsewhere. Not all agitations continued throughout the ministry period. The upheaval on Bande Matram petered out after 1937 and the turmoil over the Vidya Mandir scheme was resolved amicably by the Congress government in CP and Muslim League by the beginning of 1939.\footnote{SOI, 14 February 1939.} As far as UP was concerned, it was the issue of Congress flag around which a movement had developed and which continued through the ministry period. It would still be important to briefly touch upon the issues of Bande Matram and Vidya Mandir scheme.

'Bande Matram', a song worshipping the motherland, was written by the famous 19th century Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and incorporated in his novel 'Anand Math' in the 1860s. During the Swadeshi movement and later, it became a symbol of resistance against the British rule and used to be sung as an act of defiance against authorities. Its singing had been banned but the ban was lifted with the inauguration of Congress ministries in the provinces. As a result, it began to be routinely sung in schools. As Congress entered the legislatures, it began to be sung in the Assemblies as well. Muslim League's objection to the song was mainly on the ground
that it was “anti-Islamic and idolatrous”\textsuperscript{177} and was imposed on the non-Hindu population. Nehru thought that though the objection to the song was a “manufactured one by the communalists”, its background in the book was “likely to irritate the Muslims.”\textsuperscript{178} As a result, CWC issued a statement in October 1937 making certain clarifications. The statement emphasized that the song had never been formally adopted by Congress as the national anthem. CWC also recognized the “validity of the objections raised by Muslim friends to certain parts of the song.” It was therefore recommended by CWC that wherever it was to be sung, only the first two stanzas should be sung “with perfect freedom to the organizers to sing any other song of an unobjectionable character.”\textsuperscript{179} The statement of CWC was dismissed by Jinnah as a gesture of “arrogance and patronizing spirit.”\textsuperscript{180}

It is important to keep in mind that while taking any decision on the song, CWC had to contend not only with objections emanating from ‘Muslim quarters’ but also from Hindu side. The moderate decision of CWC met with a considerable amount of resentment among some Hindus in Bengal for whom the song may have had a certain sanctity. Subhash Bose, the president of Bengal Congress, informed Nehru that CWC’s step was seen by Hindus of Bengal as denying the historical significance of the song. The nationalist press in Bengal was agitated about it, public meetings were being held against ‘mutilating’ the song and processions were being taken out in defence of the song with active participation by women. Subhash Bose suggested that some of the

\textsuperscript{177} Resolution no. vi, passed at the Lucknow session of the AIML, Pirzada (ed.), \textit{Foundation of Pakistan}, Vol. II, p. 278.


opposition in Bengal could be neutralized by adopting the first two stanzas as the national anthem.\footnote{Letter by Subhash Bose, president, Bengal PCC to the Congress president, 13 December 1937, IE, pp. 1262-63.} CWC, however, did not oblige as stretching a bit in any direction would have meant antagonizing the other side. Taking decisions on these sensitive and potentially explosive matters was like a tightrope walk for Congress with risks on both sides. Congress had earlier experienced the multiplicity of pressures during the writing of the Nehru Report and preparing its response to the Communal Award. It had never been possible for Congress to satisfy all opinions but it had drawn satisfaction from its ability to take a stand meeting various positions half-way. CWC tried the same method \textit{vis-à-vis} the Bande Matram song also. Whatever may have been the nuances of the Bande Matram issue, the opposition to it died out by the end of 1937.

The opposition to the Wardha and Vidya Mandir schemes was a little more complex. CWC had convened a conference of leading educationists in October 1937 in Wardha, presided over by Gandhi, to discuss threadbare the scheme of basic education. A small committee of experts, with Zakir Husain as its president, was appointed to draft the scheme. The report of this committee was released for publication in December 1937 and came to be known as the Wardha scheme. The scheme aimed at (a) education in all the subjects in mother tongue only, (b) basing the education on self-help through the learning of crafts and artisanal work, and (c) providing a national outlook to students from an early stage. It was a seven year scheme and it was hoped that the earnings from craft work and cottage industry would be able to financially sustain the scheme without
any assistance from the government. Religious education was to be kept out of the syllabus.\textsuperscript{182}

The Vidya Mandir scheme, to be implemented in CP, was to be financed by endowments from land. Every 40 acre in CP and 25 acre in Berar were to support one school, to be run by one teacher only, for a period of four years. Agriculture was to be the main subject to be taught in the ‘Vidya Mandirs’. The main idea behind both schemes was to shift the responsibility of primary education from the government to public and private enterprises. Whereas Wardha scheme was meant to be a substitute for the existing system of basic education, Vidya Mandir was projected as only an additional source of spreading education without substituting or disturbing the existing primary education run by the government or the local bodies.\textsuperscript{183} It is important to keep in mind that, apart from the antagonism shown by Muslim League, there also existed a ‘secular’ criticism of the Scheme, voiced by some educationists.\textsuperscript{184} Muslim League’s objection, however, was very different. League was against the Wardha scheme because of the absence of religious education and an emphasis on the Gandhian cult of nonviolence (Ahimsa), Satyagraha and Charkha. These were seen by Muslim League as

\textsuperscript{182} Gandhi explained the keeping of religious education out of the Wardha scheme on the grounds that “religions as they are taught and practiced today, lead to conflict rather than unity.” An interview, 6 June 1938, CWMG, Vol. 67, p. 154.

\textsuperscript{183} The information on the two schemes has been obtained from an article “Swavlambi Shiksha” published in Vishal Bharat, November 1937; and another article on the two schemes, written by Abdul Rahman Khan, MLA from Berar (CP), published in SOI, 20 December 1938.

\textsuperscript{184} Zakir Husain, for instance, thought that the Wardha scheme might make the teachers very oppressive by extracting maximum work from the students. He felt that the self-sufficiency in education should not be made the only test of its success. Similarly K.T.Shah, another educationist, thought that the Wardha scheme was not viable, as it pre-supposed an ideal situation in which all foreign and machine made goods had been stopped legally and substituted by hand made ones. This, he thought, was not possible. Vishal Bharat, November 1937. Also that both the schemes put too much stress on the craft and agricultural education, ignoring other aspects of education. The two schemes were also criticized for not providing any guidelines for higher learning. SOI, 20 December 1938.
attempts to impose an essentially anti-Islamic creed on Muslims. Also the provision of co-education up to the age of 14 was projected by League leaders to be against the tenets of Islam. In other words, it was said that Wardha scheme, if implemented fully, would convert schools into ‘Ashrams’ and centres of Hindu learning and thus try to ‘Hinduise’ Muslim students.\textsuperscript{185} However, League’s opposition to Wardha scheme was not accompanied by any concrete action. It was only in CP that the provincial Muslim League contemplated starting a civil disobedience movement against the Vidya Mandir scheme. It sought permission from the parent body but the working committee of AIML, for reasons not very clear, seemed very reluctant to allow CP League to launch a movement against Congress government. Instead it instructed Liaqat Ali Khan to go to CP to study the situation and submit his report. Finally a settlement was arrived at between CP government and Muslim League. As a result the proposed agitation against the Congress government was called off.\textsuperscript{186}

It was, however, the conflict around the hoisting of Congress flag on public institutions which continued in UP throughout the ministry period. The crux of the controversy was the legitimacy that could be accorded to the tri-colour flag of Congress during the tenure of the Congress government. Muslim League, as also the British

\textsuperscript{185} The council of UPML, in a meeting in Kanpur in August 1938, found the Wardha scheme unsatisfactory as it failed to provide religious and cultural education to Muslims. SOI, 22 August 1938. Similarly, the district Muslim League, Badaun (Rohilkhand) resolved in a meeting that the Wardha scheme was meant to “destroy the Islamic culture in India and thus indirectly give a death blow to the Muslim culture and education in India.” Ibid, 15 August 1938. Similarly, Fazlul Huq pointed out in September 1938 how only Urdu could be the lingua franca of Indian Muslims. He also dismissed Hindustani as a futile effort to bring together Hindi and Urdu, two different languages. Editorial in ibid, 5 October 1938.

\textsuperscript{186} The conditions of the settlement were that the government will not insist on the name ‘Vidya Mandir’ for those units where Muslim students were in a majority. Muslims of CP could form their own association similar to the Vidya Mandir Samiti of Nagpur and call it Anjuman-Medina-Tul-Ilm. The government agreed to help it financially. It was pointed out to the Premier that Muslims, being poor, might not be able to obtain endowments for their schools. The premier assured them that the government would try and obtain endowments for them. Editorial in ibid, 14 February 1939.
government, were inclined to treat it as nothing more than the flag of a political party, not worthy of acquiring any official sanction. If the Congress flag was, therefore, flown at the government buildings as the official flag of the state, Muslim League argued, it should either be accompanied by flags of other political parties as well, or not be flown at all. The British government, too, seemed concerned that the Congress flag should take the place of the Union Jack. The genesis of the flag controversy could be traced back to the decision of the Kanpur Municipal Board to hoist the Congress flag on all municipal buildings after the Congress decision to enter the Assembly. A resolution was moved to that effect. An amendment was made by Mohammad Sami that the tri-colour flag should be hoisted on all the allied buildings as well and in case of violation of the decision, the grant-in-aid to that institution should be stopped. The amended resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority with ten out of the eleven Muslim members supporting the amendment. For some reasons, the Municipal Board did nothing to implement the decision for a long time. The Congress-League relations and indeed Hindu-Muslim relations deteriorated further during this period. Congress-League hostility, in particular, percolated down to the district and municipal levels. Hoisting of the flag now became a bone of contention between the two. A decision taken in July 1937 and forgotten thereafter now began to be implemented by Congressmen vigorously and aggressively. Muslim members of the Municipal Board, who voted for the decision and may well have been a party to it elsewhere, were now being pressurized by the provincial League leadership to either get the old resolution revised or insist that the green flag of Muslim League should also be hoisted.\footnote{This information has been gathered from a statement issued by a member of the Kanpur Municipal Board. \textit{Leader}, 4 March 1938.}
The British had earlier voiced their reservations about treating the tri-colour as the national flag. The League joined in by early 1938. A meeting of the executive committee of the Kanpur League recorded its protest at the Kanpur Municipal Board's decision to put in practice their earlier resolution.\textsuperscript{188} To press the point further, a circular was issued by the secretary, UPML to all district and city Leagues to hoist the green flag of Muslim League on all public buildings if other flags were hoisted.\textsuperscript{189} A clash actually occurred in Allahabad on the issue of the flag. Responding to Nehru unfurling the Congress flag, some Muslims tried to hoist the League flag which was resisted by Congressmen. This led to trouble. Though later, the Secretary, Allahabad League issued a statement condemning the violence and disowning any responsibility for it.\textsuperscript{190} The flag controversy gradually led to an ugly situation with other organizations also joining in the 'flag race'. Following UP League's decision, Hindu Sabha also decided to hoist its flag on every such building which had the green flag.\textsuperscript{191} It was reported that flags representing about half a dozen organizations were actually unfurled at a place in UP "causing a great deal of excitement."\textsuperscript{192} More clashes and violence followed between Congressmen and Leaguers on this issue.\textsuperscript{193}

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid, 27 February 1938.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid, 24 July 1938.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid, 21 July 1938.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, 31 July 1938.
\textsuperscript{192} From Tribune, quoted in ibid, 29 August 1938.
\textsuperscript{193} The flag related violence did not remain confined to government buildings only but extended to various other places as well. Congressmen and Muslim Leaguers clashed in Pratapgarh when some Muslim Leaguers objected to the Congress flag being hoisted on the house of a Congress Muslim. Violence followed. The Leader, 29 August 1938. In Kanpur, in January, a procession of about 400 Muslim Leaguers found the Congress flag on top of a mosque and tore it down. 24, 1938; WRPA. In the same month, in Badaun, Muslim students resented the presence of the Congress flag on the Islamia School building and walked out in protest. The flag was found missing the next day. Tension prevailed between Hindu and Muslim students in Bareilly and Hindu students took out a procession to protest against the
The official position of CWC on the flag issue was similar to its position on Bande Matram. Without conceding its position on the national importance of the flag, the Congress tried to play down the issue. As early as September 1937, Rajendra Prasad had advised Congressmen not to indulge in an unnecessary display of the flag which might lead to tension. In early 1939, CWC instructed Congressmen to avoid controversy around the flag as much as possible. Gandhi himself issued an appeal in *Harijan* saying: "Instead of being a symbol of... unity... it (the flag) nowadays often becomes a symbol for communal quarrels. In these circumstances I personally would like to remove it from public gatherings and not unfurl it....where there is any opposition (to it) in a mixed gathering, the flag should not be hoisted." In January 1939, the UPPCC issued a circular to all the local Congress committees regarding the use of the tri-colour flag. The circular advised Congressmen not to make an issue of the flag and avoid hoisting it in the face of opposition. "We should be very careful not to make the national flag a source of conflict. The prestige which the tri-colour flag has acquired, does not increase or decrease, by hoisting it or not hoisting it at any place." Nevertheless the issue continued to defy solution and plagued the UP government till the end of 1939.

194 "I think we must definitely state that the National Flag should not be hoisted on any building the proprietor or the manager of which does not permit it. Apart from clashes, which its hoisting on unauthorized places causes, this action also brings the flag itself into disrespect....I do not understand what useful purpose is served by this kind of action." Rajendra Prasad's letter to Patel, 28 September 1937, *TE*, p. 984.

195 Draft note by Gandhi on Hindu-Muslim relations, G-34, 1939; *AICC Papers*.


197 Circular no. 9, issued by UP Congress (translated from Hindi), 27 January 1939, P-20 (part I)/1938-39; *AICC Papers*.
The important thing about all these issues is that none of them, in themselves, achieved any substantial results for Muslim League. There is little evidence to suggest that they were able to elevate League to the status of the representative organization of Muslims. But these issues were able to put the Congress ministry on the defensive. The essence of all these issues was a firm rebuttal of the Congress claim of representing all sections of the Indian society. They stood to demonstrate that various measures of the Congress ministry were not meant for all; that Muslims were certainly not a part either of the Wardha scheme or the tri-colour flag or the ‘Bande Matram’ song. It also meant that Congress, which had started on a fairly positive note vis-à-vis Muslims and an aggressive note vis-à-vis Muslim League in July 1937, could not keep up this trend during 1938-39 in the face of hostile opposition by League. Dismissing Muslim League completely and bringing Muslims directly into Congress were the twin projects initiated by Congress in 1937. They were not likely to be successful in the face of fierce opposition from Muslim League on these issues, not allowing the Congress to assume any consensus. It became imperative for Congress to try and sort out these issues and approach Muslim League and, in the process, take a step closer towards conceding some sort of a representative status to it. In other words, the success of Muslim mass contact programme presupposed a certain political climate in which Congress would have an unrestricted access to Muslims. The agitations of Muslim League effectively

198 “We have too long thought in terms of pacts and compromises between communal leaders and neglected the people behind them. That is a discredited policy and I trust that we shall not revert to it.” Thus spoke Nehru to a convention of the newly elected Congress legislators. “It is now for us to go ahead and welcome the Muslim masses and intelligentsia in our great organization and rid this country of communalism in every shape and form.” Presidential Address to the All India Convention of Congress Legislators, March 1937, *SWIN*, Vol. 8, p. 62 and 63.
denied that access to Congress and made its task that much more difficult by converting the Congress approach to Muslims into a hurdle race.

However, not everything went smoothly for Muslim League either. Though much ahead of Congress in the race for the support of Muslims and starting the race with certain inherent advantages, Muslim League had to still overcome many problems and hurdles. The League movement had been initiated with three main projects, (a) not to let Congress run away with Muslims and to find chinks in its armour, (b) to achieve unity among Muslims and a certain ‘distancing’ of Muslims from Hindus, and (c) to overcome dissensions within its own ranks and maintain its distance from Congress.

Of the three, the first proved to be the most successful by 1939. Although Congress improved its position vis-à-vis Muslims, as is clear from the voting pattern in UP bye-elections, it did not look, at any stage, that it would sweep them into its fold. But

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199 It is sometimes forgotten by scholars that Muslim League in UP was already in a strong position in 1937. It had won 27 out of the 36 seats contested and had won nearly 50% of the votes polled in the constituencies where it had contested. The Muslim population in UP was concentrated mostly in towns, constituting well over 35% of the town population. This gave Muslim League relatively easier access to Muslims of UP. In UP Congress it had a poor competitor unlike Punjab and Bengal where the Unionists and the KPP had a strong hold over Muslims. So, compared to its race for Muslims of Punjab and Bengal, Muslim League in UP started off as the ‘favourite’ and from a good vantage point. Correspondingly, it stood in a much better position in UP in 1939 compared to Punjab and Bengal. A regional break-up of League’s strengths and weaknesses is something that has not been attempted by the historians, but would make an interesting area of study.

200 Also, the Congress performance in the Muslim constituencies in the 1946 elections was a considerable improvement over 1937. Though not winning many seats, Congress, along with the nationalist Muslims, got nearly 33% of the Muslim votes in the rural constituencies. Congress, along with nationalist Muslims, contested sixty seats, compared to fourteen in 1937. (Reeves, Elections in Uttar Pradesh, pp. 250-53.) This is a significant point often lost in the face of overwhelming Muslim support for League. It is, therefore, essential to develop a viable perspective in which to place the Congress and League initiatives vis-à-vis Muslims. 1937 was certainly a starting point in their campaigns to enrol Muslims. Raja of Mahmudabad makes an interesting point in his memoirs that the Indian Muslims had not been exposed to any significant political mobilization prior to 1937, khilafat being a religious issue and Syed Ahmad's ventures being in the nature of social reforms. ("Some Memories" in Philips and Wainwright, Partition of India, p. 389.) It was for the first time in 1937 that they were brought in the orbit of political mobilization by rival organizations. Importantly, both Muslim League and Congress were able to improve their record by 1946 (as is evident from the election results), although League outstripped its rival decisively and comprehensively. It was, therefore,
Muslim League’s efforts to nibble at some chunks of the low caste Hindu support base did not prove very successful. From 1938 onwards, Muslim League leadership made various efforts to rope in the scheduled castes. It all started from the UP tour of Jinnah in early 1938. At one of his meetings in Ghaziabad in February, one Swami Kalyuganand advised the scheduled castes to join Muslim League as Congress was essentially a Brahmin body. At Muslim League meetings in Lucknow and Etah, sympathy was expressed for the scheduled castes because of the treatment meted out to them by the upper caste Hindus. At the District Muslim League Conference in Kanpur in June 1938, attended by some members of the scheduled castes, it was decided to extend all possible help to them. At two small meetings in Fatehpur (Allahabad), an appeal was made to the ‘depressed classes’ to join League. Similarly, in Agra, leaflets were distributed on behalf of the local League asking the scheduled castes to get converted to Islam, pointing out that their rights were not safe with the upper caste Hindus. But these efforts did not bear fruit for Muslim League. One of the intelligence report stated that the local scheduled castes did not respond very enthusiastically to League appeal. This was perhaps because of the inherent contradiction between wanting to achieve Muslim unity and at the same time trying to mobilize non-Muslims. But more

not a case of Muslims getting alienated from Congress and going over to Muslim League, but that of Muslim League appropriating a much larger share of the Muslim support than Congress could.

201 67, 1938; WRPA. Also see the FR for April 1938, part I, p. 3.

202 114 (also 125), 1938; ibid.

203 23, 1938; ibid.

204 231, 1938; ibid.

205 67, 1938; ibid.
significantly, these efforts did not succeed because, unlike Muslims, Congress had already acquired a foothold among the depressed classes.\textsuperscript{206}

The second major project was also only partially successful. The greatest obstacle to achieving Muslim unity was presented by the Shia-Sunni strife or the Madhe-Saheba agitation active during 1937-39.\textsuperscript{207} Continuation of the Shia-Sunni strife tended to thwart League efforts at uniting Muslims; intervening in the matter carried the risk of being declared partisan by either Shias or Sunnis. Haig thought that League’s great reluctance to enter into the Shia-Sunni strife was because of a nervousness “about their own organization being disrupted by the controversy.” He reported Jinnah to have threatened “ex-communication to any Leaguer who should try to intervene.”\textsuperscript{208} A weak base among

\textsuperscript{206} In 1937, Congress in UP had captured 15 out of the 20 seats reserved for the scheduled castes in the elections, held under both separate and joint electorates. In 1946, the Congress won all the scheduled caste constituencies in UP. Reeves, \textit{Elections in Uttar Pradesh}, pp. 254-90, 315-41.

\textsuperscript{207} The essence of the Shia-Sunni conflict, two important sects in Islam, could be traced back to the observance of different ritualistic practices. The recitation of Madhe-Saheba (“praise of the companions of the prophet”) in praise of the first four caliphs by the Sunnis and Tabarra, ridiculing the first three caliphs, by the Shias, were in direct conflict with each other. Minor clashes had occurred in the 1880s and 1890s in Lucknow where Shias formed a sizable minority of about 10.7% of the Muslim population, compared to their miniscule presence of only four percent of the total Muslim population in India. But major and systematic conflict began in 1905-06, revolving around the public recitation of Madhe-Saheba. The Piggot Committee, set up in 1909 to resolve the dispute, allowed the recitation except on the days of mourning (Moharram and Chelhum). This settled the issue till 1935 but after that recommendations of the committee began to be violated and Shia-Sunni violence became frequent and rampant. The Sunnis launched a movement asserting their right to recite Madhe-Saheba on all days. A major violence occurred in April 1938 when, on the day of Chelhum, Sunnis threw stones at a Shia procession. Ten persons died and 160 were injured in the violence that followed. Yet another committee, headed by Justice Allsop, was set up in 1938 which endorsed the recommendations of the Piggot Committee. As the Madhe-Saheba movement continued, the Shias stepped up the public recitation of Tabarra. The Shia-Sunni violence in Lucknow continued to be a source of embarrassment to the Congress government. Quarterly Survey, no. 3, 1 February 1938 to 30 April 1938, \textit{Linlithgow Papers}, Roll no. 142. For more details of the Shia-Sunni problem, see Mushirul Hasan, “Sectarianism in Indian Islam: The Shia-Sunni Divide in the United Provinces”, in \textit{IESHR}, Vol. 27, Number 2, April-June 1990, pp. 209-28. Also see Gopinath Srivastava, \textit{When Congress Ruled}, pp. 127-29.

\textsuperscript{208} Letter to Linlithgow, 9 May 1939 (also 10 April 1939), \textit{Haig Papers}, Roll no. 2.
the Shias\textsuperscript{209} may have had something to do with Muslim League's reluctance to handle and solve the Shia-Sunni strife.

Overcoming dissensions within the ranks was very largely successful although dissenting voices could be heard till as late as 1939. \textit{The Leader} reported during the course of Jinnah-Bose talks, held in April-May 1938, that although Jinnah was not inclined towards a settlement, a silver line in the dark clouds was that "other Muslim Leaguers" might be more willing than Jinnah and would do their utmost in bringing about a settlement with the Congress.\textsuperscript{210} When the Congress government initiated a move to replace a Hindu judge by a European sessions judge for trying cases of communal riots in Banaras, Mirza Mohammad Husain Beg, Secretary, Banaras Muslim League, sought to assure the government and the administration, on behalf of Muslims of Banaras, that such a move was unnecessary and that "...we have full confidence in our Hindu judge....What is more, no such misapprehension exists in the minds of the Muslim public."\textsuperscript{211} These steps of local Muslim Leaguers were certainly in contrast to the general direction in which the UP League was proceeding. It was reported in the \textit{Leader} that Allahabad Muslim League was not prepared to act on the directions of UPML regarding the hoisting of the League flag. "As a matter of fact, some prominent local Muslim Leaguers do not appreciate the mandatory form of instructions" dictated by League high command in UP.\textsuperscript{212} In July 1938, Mohammad Shahid Fakhri of Muslim League issued a joint statement along with Sajjad Zaheer and K.M.Ashraf on the

\textsuperscript{209} The inadequate representation of the Shias among the Muslim legislators in UP was hinted at, in Ali Zaheer's reported conversation with Nawab Ismail Khan. \textit{The Leader}, 21 and 22 January 1939.

\textsuperscript{210} \textit{The Leader}, 29 May 1938.

\textsuperscript{211} \textit{Ibid}, 4 July 1938.

\textsuperscript{212} \textit{Ibid}, 29 July 1938.
developments in Palestine. Some local Muslim Leaguers in Kanpur welcomed the victory of a Congress candidate over Hindu Sabha candidate in Faizabad bye-election and hoped that soon Congress and League would be working together. In fact, as late as October 1939, SOI reported that there existed a minority view in Muslim League which insisted on making attempts to effect a rapprochement with Congress.

The main purpose behind this analysis is to locate the score card of Muslim League's performance somewhere between being very impressive and falling well short of being a spectacular success. Whatever inroads it was able to make among Muslims of UP, were not because of any specific issues it picked up but precisely because it had launched a movement into which various issues could be integrated.

The general context of 1937-39 was also a major propellant to the League movement. The period witnessed fierce tension between Hindus and Muslims leading to communal riots in various parts of the province. The Congress government admitted that between the taking over of office by Congress in July 1937 and October 1938 UP witnessed as many as 24 communal riots. The Viceroy thought that the increase in communal violence was because of "revived activity of the Muslim League" and the "crude communalism of much of its propaganda." Whether the increase in violence was an offshoot of League movement, or it fed into the League movement, it is difficult

213 Ibid, 30 July 1938.
214 Ibid, 17 August 1938.
215 SOI, 24 October 1939.
216 Proceedings of the UPLA, vol. 12, p. 709. The estimated loss of property that these riots resulted in was worth Rs. 12317. The total casualty was 54 and the number of injured persons was 787. Allahabad topped the list with three riots, 30 dead and 229 injured. Allahabad was followed by Aligarh, Moradabad, Pilibhit, Azamgarh, Faizabad (two each) and Etah, Bareilly, Bijnor, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Banda, Banaras, Ballia, Basti, Sitapur and B a Banki (one each). Ibid, p. 793.
217 Quarterly Survey, no. 3, Linlithgow Papers, Roll no. 142, p. 29.
to tell. But the two were directly related to each other. Interestingly, Haig was of the
view that the spate of Hindu-Muslim violence was the outcome of the fact that Congress
had formed the government without Muslim League. As a result, Muslims tended to be
suspicous of the government and Hindus acquired extra belligerence because they
thought that finally their government had come. This, thought Haig, was the main
reason for the Hindu-Muslim violence.\(^{218}\)

Haig may have been overstating the case when he suggested that the mere
participation of Muslim League in the government would solve the problem. But his
insight about the increasing hostility and aggression on the part of Hindus and Muslims
was absolutely correct. It is not necessary here to go into the details of Hindu-Muslim
relations or communal violence in UP. But two instances, of Dadri fair and Tanda firing,
can be cited to illustrate the extent of Hindu aggression and Muslim hostility. Whereas
the violence at Dadri fair witnessed Hindu aggression, the Tanda firing was the result of
Muslim belligerence.

\(^{218}\) "To my mind there is no doubt that the root cause of the trouble is that the Muslims look
upon the present government as a Hindu raj, and to a very large extent the Hindus also have the
same feeling. In these circumstances, it does not require any striking and obvious example of
injustices, which indeed are really lacking, to keep alive the flame of communal animosity." (Letter to Linlithgow, 10 April 1939) According to Haig, Muslims looked upon Congress as a
Hindu raj because most of them sat in the opposition in the Assembly. It was, therefore, the
"political grouping in the province" which made the government look Hindu and the opposition
Muslim. "Finding themselves unable to effect much by the parliamentary methods, they
(Muslims) are inevitably tempted to create unrest and disturbances outside the legislature and
there is no doubt that the Muslim League have set themselves quite deliberately to this policy.
There are, I believe, a great number of inflammatory speeches and writings on the Muslim side,
and of course the Hindus do not refrain from counter attacks. Moreover... it is probably the case
that the Hindus are elated by their position of political power and are by no means tolerant or
conciliatory." (Letter to Linlithgow, 23 October 1938) Haig was convinced that the only way
out was the inclusion of Muslim League in the government. "It (the communal violence) would
continue until the Congress made up their minds to admit the Muslims to some real share of
power....nothing else will change the situation. What the Muslims resent is not any particular
injustice or oppression (indeed they find it difficult to allege with plausibility any instance of
this), but the fact that they are ruled by the Hindus." Letter to Linlithgow, 25 February 1939,
\textit{Haig Papers}, Roll no. 2.
Looting of the cattle at Dadri fair was the first serious example of Hindu-Muslim turbulence under the Congress government in UP. Dadri, a village in Ballia District, used to hold the annual cattle fair where the cattle were sold, invariably by Hindus, to Muslim butchers. In November 1937, the cattle fair at Dadri witnessed violence by Hindus against Muslims. After the cattle had been sold to Muslim butchers, they were attacked by a mob of Hindus who took away nearly 2000 cattle. Five Muslims were seriously injured in the violence, one of whom died later. The administration took action and succeeded in retrieving 181 cattle. Before the Dadri fair, some leaflets, appealing to Hindus to protect the cow, had been circulated by one Baba Ragho Das of Barhaj Ashram who had also been the president of the Gorakhpur Congress Committee. The significance of the Dadri violence lay in the use that Muslim League was to make of it by equating ‘Hindu aggression’ with ‘Congress aggression’. Although the Congress government was able to deny most of the charges levelled by Muslim League on the floor of the Assembly, propaganda outside could still go on about Congress complicity in the Dadri violence.

If the Dadri violence was an instance of Hindu aggression, the Tanda incident in August 1938 reflected Muslim aggression against Hindus followed by police firing on the Muslim mob. Hindu-Muslim relations had generally been strained in Tanda town in district Faizabad. Muslims had resented the taking out of an Arya Samaj procession

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219 The charges that Congressmen made inflammatory speeches at the fair, that they did not prevent violence in spite of being present there, that Congressmen had tried to influence the district administration and stood surety for some of the accused were effectively denied by the Congress government. See question no. 67 to 80, specially 69, 71, 75, 76 and 77, Proceedings of the UPLA, Vol. 4. pp. 954-57.

220 “Muslims bullied and looted with Congress Raj ki Jai”, “A well designed plot”, “(Muslims) looted under the flag of the Congress” was how the SOI chose to report the incident. Another version stated that the “Hindu mob which was mercilessly beating the Muslims was all the time shouting ‘Gandhi ji ki jai’.” SOI, 20 December 1937. The Pirpur report and the report prepared by Fazlul Huq inflated the number of the injured to 40 and 50, respectively. Aziz, Muslims Under Congress Rule, p. 371 and 407.
earlier in 1937. In August 1938, a procession of 17 Muraos (a vegetable selling caste among Hindus) was doing the rounds of temples with idols. When they passed a mosque, they were stopped by a crowd of Muslims. The processionists did not retreat but hid themselves in a shop. The Muslim crowd soon swelled to 4000 and surrounded the shop. The police force arrived, accompanied by the Tehsildar and the police inspector, both Muslims. But the crowd refused to disperse. Soon brickbats started coming from the mob and the mosque nearby. The SDM arrived shortly after, declared the assembly to be unlawful and gave a warning to the crowd to disperse. The crowd refused to disperse and increased in size to 5000. The SDM ordered firing. A total of 19 people received bullet injuries. On the administration side, SDM, Deputy Collector, Tehsildar, S.O. and Head Constables received injuries through brickbats.\(^{221}\)

Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan condemned the incident, declared the police firing to be unjustified and demanded a non-official enquiry.\(^{222}\) The Congress government instituted an enquiry to be conducted by Justice Yorke, a judge of the Oudh Chief Court. All witnesses from the administration, Hyder Raza, the Tehsildar, Inkisar Husain, the S.O., and Mr. Randhawa, the SDM, considered the firing inevitable. The Deputy Collector, an Englishman, said in his evidence: “If the firing had not been ordered, we would have been crushed by the crowd...By crushing, I mean they would have killed us with lathis.”\(^{223}\) Two Muslim League flags were spotted in the crowd. The enquiry also revealed that the two local Muslim leaders, who had escorted the Hindu processionists to safety, expressed their inability to handle the violent crowd. The

\(^{221}\) The information on Tanda firing has been gathered from The Leader, 25 August 1938 to 1 September 1938. The proceedings of Tanda firing enquiry appeared in the Leader on 22, 23, 24 and 30 October 1938 and 7 November 1938.

\(^{222}\) Ibid, 25 August 1938.

\(^{223}\) Tanda Firing Enquiry, Ibid, 24 October 1938.
enquiry cleared the officials of any charges. Muslim League boycotted the enquiry. Interestingly, whereas the SOI played down the Tanda firing in its coverage and the Pirpur report made no mention of it, the report by Fazlul Huq included the Tanda incident in the list of government atrocities on the Muslims.\(^{224}\) The UP League observed 16 September as the 'Tanda Day' in more than half the districts of UP to condemn the police firing.\(^{225}\)

Incidents like Dadri or Tanda could easily provide fodder to the League movement. In certain cases, as in Gorakhpur district in February 1938, an incident led the League protest to take the form of a civil disobedience movement involving voluntary imprisonment. In Zahidabad town in Gorakhpur district, the administration had promulgated section 144 of the Cr.PC apprehending trouble during Bakr-id. Prohibitory orders were also passed regarding cow-slaughter. Mohammad Faruq, a League legislator, decided to defy the order and was arrested. He nominated Rizwanullah, another Leaguer, as the dictator for the movement. One dictator followed another and within two weeks three dictators and 300 League volunteers had been arrested for defying the prohibitory orders. Jathas began to arrive from other districts to provide reinforcement. The local Ahrars and the members of Jamaitul-Ulema-i-Hind supported the administration and tried to keep the Muslim shops open. But the civil disobedience movement gathered momentum in the district. After two weeks of agitation, the District Congress Committee appointed a unity board to control the panic. The unity board initiated negotiations between the District Magistrate and Muslim League leaders. League leaders gave an assurance that cows would not be slaughtered except at the


\(^{225}\) 338, 1938; WRPA.
stipulated site. The DM decided to withdraw section 144 and the arrest notice on the League dictators. But soon Muslim League negotiators expressed their inability to implement their promise. The DM clamped section 144 again. More arrests followed. The Gorakhpur League formed a war council to defy the orders of the administration. Two months later, 260 Muslim League volunteers were sentenced to one day’s imprisonment by the City Magistrate of Gorakhpur. And, finally, Hakim Manzur Ahmad, Secretary, Gorakhpur Muslim League, was sentenced to six months’ rigorous imprisonment for violating the prohibitory orders regarding cow-slaughter. 226

The Gorakhpur movement demonstrated that Muslim League had acquired among its ranks a group of people who were willing to make personal sacrifices for their movement. The large scale arrests would have served to mobilize more people to Muslim League. Equally significantly, they might have also helped to snatch from Congress the moral authority to speak for Muslims.

These efforts throughout the year 1938 were put together by, and tied up with, the publication of the Pirpur report. The report is now easily available, having recently been published again. 227 It is possible to interpret it in a variety of ways. It has been treated as a documentation and a reflection of the discontent of Muslims under the Congress regime. 228 Alternatively it can be considered a statement of Muslim League’s propaganda. Some historians have attempted to examine and investigate the report and question its authenticity. 229 But the question ‘how the Pirpur report was prepared’ has

226 See The Leader, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 19 February, 17 April and 23 August 1938.


not been raised. The council of Muslim League appointed, in March 1938, a special committee under the chairmanship of the Raja of Pirpur to investigate the instances of injustice done to Muslims in Congress provinces. The committee started working around May. Appeals were made to town, district and divisional branches of Muslim League to send information of discrimination against Muslims to the committee.\(^{230}\) The report was written on the basis of information received from Muslim League branches and the information collected directly by the committee from local Muslims. The riot hit places were the obvious areas visited by the committee. Often investigation and propaganda were conducted at the same time. For instance, the committee arrived in Allahabad in May 1938 after two months of fierce communal violence and tension. Meetings were held, speeches delivered and simultaneously the statements of Muslims were recorded. Similar pattern was adopted elsewhere.\(^{231}\) Non-Muslim evidence of any kind was absent. During the Tanda firing enquiry, the Deputy Commissioner made the following observation:

It was clear from what they (Pirpur and others) said to me that they had listened only to the statement of Muslims. The story they gave me was not at all as I heard from official witnesses but contained the allegations as were made by (other Muslims). They did not offer to lead any evidence before me to substantiate those allegations.\(^{232}\)

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\(^{231}\) SOI, 23 May 1938.

\(^{232}\) The Leader, 5 and 7 May 1938. Similarly, Pirpur delivered anti-Congress speeches and then collected information from Muslims of Nagpur. Ibid, 9 June 1938. Also see SOI, 1 August 1938.

\(^{232}\) Tanda Firing Enquiry: Evidence of Deputy Commissioner Mr. Stephenson, The Leader, 7 November 1938.
Going by the manner in which the Pirpur report was prepared, it is not surprising that, far from containing an account of the performance of the Congress ministry, it merely recorded the statement of the position of League leadership against Congress. It was meant to be a part of Muslim League’s propaganda, and it was just that.

So, where did Muslim League stand in UP at the end of 1939? Do all the instances cited above add up to the story of a successful, vibrant movement? They probably do, but it has to be still emphasized that the League leadership had yet not overcome many of its problems. A good test of the League’s success would be to judge the kind of response that it got from the ‘deliverance day’ appeal. Though the ‘deliverance day’, held on 22 December 1939, was observed in almost all the districts, the extent of participation varied from district to district. The pattern was the same. Meetings were held in mosques, the official resolution of Muslim League was passed, speeches were made and faith in Jinnah’s leadership was reiterated. The UP intelligence reported that although the day was observed all over the province, it had “met with a mixed reception among Muslim circles in the province.” Within Muslim League leadership, Jinnah’s decision was resented by some of his followers. Ispahani wrote to Jinnah: “...your direction for the observance of the day of rejoicing for deliverance from Congress rule gave me a rude shock. I did not expect such a command from you, because you have all

233 Responding to CWC’s decision to ask all Congress ministries to resign, Jinnah issued an appeal to all Muslims to observe 22 December 1939 (Friday) “as the ‘Day of Deliverance’ and thanksgiving as a mark of relief that the Congress governments have at last ceased to function.” (Statement to the Press, 6 December 1939, Nation’s voice, pp. 417-18.) Great care was taken by League leadership to observe a very restrained ‘day of deliverance’. Any violence and provocation were to be avoided. No processions were to be taken out. Specific instructions were issued to only pass resolutions and hold meetings inside the mosques without making any demonstration of triumph. Editorial in SOI, 16 and 18 December 1939.

234 SOI reported the observance of the ‘deliverance day’ from Lucknow, Aligarh, Meerut, Moradabad, Azamgarh, Saharanpur, Badaun and Ghaziabad only. SOI, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 December 1939.

235 513, 1939 and 3, 1940; WRPA.
along been on a very high and strong pedestal. The order was bereft of your fighting spirit.\textsuperscript{236}

If, at the end of the year 1939, Jinnah was to take stock of Muslim League's performance in UP during the ministry period, he would have been reasonably satisfied, though not entirely free from worries and anxiety about the future. The first phase of the movement was over. The Congress government, catalyst to Jinnah's movement, did not exist any longer. This had deprived the movement of readily available incentives and motivation. It would now have to be pursued along different lines.

\textbf{3.5 Making of the Quaid-i-Azam: M.A. Jinnah}

I know that you are out to unite and consolidate the Muslims and not to divide them and that you will not be a party to anything that may create further dissensions among the Muslims.

(Letter from Chhatari to Jinnah before the Lucknow session of the League)

Will you accept the sincerest thanks of the whole of Muslim India for the supreme tact, ability and devotion shown by you in inspiring the Muslim community? You have risen to the occasion with the vigour and experience of the old Jinnah whom we loved and admired, and organised the League on a basis which will make it a shield against Congress influence and work.

(Letter from Shafaat Ahmad Khan to Jinnah after the Lucknow session)

The two letters quoted above\textsuperscript{237} convey very well the kind of expectations which were being made from Jinnah during the period around the Lucknow session of Muslim League. The need for Muslim unity was being felt with a desperate urgency in various quarters among Muslims from diverse backgrounds and Jinnah was perceived as the


man who could bring it about. Why did most political formations among Muslims come around to accept Jinnah as their leader, in spite of their differences? What was it about Jinnah that made him indispensable to them?

Making of the Quaid-i-Azam is an interesting story. Interwoven into it are the sub-themes of an urgent need for a leader, a strategy and the creation of a pan-Indian political structure of Muslims to keep abreast with the changed political context. Increasing democratization, total provincial autonomy and the prospects of a federation at the centre put a certain premium on the majority rule. Shrinking space for nominated candidates in the legislatures and a gradual withdrawing of official patronage in different political and administrative arenas forced the recipients of the benefits from the earlier system to look for alternatives. It looked certain that Congress, with its popularity and organizational resources, would appropriate a large share of the ‘political power’ released by the new constitutional arrangements. However, Congress could not have been so certain, given its traditional weakness among Muslims, of also acquiring the ‘power’ reserved for Muslims in the new Act. In fact, it was almost certain that Congress directly would not be a formidable contestant for this ‘Muslim space’.

This, then, was the essence and texture of the new political context. It was in this situation that various groups and leaders of Muslims, scattered through the provinces, had to reformulate their political priorities and the course of action. It was in this spectrum of possibilities that various Muslims, from the majority and the minority provinces, sympathizers and opponents of Congress, loyalists and anti-British, had to locate themselves. The spectre of a Congress sweep did not haunt the ‘Muslim leaders’

\(^{238}\) Jinnah made numerous references to the new changes that had come about in the political situation, in 1937. He said in a public speech in Patna in October 1937 that the “time had changed. Under the new Constitution any legislation can be passed by the majority in the legislature.” \textit{The Nation’s Voice}, p. 185.
of Punjab and Bengal where they could build cross-communal alliances and capture provincial legislatures. The pro-Congress Muslims faced a different dilemma. They were sure to be defeated if they faced the Muslim electorates from a Congress platform. They, therefore, needed a specifically ‘Muslim platform’ which would also be a nationalist platform. The choice for anti-Congress loyalist Muslims from the minority provinces was either to fight and stop Congress march to power through consolidated loyalism or through positing the ‘Muslim alternative’, given Congress’s vulnerability in that area. The options became clearer after the elections when the dreaded capture of power by Congress became a reality and landlordism became a dead letter (except in the province of Punjab) in the electoral arena. Thus, through a process of elimination, the ‘Muslim alternative’ emerged, for the loyalist Muslims, as the strongest weapon with which to challenge Congress.

It was thus that, during the period 1934-37, Jinnah became the inevitable choice for various formations of Muslims (except for the regionalists of Punjab and Bengal). His anti-imperialism, preference for ‘Muslim politics’ and being a candidate for the all-India domain of politics, brought him to the forefront of ‘Muslim politics’ in a lot more certain manner compared to the 1920s. It was, therefore, no surprise that Jinnah was requested to return to active political life in India by Liaqat Ali Khan, a Muslim landlord from UP. After 1937, leaders from Punjab and Bengal also rallied behind Jinnah. The

239 With a regional base in the Bombay Presidency, Jinnah could not possibly be a candidate for provincial politics, unlike the Muslims of the Muslim majority provinces. It was, therefore, not a co-incidence that the impetus for creating an all-India political structure of the Muslims came from the minority provinces.

240 It has been argued that Jinnah owed his return to mainstream politics to the vacuum created by the deaths of prominent Muslims, viz., Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mohammad Ali, M.A.Ansari, Mohammad Shafi and Fuzli Husain. Humayun Kabir, Muslim Politics, p.9; and Saleem M.M. Qureshi, The Politics of Jinnah, (Karachi, 1988), p.128. But it is best to look for reasons of Jinnah’s return and acceptance, not in the creation of any vacuum but in the changed political scenario.
story of their joining Jinnah, and the reasons for it, have been narrated earlier in this chapter.\textsuperscript{241}

But did all this, in itself, make Jinnah the Quaid? Was he merely a silent spectator in the process of his transformation as the unquestioned, unrivaled, unmatched, and supreme leader of Indian Muslims? Jinnah may have owed his initial acceptance by Muslims of diverse political regional backgrounds to circumstances. But he had to still work hard and retain and develop his status. This could be done by stressing upon his followers and audiences that it was no longer possible to take on Congress through constitutional means. The constitutional battle had been won by Congress through the capture of seven (and later eight) provincial Assemblies. The Congress would have to be confronted with extra constitutional means, i.e., through a popular movement against the Congress governments. Herein lay the indispensability of Jinnah. He could lead and conduct the movement through the articulation and development of a strategy.\textsuperscript{242}

The making of Jinnah as a Quaid-i-Azam, a strategist par excellence, and an ideologue are intertwined themes in Jinnah’s politics and, therefore, need to be taken up together. Along with being accepted by Muslims of different background, Jinnah came to symbolize Muslim unity, resurgence and an assertion of Muslim ‘rights’. This

\textsuperscript{241} Though it has to be emphasized here that both the alliances remained uneasy and full of uncertainties, leading finally to the expulsion of Huq from Muslim League in 1941. In Punjab also, the exact relationship between Muslim League and Unionists remained a bone of contention (See Ghulam Rasul’s letter to Jinnah, 4 November 1937, Mukhtar Masood, Eye Witnesses of History, pp. 47-54). The conflict between provincialism and communalism in Punjab had not resolved itself very easily, and, at any rate, not until very late in the 1940s.

\textsuperscript{242} Formulation of a strategy, as a part of the movement, may exist at a conscious, semi-conscious, or even sub-conscious plane. Sometimes it is not articulated by the leaders, as was often the case with Gandhi, but has to be extrapolated by the historian from the package of actions, utterances, writings, notes and texts of the leaders. Jinnah displayed an acute sense of a strategy, specially after 1937, though seldom articulated or theorized it. Jinnah’s strategy may have existed at a conscious or semi-conscious level, and it is generally possible to discern it from an assemblage of his statements and activities.
became possible partly because of the context mentioned above and partly because of Jinnah's own personality. 243

The period between the elections and the Lucknow session of Muslim League is very crucial in Jinnah's ideological development. It was in this period that all the basic themes of his politics were enunciated and sharpened for effective use in the future. In other words, this period laid the foundations for Jinnah's subsequent political activities and postures and he stuck to them with a remarkable consistency. Taking fiercely anti-Congress positions, demanding parity between League and Congress, relegating Hindu-Muslim unity to a secondary position and subject to the treatment of Muslim League as the authoritative body of Muslims, and castigating Congress Muslims became frequent utterances for Jinnah in this period. It was through all these that he proceeded to initiate a new strategy of creating a consolidated, parallel structure of Indian Muslims, organized vertically.

This strategy was born out of a very real dilemma in which Jinnah found himself after the elections. In spite of all the major demands contained in the fourteen points (separate electorates, 1/3rd representation at the centre, creation of more Muslim provinces) having been accepted, he found himself nowhere politically. The earlier strategy of demanding concessions and weightage had exhausted itself and yet had not taken Jinnah and his League to a position of any visible political strength. The politics of

243 For an account of what Jinnah meant to his followers and admirers and the high esteem in which he was held by them, see Z.A.Suleri, My Leader (Lahore, 1945); Ispahani, Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah as I Knew Him; Fatima Jinnah, My Brother, (Edited by Sharif-al-Mujahid), (Karachi, 1987); and K.H.Khurshid, Memories of Jinnah, (Oxford, 1990). As Jinnah's new identity as the unquestioned leader of Muslims asserted itself, earlier titles like 'Muslim Gokhale' and 'ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity' gave way to new ones like Mohib-i-Millat (friend of the community), Fakhr-i-Qaum (pride of the community), Mohib-i-Watan, and Kemal Pasha of India. (Waheed Ahmad (ed.), Nation's Voice, Vol. 1, p. 184 and 188.) For a somewhat psychoanalytical assessment of Jinnah's politics and personality, see Khalid B.Sayed, "The Personality of Jinnah and His Political Strategy", in Philips and Wainwright (ed.), Partition of India, pp.276-93.
concessions, therefore, had to give way to politics of ‘parity’. This meant drawing a vertical dividing line between Muslims and non-Muslims. The first step in this direction was to remove all obstacles in his way. Congress, with its secular agenda and insistence on Hindu-Muslim unity, and Congress Muslims clearly stood in the way. Although, in this period, Jinnah did not discount the desirability of Hindu-Muslim unity, he proceeded on the assumption that the creation of vertical political structures of Hindus and Muslims would create better conditions for Hindu-Muslim unity. In other words, a total Muslim unity was seen by Jinnah as a pre-condition to Hindu-Muslim unity. This was in sharp contrast to the Congress position on the question of how to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity.

Jinnah’s election campaigns had been marked by minor skirmishes with Nehru, but no major offensive had been launched against Congress. By April 1937, specially after Congress’s declaration of the Muslim mass contact programme, it became clear that between opposition to British and that to Congress Jinnah considered latter to be more important. When the Congress declared a hartal on 1 April to protest against the inauguration of the Act and the installation of the puppet ministries in Congress majority provinces, Jinnah appealed to Muslims to stay away from the hartal and not to participate in it. This was the first instance when Jinnah issued a public appeal against joining an anti-imperialist demonstration in spite of his own strong disapproval of the Act. This showed the extent to which he was willing to go to pursue anti-Congressism. It also demonstrated that in his new priorities, anti-imperialism had taken a back seat against anti-Congressism. Earlier in March, he had also visited UP and tried for a rapprochement between Muslim League and the NAPs. In retaliation to the Congress decision to bring Muslims into its fold through a separate campaign, Jinnah issued a statement:
This recent orientation of their policy towards Muslims and the Muslim League is bound to fail and lead to disaster. I find that efforts are being made in a somewhat deliberate fashion to divide Muslims for an ulterior object by appealing to their patriotism and national feeling, by falsely representing that the Congress alone has got the monopoly to champion and fight for the freedom of India.... When the question of the protection of the minorities is raised by anybody who dares to raise it, he is dubbed as a Communalist, for there is, in their opinion no such thing as a Hindu-Muslim question in reality.... the object of these people is to split Muslims and break the Muslim League.244

The reasons for this re-ordering of priorities are quite clear. The British had displayed no intention of disturbing his apple cart of Muslim unity. They did not intend to threaten it (later, after October 1937, they were to welcome it and after 1939 openly support it). At most they could retain some Muslim landlords and loyalist elements. But these elements showed no great aversion to the creation of a consolidated Muslim bloc. Their own loyalist bloc had crumbled badly and beyond repair (except, of course, in Punjab) and they would, therefore, not mind going over to Jinnah. The main threat, in fact, came from Congress and its proposed Muslim mass contact programme. The fragile Muslim base of Congress had become clear to everyone. But instead of solving this problem by delegating this task to Muslim League (as Jinnah would have wanted it), the Congress leadership actually decided to undertake this project directly. This, to Jinnah, was adding insult to injury.

So, the greatest threat to Jinnah’s long term scheme came from Congress. The British could, at most, keep a few Muslim elites from Jinnah’s hegemonic orbit. But

244 Waheed Ahmad (ed.), Nation’s Voice, Vol. 1, p. 137. The April demonstration had been a success and Muslims were reported to have participated in it. Rajendra Prasad issued a statement to this effect, drawing satisfaction from the Muslim participation in the Congress demonstrations, in spite of Jinnah’s appeals to the contrary. Jinnah said in his statement: “Babu Rajendra Prasad knows that my expression of opinion was not followed up by any organized effort. Does he want me to make such an effort in future? Besides, with his experience as a practical man, does he not realize that Muslims love any demonstration or tamasha and always enjoy excitement?” Ibid, p. 139.
Congress, upon being successful, could mobilize the masses of Muslims. Deprived of the Muslim mass support, in an era of competitive electoral politics, there was nothing Jinnah could do to rescue himself from political oblivion in spite of having been granted his fourteen points. To put it in a nutshell, although Jinnah achieved the fourteen points, the Congress juggernaut, if not stopped, could still endanger the prospects of reaping a rich harvest based on them. The British granted the fourteen points; Congress could prevent Jinnah and Muslim League from translating them into political strength.

The point should be clear. Jinnah’s antagonism towards Congress did not start after the break-down of the coalition talks or the functioning of the Congress ministries; it had started much earlier and had little, almost nothing, to do with the latter. It was also not because of the ‘highhandedness’ on the part of Congress. Jinnah was not making allegations against Congress out of anger or a feeling of being let down. He was pursuing his politics, logically and ‘rationally’. He was merely advancing his politics further in the new situation.

Given the above understanding, it is no surprise that Jinnah devoted a considerable part of his attention to castigating Congress and particularly Muslims in it. He called Nehru a dictator245 and expressed satisfaction at UP League’s refusal, in May 1937, to support Congress in the legislatures: “The Muslim League has emerged in the United Provinces, notwithstanding the attempts on the part of some Congress leaders to undermine the League, stronger and more united than it ever was.”246 He even accepted the charge of being communal: “We are glad we are communalists. Instead of waiting at

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245 Statement to the press, 24 April 1937, ibid, p. 140.

246 Interview to the press, 10 May 1937, ibid, p. 148.
other’s door, if you want to create self-respect and self-reliance, organise yourself. If that is communalism, I am proud of it.” 247 He warned Nehru to stay clear of Muslims:

In my opinion this policy of mass contact with Musalmans by Congress is fraught with very serious consequences. There is plenty of scope for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to improve his own people, the Hindus as there is a lot of undesirable elements among them. Similarly the Muslim League should do the same, as there is plenty of undesirable elements among the Musalmans.248

He also charged Congress with a Hindu Mahasabha mentality: “At times it is very difficult to say who are Congress leaders and who are Mahasabha leaders, for the line of demarcation between the two with regard to a large number of them is very thin indeed.”249 Interestingly all these statements were made before Congress had accepted office. His onslaught against Congress had begun much before the ‘Hindu’ raj arrived.

The very decision of Congress to form the ministries was called the ending of the “blind man’s bluff and Dutch auction.”250 Jinnah’s accusations against the Congress continued uninterrupted till the Lucknow session and even after.251

The other themes of Jinnah’s rhetoric in this period, creating parity and impressing upon his audiences the need for Muslim unity, were also conducted with characteristic clarity and sharpness. Parity was sought to be achieved by (a) demanding for Muslim League the status of equality with Congress and that of an organization fully

247 Public address, 16 May 1937, ibid, p. 150.
248 Statement to the press, 7 July 1937, ibid, p. 154.
250 Interview to the press, 8 July 1937, ibid, p. 157.
251 See, for instance, ibid, pp. 146-47, 156, 159-61, 183, and 184-86. For his attack on those Muslims who left League to join Congress, see p. 161, 162 and 190. For Jinnah’s anti-Congress position during 1938-39, see pp. 282-85, 300, 318-19, 327-32, 337, 338-41, 370, 382, 386 among others.
representative of Indian Muslims; and (b) making the settlement with Muslim League a
pre-condition for any attempt to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity.

As a step towards this end, Jinnah asserted that Muslim League, and therefore
Muslims, were a separate social and political force, incapable of being accommodated
and assimilated into any mainstream. Jinnah had earlier, during the course of the
election campaign, called ‘Muslim India’ the third force. Now he proceeded to elaborate
what he had meant by it: “...we do not wish to submit to slavery or dictation either of the
British Government or any majority party or community.”252 He, therefore, appealed to
Muslims to “organize themselves. We want no ‘assurance’ from one party or the other
in this country, or for that matter, from the British Government.”253 On the relationship
with Hindus, he emphasized that “it was not possible for Muslims and Hindus to merge
their identities because of the fundamentally different social heritage and culture of the
two communities, but it was at the same time most feasible for them to join hands and
march together to the goal of freedom.”254 But joining hands was possible only on the
basis of complete parity.

This insistence was accompanied by the assertion that Muslim League was the only
authoritative organization of Muslims; that it was a national political body;255 and that it
did not lag behind anyone in the desire for independence. Indian Muslims, according to

252 Interview to the press, 12 May 1937, ibid, p. 148.

253 Statement to the press, 3 May 1937, ibid, p. 143.


255 “I think he (Nehru) is doing a very great injustice when he talks of the Muslim League as
a religious group. The Muslim League is a political organization and its policy and programme
differs in vital respects from that of the Congress.” Statement to the press, 3 May 1937, ibid, p.
142.
Jinnah, had been a demoralized lot. They got a raw deal from the new Act, the benefits of which had gone to Congress. Both, the British and Congress, had exploited Muslims only because they were weak and disunited, and only Muslim League could rescue them from this state: "The Muslims in the past have been in no-man's land. Having no organization, no system, their leaders were exploited either by the British Government or by the Congress to the fullest extent. It was only with the coming of the League that the Muslim came to (into?) his own." The only honourable course left for Muslims, therefore, was to unite under the banner of Muslim League to make it an irresistible force which nobody could ignore: "We want to gather all Muslims and claim that Muslims back the Muslim League." Muslims should, therefore, stop being the "camp-followers but be in the vanguard."

This, then, was the direction in which Jinnah's politics was developing. Although it continued to retain elements from his past, it broke some new ground as well. The question of independence was finally clinched at the Lucknow session; it was the accusation of being pro-British which had irked him most. Anti-Congressism also acquired a firm place on the agenda. Total indispensability of Muslim unity was

256 "During the last two years one important event has happened. A new constitution has been framed and introduced in India. Under that constitution my community was hopelessly placed. Numerically in a minority, educationally backward, economically nowhere, and financially almost bankrupt, we had to run the election under the new constitution on the basis of separate electorate." Public speech in Patna, 27 October 1937, ibid, p. 189.

257 Ibid, pp. 189-90.

258 Public address in Bombay, 16 May 1937, ibid. p. 150.


260 Immediately after the Lucknow session, he stated categorically: "We yearn for independence more than the Hindus but we want to keep the rights of nine crores of Muslims alive. Islam undoubtedly teaches to be freedom-loving and so we want freedom but we want a freedom in which we should not be slaves of Hindus." Public speech at Patna, 25 October 1937, ibid, p. 185.
What was now left was providing a vision to his audiences and followers, the promise of a better future: “And I say to all Musalmans of India to organise, consolidate and establish solidarity and unity. Service, suffering and sacrifice are absolutely essential conditions before we can achieve anything big and secure our rightful place in the national life of our country.”

What exactly should be the place of Muslims in future India was left unspecified at this stage. It might be an honourable settlement between Hindus and Muslims. Or, alternatively, it might not. Towards the end of 1937, Jinnah did begin to offer inklings of his ‘two-nation-theory’:

It is a historical fact that even an ordinary majority, an overwhelming majority - is likely to be oppressive and tyrannical. How much more is the danger when the majority consists of those whose religion, whose culture, whose philosophy, whose language, whose ordinary life, whose outlook-daily outlook - is fundamentally different from those of the Muslims? What will be the position of the Muslims if that majority is going to decide everything for us? Are we wrong, are we unreasonable when we say that we are not prepared to trust this majority’s goodwill and that we want our rights and interests to be incorporated in the Constitution itself. That is really the point in general, that is really the fight, that is really the issue.

In the post-Lucknow period, Jinnah repeatedly hammered at three inter-related points, (a) the essence of minority politics, (b) unsuitability of democracy to India, and (c) suggestion of a division of India on religious basis as the solution of the minority problem. He constructed the case for his ‘minority politics’ more cogently by drawing inferences from other countries. Most countries, argued Jinnah, had their minority

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261 “The crying need for the Musalmans is to organise themselves and stand on one platform and under one flag of the only organization of the Muslims, namely, the All India Muslim League...I feel that in the present conditions and the way in which things are moving, if the Muslims are not organised and solidarity and unity is not established, they are likely to be crushed, nay, even wiped out of their proper place in the national affairs of the country....I therefore, appeal to you young men not to be led away by visionary ideas but act as practical men in the light of realities which face us.” Message on the occasion of the establishment of Punjab Muslim Students Federation, 1 October 1937, ibid, p. 175.

262 Statement to the press, 28 July 1937, ibid, p. 165.

263 Public speech in Patna, 27 October 1937, ibid, p. 192.
problems which had to be solved. Mere independence was not enough. Countries like America and South Africa got their independence but not for everybody. Blacks in America and Indians in South Africa remained slaves because independence alone did not (and could not) solve the minority problem. Similar fate awaited Indian Muslims if the minority question was not tackled satisfactorily. The minority question included not just religion and culture but also political power: “Muslims have made their position clear. They want not only a complete protection for their religion, culture and language but their political rights and interests should also be safeguarded adequately and effectively in the Constitution itself...”

From 1938 onwards Jinnah began arguing the impossibility of running a country like India along democratic lines:

We in India have been brought up in the traditions of the British parliamentary democracy. The constitution foisted on us is also modelled more or less on the British pattern. But there is an essential difference....The majority and minority parties in Britain are alterable....But such is not the case with India. Here we have a permanent Hindu majority and the rest are minorities which cannot within any conceivable period of time hope to become majorities. The majority can afford to assume a non-communal label, but it remains exclusively Hindu in its spirit and action.

He declared the democratic government to be an “impossibility”, which could not work successfully in India because “Muslims and Hindus... were poles apart in faith, education, culture and philosophy. They were two distinct races or nationalities.”

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264 Statement to the press, 26 December 1937, ibid, p. 199.

265 Personal Reminiscences, ibid, p. 235. Also, “Can democratic parliamentary Government succeed in India? Is it suited to the conditions of the country? It is not the democratic majority that has formed the government in the seven provinces; it is the permanent Hindu majority which cannot be altered by any change whatsoever and hence it is a travesty of the system which may be worthwhile in England.” Speech in Simla, 13 August 1938, ibid, p. 267.

266 Speech in Bombay, 16 August 1939, ibid, p. 386. Also see pp. 382, 399-400 and 410-11.
The development of minority politics and the perceived incompatibility of the democratic model with India provided the stimulus for separatist politics in its extreme form. This was the beginning of the demand for a separate homeland for Muslims. From 1938 onwards, the concern for a Muslim homeland started gathering momentum and began being voiced from different quarters within Muslim League. Khaliquzzaman recalled in his autobiography that in 1938 the idea had taken roots: "Then why should we (Muslims) not separate? I could see that the Hindus would never agree to that, while so far as the British were concerned they might or they might not. Finally I came to the conclusion that separation would perhaps be the best remedy for both the Hindus and the Muslims." 267 The Star of India declared in October 1938 that the Congress "excesses" had begun driving the Muslims to the "Pakistan goal." 268 Finally, Liaqat Ali Khan spelt out the scheme in detail:

I want an independent India where Muslims have power and freedom, for the Muslims are a nation and not a community. It would be a travesty to dismiss 90 million people with a glorious past as a community. Although Hindus and Muslims live in the same country, they live differently because their religion, culture and civilization are different. Muslims do not favour the pseudo-nationalism that the Hindus have borrowed from Europe. If Hindus and Muslims could not now live together amicably in India - and it has become almost impossible for them to co-exist under the same regime - then they might be able to do so by dividing the country on a religious and cultural basis. 269

This was the most unambiguous advocacy of Pakistan proposed hitherto. Jinnah started by declaring that India was not a nation state but a state of nationalities. 270 Of these nationalities, Hindus were the strongest. He told the Muslims students of Karachi:

267 Khaliquzzaman, Pathway to Pakistan, p. 197.
268 SQI, 18 October 1938.
“Hindus will always prevent you from receiving education. They will never allow you to progress. Therefore, you have to help yourself.” He also added: “Muslims have no home and no place to call their own...”271 This, then, was the justification for a Muslim homeland. He also informed the council of AIML that the working committee of Muslim League was considering a variety of schemes, one of which consisted of “dividing the country into Muslim and Hindu India.”272 He actually used the word ‘Pakistan’ in July 1939 273 and declared that Muslims and Hindus were indeed two nations. As a nation, the Muslims could not “maintain their status...unless they acquire(d) ...national self-determination.”274

This, then, was the two-nation theory. From here to the famous Lahore resolution, there was not much distance to cover. On how to achieve his goal and the relationship with the British and Congress, Jinnah gave a clear insight at the Patna session of the League: “I say the Muslim League is not going to be an ally of anyone, but would be the ally of even the devil if need be in the interest of Muslims. It is not because we are in love with Imperialism; but in politics one has to play one’s game as on the chessboard.”275

To sum up, certain aspects of Jinnah’s politics and ideology may be outlined. This would help in locating areas of continuity and shifts in the long span of Jinnah’s political life.

270 Speech in Simla, 13 August 1938, ibid, pp. 267-68.
271 Address at the Muslim Students’ Conference at Karachi, 11 October 1938, ibid, p. 294.
272 Discussions at the Council of AIML at New Delhi, 8 April 1939, ibid, p. 364.
273 Statement to the press, 30 July 1937, ibid, p. 381.
274 Speech in Aligarh, 12 April 1939, ibid, p. 368.
275 Presidential address at the Patna session of the League, 26 December 1938, ibid, p. 332.
To begin with, some sort of loosely defined notion of ‘Muslim politics’ and Muslim unity continued to characterize Jinnah’s politics throughout. In this sense there was a consistency between the earlier and latter periods. Various tactical decisions were related to the preservation of his ‘Muslim politics’. It was the Lucknow pact in the 1910s; pleading for concessions in the 1920s; and asserting ‘parity’ in the 1930s, specially after 1937. All were fostered by a preference for ‘Muslim politics’. All his positions were argued from a ‘Muslim’ platform and as a representative of Muslims. Interestingly, not all the ‘Muslim’ demands corresponded with Jinnah’s political priorities in the 1920s. In particular, the insistence by Muslim League from 1924 onwards on strong provinces and a weak centre, conflicted directly with Jinnah’s own centralist politics. Yet it did not alienate him from Muslim League. He, in fact, presided over the politics of his own marginalization in the 1920s. The only possible reason why he did so, could be a desire not to break out of ‘Muslim politics’.

What, however, changed was the way in which ‘Muslim politics’ was to be pursued. Jinnah might do it within the ideological framework of Indian nationalism or outside it; or within the ideological framework of Muslim separatism. In other words, his ideological equipments and parameters changed, which necessarily meant that the outcome of his politics - the desired destination - would also change. ‘Minorityism’ was the raw material of Jinnah’s politics. Initially it was flexible enough - like the clay of the potter - to lend itself to various shapes and forms. Even when it had lost some of its flexibility in the 1920s, it still remained in a melting pot, but emerged out of it, decisively and conclusively, after 1934. In 1937, uncertainties and confusion disappeared. The direction of his politics became clear. It was difficult for him to go back on it; after 1940 it was impossible. It was in this sense that Jinnah’s politics
represented strong continuities and discontinuities. To focus only on one and overlook the other might give a misleading picture.

Jinnah’s political endeavour lay essentially outside the domain of Congress politics, specially after 1920. There was no ambiguity about it in Jinnah’s mind. Between representing a Muslim wing inside Congress and leading a Muslim party outside, he increasingly preferred the latter option. Although his anti-imperialism brought him closer to Congress in the 1920s, he took care to carve out a place for himself outside even though it created uncomfortable alliances, such as the ones with Agha Khan and Fuzli Husain. It was in this sense that his break with Congress was a lot more complete and emphatic than that of his other contemporaries such as Sapru, S.N. Banerjea, Jayakar and Annie Besant.

Jinnah’s position vis-à-vis the British, in this period, was clearly of secondary importance to him. His anti-imperialism also settled for a second spot. Although he continued to retaliate strongly to the charges of being an ally of imperialism and kept asserting the demand for independence from every forum available to him, the demand for independence itself became secondary to the fulfilment of the ‘Muslim demands’. It also softened his anti-imperialism quite a bit.