Chapter II

BRITISH POLICY OF 'DIVIDE AND RULE' AND
RISE AND GROWTH OF MUSLIM COMMUNALISM

Hindu-Muslim Relations in pre-British Days

After getting a stronghold in India, the merchant rulers of the East India Company realised the necessity of dividing the ruled. The unceasing wave of mass struggle against the Company Raj proved the fact that Hindu-Muslim masses could raise together arms against foreign rulers.

Pre-British Indian society was plural and like all societies of the middle age, was anti-secular but it was free from communal hostility. So from the very beginning, the British rulers became active to poison the society by its policy of 'divide and rule'. In fact, Hindu-Muslim rivalry or communal attitude to each other of both the communities was a deliberately created phenomenon. J.T. Sunderland noted:

"Before the British came to India, there seems to have been little hostility between Hindus and Moslems; everywhere they seem to have lived together for the most part peacefully and harmoniously. ... It is only since British rule in India began,

and in those parts of the country where British rule is most directly and strongly felt, that hostility becomes noticeable and riots of any importance appear."2

Rajani Palme Dutt is also of same opinion,

"prior to British rule there is no trace of the type of Hindu-Muslim conflicts associated with British rule, and especially with the latest period of British rule."3

Even a religio-political theorist of the Pakistan movement and a zealous supporter of the 'two nation theory' argued:

"The plain undisputable fact is that communal riots between the two peoples are not a feature of Indian history. It is towards the close of the 19th century that we come to hear of Hindu-Muslim riots for the first time. Even then they remained few and far between. It was after 1923 that they began to become a regular feature of Indian life."4

And quite convincingly he blamed the British rule for creating animosity between the two denominations.5 The Muslim races,

5. Ibid. p.37.
however, invaded India again and again for conquest and loot and not proselytize.6 Vivekananda, a staunch Hindu, once stated that:

"The Mohammedan conquest of India came as a salvation to the down-trodden, to the poor. That is why one-fifth of our people have become Mohammedans. It was not the sword that did it all."

Most of the Indian Muslims embraced Islam and abjured the creed of their ancestors to escape from and avoid the tyranny of Hindu orthodoxy and Brahmanical hegemony.8 Besides, prior to the British rule common people of both the communities lived in the womb of traditional village community system and were equally exploited by the sovereign at the capital. "All the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive action in Hindustan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface."9 So the balance of the village community system remained almost intact till the advent of the British. In


such a closed society based on mutual understanding, there was little scope of growth of communal bitterness. The rulers were only eager to extract the revenue from the peasants and artisans and they did not bother about the faiths of the subjects. Harbans Mukhia points out that

"There is no evidence, indeed, to suggest that the state engaged itself in converting the Hindus into Muslims on a mass level or in a ferment, zealous effort to propagate the faith."¹⁰

The state however in some cases was interested to convert politically important individuals or families.¹¹ On the whole, the "medieval Indian state ... subordinated religion to politics rather than politics to religion."¹²

It is generally believed that barring the rule of liberal Akbar, other Muslim rulers were dogmatic anti-Hindu and hence the state was tyrannical. But history shows that Muslim rulers employed Hindus of high status freely in the responsible positions and vice versa.¹³

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11. Ibid, p. 32.

12. Ibid, p. 35.

feature of middle age in India was the absence of communal clashes, Mukhia says that even during the "Aurangzeb's 'tyranny' ..." Communal riots did not occur. In the British period, both Muslim communalists and Hindu communalists regarded Aurangzeb as the champion of Islam and anti-Hindu of the highest order. Even today, the Muslim communalists venerate Aurangzeb as 'Jinda Pir'. But Aziz Ahmad says that:

"Hindu elements continued to be an integral part of Aurangzeb's civil and military administration. If on the one hand some temples were abolished, on the other a number of endowments and pensions were given to Brahmins and revenue grants to other Hindu temples."

A detailed account of Aurangzeb's (or other Muslim rulers) Hindu policy is beyond our scope. Yet it may be stated that he used to participate in Hindu festivals like Dashera as long as his great Hindu generals Jaswant Singh and Jai Singh were alive. He reimposed jizya but abolished a number of taxes not authorised by canon law. Probably jizya was imposed

17. Ibid. p.197.
18. Ibid. p.198.
to make some money. 19

For one thing, however, Aurangzeb may be remembered; the fact has been sunk into oblivion that Aurangzeb prohibited the evil practice of 'sati' on humanitarian ground. 20 Even today, Bentinck is eulogised because during his period 'sati' was prohibited. But Aurangzeb did this long ago and it is regrettable that most historians remain completely silent about this fact. It seems that Aurangzeb was not anti-Hindu but rather puritanic. For this reason, he prohibited processions during Muharram, 21 and ordered death-sentence to a naked Muslim saint 22 probably on the ground of obscenity.

Both the Hindu and Muslim rulers of different territories scattered all over India, understood politics and ruled according to their political purposes. The Muslim rulers understood that religious conflicts between the rulers and the ruled would not favour a smooth functioning of the administrative machinery. Marx observed:

21. Ibid. p.197.
"Arabs, Turks, Taataras, Mogals, who had successively overturned India, soon became Hinduised, the barbarian conquerors being, by an eternal law of history conquered themselves by the superior civilisation of their subjects." 23

By Hinduisation, Marx obviously meant the process of Indianisation, that is, an assimilation of conqueror and the conquered.

In the social realm, the juxtaposition of two unknown cultures, through the passing time became almost known to each other and gave birth to a process of give and take. Especially in Northern India, the social and cultural intercourses that followed between the Hindus and Muslims, in consequence, resulted in the fusion of the two "one time antagonistic cultures leading to the birth of what may be called the Indo-Muslim society." 24 The culture which evolved by the force of circumstances and mutual tolerance

"was neither purely Muslim nor exclusively Hindu but a happy union of both. The Muslim Kings and chiefs encouraged Hindu art and literature, science and philosophy. Like saints and sages they too in their own sphere tried to bring about a rapprochment between

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23. K. Marx. The Future Results of The British Rule in India in K. Marx and F. Engels. op. cit., p. 34.

the two communities. The result was an almost complete reconciliation of the two. It should not occasion, surprise, therefore, if the Hindus offered sweets at Muslim shrines - and the Musalmans responded with similar acts. Since a vast majority of Indian Muslims were drawn from the masses of the Hindus, they retained their old customs, practices, habits and hobbies. The change of religion did not change their environments. The result was the Indo-Muslim society which incorporated with itself a number of Hindu social features.

Tara Chand has also suggested that the pre-British history of India was not stained by communal antagonism. He says:

"The Muslims who came into India made it their home. They lived surrounded by the Hindu people and a state of perennial hostility with them was impossible. Mutual intercourse led to mutual understanding. Many who had changed their faith differed little from those whom they had left. Thus after the first shock of conquest was over, the Hindus and Muslims prepared to find a via media whereby to live as neighbours. The effort to seek a new life led to the development of a new culture which was neither exclusively Hindu nor purely Muslim. It was indeed a Muslim-Hindu culture. Not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu science absorb Muslim elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind were also altered, and the Muslim reciprocated by responding to the change in every department of life."

25. Quoted in ibid, p.3.

F. K. Khan Durrani observed that in the pre-British days "Hindus and Muslims participated in one another's festivals, marriages and other domestic events and shared their joys and sorrows." 27

The above statements amply show that in the pre-British days Hindus and Muslims lived side by side as good neighbours and that the mutual relationships between the two communities were amicable and peaceful. And this amicable relationship between Hindus and Muslims was also visible in pre-British days of Bengal.

In the realm of literature and art, there emerged a harmonious relationship between the two communities in Bengal under Muslim rule. History of Bengali literature tells us that many Pathan Sultans liked deliberations with Hindu Pundits and poetry of epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. 28 The Muslim rulers often encouraged Hindus to translate the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagabat etc. in Bengali. It is heard that Rucknuddin Barbak Shaha adorned Maladhar Basu with


the little 'Gunaraj Khan' for composing the Bhagat. The ruler of Chittagong Paragal Khan and his son Chuti Khan got the Mahabharata composed by their Hindu court poets. This Mahabharata is still known as 'Paragali Mahabharata' to the lovers of Bengali literature of middle age. Kabindra Parameshwar, a translator of the Mahabharata, said that Muslims loved the stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

On the other hand, some Muslim poets wrote verses based on Hindu story such as 'Madhu Malati' written by Mohammad Kabir, and 'Padmabati' (translation) by Syed Alaol. 'Padmabati' the verse, became equally famous among both the communities.

Vaishnavism, the popular faith, influenced Bengali Muslims of middle age. It helped to create a new, popular but vigorous Bengali literature, centering round the two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, sometimes encouraged by the Muslim Sultans. It is also known that sometimes Muslim rulers

32. Ibid, p.271.
took part in Hindu religious festivals. For example, Siraj-ud-daula, the last de facto independent king of Bengal, took part in Holi festival. This Holi festival also was a favourite festival to the aristocratic Muslims like some other un-Islamic ceremonies.

The royal patronage, support and encouragement to the cultivation of Bengali (Hindu) literature and Hindu religious ceremonies broadened the way of mutual admiration and harmony between the two communities. Besides this, there emerged a happy synthesis of Hinduism and Islam, particularly among the people of lower strata of both the communities. This religious-cultural synthesis was the logical consequence of orthodoxy and dogmatism of guardians of Hinduism as well as of Islam. There emerged a number of sects and sub-sects outside the pale of traditional Hinduism and dogmatic Islam. This new religious synthesis may be termed as religion of humanism; it was neither Hindu nor Islam in the true sense of the terms, but a happy union of the two. The Census Report of 1911 recorded the existence of communities which were "neither Hindus nor Muslims

35. Ibid, p.25.
but a mixture of both."\textsuperscript{37} This religious synthesis was the product of mutual admiration and warm relationship between Hindus and Muslims. This religion of humanism reflected high level of spirituality and proved the mutual tolerance, sympathy and devotion to one God, who belonged to both the Hindus and Muslims. The literary translation of some songs and verses may be cited here, which generally sprang from the lyre of people's poets and ascetics. One Rameswar wrote, "From now I shall adorn Rahim in the sense of Ram."\textsuperscript{38} An unknown poet wrote, "Meditate on Kali, Krishna, God and Khoda."\textsuperscript{39} One Basan Udas expressed the same devotion to one God who equally belonged to Hindus and Muslims. He said, "Hindus call you Radha, I say Khoda, when I call you Radha, the Mulas and Munshis oppose."\textsuperscript{40} One Muslim poet wrote in adoration of the Jagannath of Puri, - "There a Chandal prepares the meal which is eaten by a Brahmin. Oh, what is a pious land it is, nobody loses his caste."\textsuperscript{41} Even in much later period, the union between

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\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid}, p.139.
\textsuperscript{40} Quoted in Asit Kumar Bandopadhyay. \textit{Op.cit}, p.275.
\textsuperscript{41} Quoted in Benoy Ghose. \textit{Op.cit}, p.139
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Hinduism and Islam was unabated, so an unknown poet made a unique synthesis of Hinduism and Islam and sang "My path is chequered with temples and mosques."  

Besides such spiritual transactions between Hindus and Muslims, there was social intercourse which proves the fact that before the penetration of two-nation theory into the rural life of Bengal, the relations between Hindus and Muslims were not hostile and antagonistic. In 1881, 'Bangadarshan' wrote in an article entitled 'Dacca O Purba Bangla' that separatism between Hindus and Muslims (Dacca and its neighbourhood) was relatively weaker, even Hindus used to smoke by the same hooka (tobacco pipe) with the Muslims and sit side by side. By this time, inspired by Muslim separatism, a Muslim paper lamented and expressed its anger that in Rangpur some Muslims participate in Hari Sankirtan or chorus devotional songs of Hari in accompaniment with drums and cymbals, eat vegetarian diet and like the Hindus they dine separately sitting on low wooden seat, no sign of true Muslims can be seen among them.  

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44. Ibid, p.181.
British rule, however, brought equal misery to the masses of Hindus and Muslims, and against the rapacious administration of East India Company, the Hindu Muslim masses of peasantry and artisans fought shoulder to shoulder. Common class interest drove them to fight against the new ruler and its native allies, which reached its culmination in the First War of Independence and in the indigo revolt, particularly in Bengal.

All these facts prove that Hindu-Muslim relations in pre-British days and even in the first century of the British rule were cordial and of mutual understanding. The feeling of most of the Muslims in British India that their umbilical cord was attached with West Asia which fanned the sense of separatism was a phenomenon superimposed upon them by the leaders of Muslim communalism who were actually strengthening the hands of British imperialism. The Bengali Muslims were sons of the soil, lived by the side of the Hindus, but not in hennatic apartment, as equal sharer of common country life. The Hindu and Muslim masses were tied by the common language, common class interest, common food habit and in some cases even by a common God like the Satyapir.

On the other hand, in 1757, a Hindu-Muslim joint conspiracy sold Bengal to the East India Company. The antecedents
of the Battle of Plassey was not a Hindu conspiracy against a 'Yavan' ruler; Muslim aristocracy was equally responsible for the downfall of Siraj.

In the later days of the act of bringing division between the two communities was left for the British imperialism which packed some natives as well as white people to serve its nefarious policy.

British Policy of 'Divide and Rule' and the Emergence of Muslim Communalism

"The British policy in India" noted Sunderland, "has been from the beginning that known as "divide and rule" or that which the Old Romans described by their well known Latin words, divide et impera ... British rulers of India have employed the ... policy of fostering divisions among the people knowing well that divisions always weaken a nation and render it easier to hold in subjection." So the British imperialists, from the very beginning of their rule tried to divide the Indians for continuation of their Raj. They took the lesson from an unceasing wave of peasant struggle during the rule of

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the East India Company that a joint Hindu-Muslim struggle was a threat to their existence. The First War of Independence shook the whole edifice of the Company Raj from its base which blurred all the religious distinctions of the two major denominations of the country. "Din-Din", "Har-Har Mahadeo" and "Moro Firingee ko" were the full throated shouts of Hindus and Muslims during 1857\textsuperscript{46} which appeared as a death-blow to the Company Raj.

But even before the days of The First War of Independence, the British ruler applied the policy of stirring up hostility between Hindus and Muslims and often did not hesitate to boast that they did it. So as early as 1821, a British officer wrote in the Asiatic Review of May of that year: "Divide et Impera should be the motto of our Indian administration, whether political, civil or military."\textsuperscript{47} About the time of The First War of Independence, Lieutenant Colonel John Coke, Commandant at Moradabad, wrote:

"Our endeavour should be to uphold in full force the (for us fortunate) separation which exists between the different religions and races, not to endeavour to amalgamate them. Divide et impera should be the principle of Indian government."\textsuperscript{48}


\textsuperscript{47} Quoted in Sunderland. \textit{Op. cit.}, p.268

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}, p.268.
In a minute of 14th May, 1850, Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, wrote "Divide et impera was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours." Sir John Strachey, an eminent British Indian civilian, said:

"The existence side by side of hostile creeds among the Indian people, is one of the strong points in our political position in India."

It is said that Mr. O.A. Hume, the father of the Indian National Congress, frankly confessed to M. K. Gandhi, that the British Government was sustained by the policy of Divide and Rule.

This policy of divide and rule adopted by the imperialism was quite consistent from its point of view, but from the Indian point of view, it plunged into the social life of India, particularly of Bengal and poisoned every walk of life and hindered the way of the development of political movements independent of communal bias.

From the very beginning of its rule, the British rulers tried to conciliate the Hindus against the hostility of the

49. Ibid, p.268.
50. Ibid, p.268.
51. Ibid, p.268.
Muslims who just had lost the ruling power over the territory.
And in this regard, British policy was open and avowed. In
1848, Lord Ellenborough, the Viceroy wrote,

"It seems to me most unwise when we are
sure of the hostility of one-tenth, not
to secure the enthusiastic support of the
nine-tenths who are faithful ... I cannot
close my eyes to the belief that this race
(Moslem) is fundamentally hostile to us
and therefore our true policy is to con-
ciliate the Hindoos."52

In fact, at one time, militant Muslims, who were out and
out against the Company Raj, declared India a 'dar-ul-herb' or
a land hostile to Islam. "But this was not because of the
Hindus whom they had ruled, but because of the "infidel"
Christians who ruled them."53 On the other hand, from the very
beginning a section of Hindus identified their interests with
the greedy, exploitative machinery of the East India Company.
These people were petty intermediaries between the English and
Indian artisans and peasants in the form of banyans and gomastahs
of the former. Subservient to the needs of the British as

52. Quoted in Atulananda Chakrabarti. The Recovery of India.
against those of the Indians "these creatures were the first product of the monstrous machine of colonial exploitation introduced by the Company in India."\textsuperscript{54}

Besides these banyan people, there emerged another product of the Company Raj, they were the new zamindars and mahajans or money lenders. Commercialisation of agriculture, and especially the Permanent Settlement of 1793, which Marx called "a caricature of English landed property",\textsuperscript{55} gave birth to a class of Zamindars with vested interests and they became the "social basis of British rule."\textsuperscript{56} Thus the Permanent Settlement introduced by Lord Cornwallis, altering the balance of traditional rural society of Bengal, helped the concentration of economic power in the hands of absentee landlords and money lenders.\textsuperscript{57} Now these 'neuveau-riche', the new zamindars and banyans thronged at Calcutta the "comprador city" with exotic glamour and gave birth to a sub-culture, peculiar to their own. Most of these upstarts were upper caste Hindus and from the very outset, they

\textsuperscript{54} Ramkrishna Mukherjee. \textit{Rise and Fall of the East India Company}. Berlin, Veb Deutscher Verlag Der Wissenschaften. 1958, p.312.


were eager to imitate the British. British contact opened to them various avenues for lucrative earnings, so British language was essential for the aspirants who showed an excessive craze to adjust themselves in the new order.

After the adoption of the Anglicist policy by the British in 1835, these upper caste Bengali Hindus became able to combine formal education with money and thus achieved something in addition to their ascriptive position in the social ladder. On the one hand, they belonged to upper caste Hindu family, on the other, they could achieve English education and thus caused the emergence of a baboo class or the bhadraloks, who were urban dwellers and took the leadership in all the social, religious, economic and political movements of the later days.

Macaulay dreamt of a class of Indians who would be "Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and in intellect." A section of upper caste Hindus, acquisitive of higher status, acquainted themselves with 'Macaulyan dream' and soon realised it. Before the emergence of the nationalists as a recognizable political force, these 'dream-children' of Macaulay controlled the moderate politics in Bengal like that of the whole of India. But since the beginning

of the twentieth century, as we have mentioned earlier, there emerged a sense of Indianness, which should be termed a pride for the Hindu civilization, among a section of these Bengali bhadraloks.

Whereas the new land revenue system of Lord Cornwallis caused the emergence of a wealthy Hindu zamindar class, it led to the ruination of Muslim aristocracy. The long delayed repercussions of the Permanent Settlement helped the political polarisation of Hindus and Muslims of which Sir Syed had sown the seed. After the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, land became a marketable commodity like all other things and the hereditary zamindary system of the Mughol rule was brought to an end. With few exceptions, Muslim land lords were traditionally extravagant and usually decadent, their lands gradually but steadily passed into the hands of upstarts Hindu moneylenders and speculators. W.W. Hunter, in his book 'The Indian Musalmans' which played a very important role to inculcate the sense of separate identity among the Muslims, and thereby to what the

60. *Ibid*, p.54.
Muslim communalism, quoted Mr. James O'Kinealy, the officer who studied "the Permanent of Settlement most minutely in connection with the ... Muhammadan disaffection." O'Kinealy discovered that the Permanent Settlement "elevated the Hindu collectors...who upto that time had held but unimportant posts, to the position of landlords, gave them a proprietary right in the soil, and allowed them to accumulate wealth which would have gone to the Musalmans under their own Rule." Thus the Permanent Settlement dismantling the Muslim aristocracy commenced the end of Muslim supremacy.

The aftermath of the Permanent Settlement closing the chapter of Muslim supremacy and elevating the Hindu landlordism brought East Bengal completely under the sway of Hindu and British jute, tea and other commercial interests in Calcutta. The Muslim landed aristocracy already demoralised by generations of easy pleasure seeking life had neither the mental energy nor the adaptability to cope with the new situation. The Muslim aristocracy thus sank into oblivion. Expropriation of Muslim land holders can be measured by the fact that by the nineteenth century, in Eastern part of Bengal most of the land was owned

62. Ibid. p.155.
by the Hindus.\textsuperscript{64} M.R.A. Baig epitomizes the situation, "In Bukeagunge district, for example, Muslims were 64.8 per cent of the population but owned less than 10 per cent of the estates and paid less than 9 per cent of the total revenue."\textsuperscript{65} The Muslim aristocracy was thus during the spell of few decades replaced by a wealthy Bengali Hindu baboos. Moreover, most of the local inhabitants of East Bengal were poor Muslim peasants and unemployed artisans and the new zamindars were upper caste Bengali Hindus who were, usually absentee and stranger to their subjects. So the class contradictions between the oppressed peasants and artisans and the oppressor - the Hindu zamindars and mahajans or moneylenders appeared to the former as the tyranny of the Hindus. Thus the socio-economic background became congruent for the communal leaders to represent the problems in the garniture of communal hatred and to spawn communal clashes.

The virtual extinction of the Muslim aristocracy affected all aspects of social life of the Muslims, particularly it caused the decadence of traditional educational system. W.W. Hunter noted, "Hundreds of ancient families were ruined, and the educational system of the Musalmans, which was almost entirely

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid. p.55.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid. p.55.
maintained by rent-free grants, received its death-blow.\textsuperscript{66}

Thus while the new land revenue system, directly and indirectly, gave birth to a wealthy Hindu baboo class, who could combine money with formal education, it simultaneously marred the way of a full-fledged growth of an educated baboo class among the Muslims. The "shackles of religiosity and bigotry caused" the Muslims "to stand still while the rest of India moved forward."\textsuperscript{67}

In 1837, the British decided to conduct the work of administration either in English or in the local vernacular language; this change shut the door of high official jobs and other white-collar professions to the Muslims who lacked sufficient knowledge of English. Observing the situation one historian has noted:

"Starting with a crippling handicap the Muslims, due to religious conservatism, political jealousy and cultural backwardness, unlike the Hindus, were slow at taking to British ways by accepting English education and all that it promised ... in Bengal, the first province to come under full British impact, the Muslims, most of whom were poor peasants and weavers, stood aloof and led the Hindus reap the fruits of their new learning."\textsuperscript{68}


\textsuperscript{68} B.N. Pandey. \textit{The Break-up of British India}. New Delhi, Macmillan India Limited. 1981. p.56.
Thus, by the middle of the nineteenth century, in Bengal, the Muslims amounted to one-third of the population, but occupied a few minor posts in the government, and a very few became able to get the white-collar jobs. W.W. Hunter made up a table of the gazetted appointments for which Englishmen, Muslims and Hindus were alike eligible; from these data the picture becomes more clear to us as to how the Muslim bhadraloks lagged behind its Hindu counterpart in the race of achieving lucrative posts in the government. The table shows that in 1871, among the gazetted appointments, European held 1,338 posts, Hindus 681, and the Muslims only 92. Furthermore, Hunter remarked that the Muslims were "shut out equally from Government employ and from the higher occupations of non-officials life."  

From the above discussions, it is clear that ab initio, the British imperialists adopted the policy of 'divide and rule' and to implement this policy, it successfully conciliated the Hindus, and the Hindus utilising this opportunity up to the extent of their reach, soon emerged as a socio-economic entity.

69. Ibid. p.56.
71. Ibid. pp.162-163.
much conscious about its rights and demands. The new land revenue system gave birth to a class of well-to-do Hindu zamindars and it caused the Muslim aristocracy to pass into oblivion. On the other hand, the masses of peasantry and artisans sank into hunger, the majority of which were Muslims. When the Hindu bhadraloks began to wield some riches and influence, the late comer Muslim bhadraloks were still then tottering. So the Muslim communal leaders manipulated two things; first they utilised the uneven development of Bengali society, that is, the matter of the late rising of the Muslim middle class from the communal standpoint and translated this very social phenomenon as communal rivalry. The second was more important in determining the destiny of the sub-continent. It was the problem related to zamindari system. The unity of the Hindu and Muslim peasants and artisans was equally dangerous to the zamindars of both the communities, so the Muslim communal leaders tried to convert the class contradictions between Muslim peasants and Hindu zamindars into communal confrontations and thereby saved the interests of the Muslim landlords, however, few they were! Appeal to religion in socio-economic-political affairs served as a tool to strengthen the fraternity and in-group feeling among the Muslims which crossed the boundary of class distinctions, and at the same time it transformed class hatred into communal hatred and barred the way of unity between the exploited of both the communities.
On the other hand, when the Hindu bhadraloks due to their earlier rising, enjoyed the boon of British contact and became well-established in the society, the late comer Muslim bhadraloks by not getting at the reach of their Hindu counterpart became jealous about the well established Hindu bhadraloks. The Muslim communal leaders tried to boost Muslim upper and middle classes and represented their interests as the interests of the whole community and chafed the whole community against the "Hindu interests."

Thus, at the primary stage, communal rivalry was an upper and middle class phenomenon. The communal leaders, in collusion with the British, implanted it among the masses, which ultimately culminated in 'the two-nation theory' and stilled the way of the growth of a national solidarity that could overcome the distinctions of religiosity. Professor A.R. Desai has rightly suggested that:

"... the Indian Muslims, lacking a common territorial basis, language, and economic life, neither constituted a nation nor, since divided into classes, represented a monolithic social structure, with common economic and political interests. The landed and bourgeois interests which dominated the principal organization of the Muslims, the All India Muslim League, and sections of their professional classes which were rivals of the Hindu professional in the struggle for posts in the services or seats in legislatures ... could only retard the process of the growing national unity of the Indian people and the class unity of the lower strata of the"
Indian society which sprang from the reality of the British rule over India and the class structure of the Indian society.\textsuperscript{72}

To safeguard a supposed Muslim interest against a supposed Hindu interest, the Muslim communal leaders through the "propaganda of communalism could only retard the historically progressive process of unification on lines of class division which were based on the existing economic structure.\textsuperscript{73}

\textbf{Change of the British Policy}

Patronage to the Hindus and hostility to the Muslims that is the 'Ellenborough doctrine' continued till 1870's. The Wahabi Movement and the First War of Independence and its cruel suppression inflamed the mutual suspicion between the British and the Muslims. But with the beginning of the decade of seventy, a change of policy of the British government took place regarding the Indian Muslims. This change synchronised with the publication of Hunter's book \textit{The Indian Musalmans} in 1871. By this time, the British packed some respectable Muslims to inculcate the sense of loyalty to the rulers among their co-religionists. The most


\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid}. p.391.
important of these people was **Syed Ahmed Khan**, who played a vital role in creating a cleavage between the Hindus and the Muslims. Mainly the two men, Hunter and Syed cultivated the land, made it fertile and sowed the seed of two nation theory and thereby served the British policy of divide and rule. The mission of Syed was to spread loyalty among the Muslims, to remove the aversion of the Muslims to the British and Western education and to oppose the activities of the Indian National Congress. The three-fold programme of Sir Syed culminated in his theory of two-nation.

In the craze for inserting his two-nation theory, Syed crossed even the provincial, cultural and linguistic boundaries of the Indian people, and found no other tie than religion in favour of his argument. By the term 'Bengalis' he connoted a religious but not a provincial category. To him the term Bengali meant only the Bengali Hindus but not the all inhabitants of Bengal; and the Muslim population of Bengal were not at all Bengalis. They were only Muslims. In a speech entitled 'Indian National Congress (I)' delivered at Meerut on March 16, 1888, Sir Syed argued,

"As regards Bengal, there is, as far as I am aware in Lower Bengal, a much larger proportion of Mohammedans than Bengalis. And if you take the population of the whole of Bengal, nearly half are Mohammedans and something over half are Bengalis... In Bengal the Mohammedan population is great..."
that if the aspirations of these Bengalis who are making so loud an agitation be fulfilled, it will be extremely difficult for the Bengalis to remain in peace even in Bengal.\textsuperscript{74}

Syed believed that representative government was impossible in the soil of India because the country was inhabited by two different nations, each of which was hostile to another. He asserted that British domination was necessary for India, not for a spell of time, as the moderate Congressmen thought, but for ever, because, in the absence of the British, the two nations would raise arms against each other and either the Hindus would conquer the Muslims or vice-versa. Syed visualised that a civil war would take place in India in the absence of the British and the peace set up by the British would be broken. He asserted, "... our Musalman brothers, the Pathans, would come out as a swarm of locusts from their mountain valleys, and make rivers of blood to flow from their frontier on the north to the extreme end of Bengal."\textsuperscript{75} No doubt that this far-sighted gentleman could foresee the events which took place after a long time though the British rule was there. The ventriloquist British chose the right person, and Sir Syed dreamt the right thing which was growing up day by day under the careful nourishment of the British

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\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, p.52.
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and its native allies. The cleavage created by Sir Syed never wiped out and it provided the central tenet of the communalist Muslims and the Muslim Leaguers faithfully followed the doctrine of Sir Syed as the guiding principle. In one word, Sir Syed became the demigod of Muslim separatists, and his college, the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, founded in 1875 (which subsequently grew into Aligarh University), became the breeding ground of Muslim communalism, which caused a poisonous political weather in India. The Aligarh College gave a new impetus to Muslim orthodoxy and anti-Hindu feeling and provided it with fuel on which to grow and a habitation in which to live. Atulananda Chakrabarti has aptly put, "One College divided India."76 The Cunning British ruler, the third party in the communal triangle behind the screen, now encouraged a clamour for instruction in Hindu religious terms and the result was the Benaras Hindu University (1915). However, a discussion of Sir Syed's activities and the Aligarh Movement is beyond our scopes but it should be mentioned here, that the influence of Aligarh Movement also affected the Bengali society and provoked the Muslims to think of socio-economic-political matters in terms of their "separate identity."

Hunter's book, on the other hand too, imprinted a sense of separate identity among the Muslims of Bengal. In this book,

Hunter tried to show that there remained always some cleavages between the Hindus and the Muslims and that the relation between the two communities had been bad. He asserted that in the eyes of the Muslims the Hindus were "hated Hindus." He also emphasised that the Muslims of India formed a homogeneous community like that of the Hindus and presented the Hindus as the only rival of the Muslim interests. He shed enough tears for the decadence of the Muslim aristocracy and the prevailing socio-economic backwardness of the Muslims and raised the question, "Is that the Hindus have all along been better men than the Musalmans, and only required a fair field in order to outstrip them in the race?" Thus long before the birth of the Muslim League, - the mouthpiece of "Muslim interests", Hunter visualised a separate monolithic Muslim interest and thereby explained the uneven development of the Bengali society in terms of communal rivalry and ignored the fact that British exploitation brought equal misery among the masses irrespective of religious faith. Thus establishing a separate Muslim interest, Hunter concluded that "The Indian Musalmans ... are bound by their own law to live peaceable under" the British rule, and appealed to the government to "respect their rights and spiritual privileges."
Hunter thereto suggested that the government could win over the loyalty of a section of influencial Muslims by establishing educational facilities for them. The ultimate purpose of which was to create a class of loyal educated Muslims as the Spokesman of "Muslim cause", as a competitor of "Hindu interest."

The British government cordially accepted Hunter's thesis and offered the bait of educational facilities, the only way of securing social status and so they intended to create a class of Muslims who would form a separate socio-economic-political entity.

The Muslim middle class, due to its late emergence found every possible road to its material advancement blocked by the Hindu bhadraloks. This led to the feeling that the Muslims were dominated by the Hindus whether economically, culturally, or politically. Therefore, it was natural for the Muslim middle class to look for new outlets which culminated in the establishment of separate political organisation based on religious affinity.

We have seen earlier that some sort of religious revivalism and contributions of some Hindu thinkers led to the emergence of Hinduised nationalism. Similarly, there were some antecedents that helped the rise and growth of Muslim separatism, some of which have been discussed above. But here the line of demarcation between Hindu nationalism and Muslim separatism should be made
clear. The politics of nationalists and the revolutionaries was basically anti-British. They, particularly the revolutionaries stood for the emancipation of India, they sacrificed everything for the sake of their 'Mother land'! Though they imbued politics with Hindu religion, politically they had been the most progressive force among the contemporary political currents in India. On the other hand, the Muslim Leaguers who made a conjunction of religion and politics, remained for the most time, loyal to the imperialist and hence they cannot be termed patriots or nationalists. Humayun Kabir has observed,

"Founded in 1906 by group of well-to-do and aristocratic Mussalmans, it /The Muslim League/ was intended to keep the Moslem intelligentsia and middle classes away from the dangerous politics into which the Indian National Congress was just then embarking. It raised the cry of special Moslem interests and pleaded that these could not be safeguarded except by cooperation with the British, as in its opinion, Mussalmans were as yet educationally, economically and politically incapable of defending their own interests."80

The Muslim Leaguers, the spokesman of 'Muslim interest' preferred British rule to the independence of India, because they apprehended that in free India Hindus would rule over them, who

formed the larger portion of Indian population. For a Hindu patriot, nothing was more precious than the freedom of India, but the Muslim Leaguers had to face a dilemma - freedom of the country, which meant Hindu Raj, or British domination, - they preferred the latter. Religious obscurantism was dearer to them than the freedom of the native land. However, it is to be mentioned that sometimes the Muslim separatists showed anti-British attitude, but that was due to events outside India. Pan-Islamic outlook served to kindle the Muslim heart against the British, but not for India in bondage. Finally, the Muslim separatists fought for a separate homeland free from Hindu domination, as they conceived of the free India, but not for undivided India. This very fundamental difference regarding the attitude towards the British imperialist rulers demarcates the Muslim separatists from the Hindu nationalists. One should not ignore, of course, the role of Hindu communalist organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha (1910) or Arya Samaj (1875) which were equally responsible for Hindu-Muslim animosity. Hindu communalists who masqueraded as nationalists jeopardised the unity of the masses and caused to divert the attention of the masses from the real enemy, that is, the British imperialism and its native allies.

However, besides the impact of the thesis of W.W. Hunter...

and Syed's negative politics, that is, the principle of discouraging the Muslims to take part in the Congress (even in the time when the Congress followed the political mendicancy) or any other political movement, there remained several factors that led to the creation of Muslim separatism the irresistible result of which was the formation of the Muslim League. It should be remembered that all these occurred under the auspices of the British policy of divide and rule, sometimes open, sometimes veiled.

As the emerging Muslim middle class lagged behind the Hindu middle class in securing English education, the British policy of creating hostility between the two communities permeated prima facie through a biased educational system for the Muslims.

After the cruel suppression of the First War Independence by the British, some respectable Muslims began to realise that their material wellbeing was dependent upon British patronage and that a considerable knowledge in Western education was essential for this purpose. We have pointed out that the British imperialism began to fondle the Muslims since the seventies of the last century, which got a concrete shape with the publication of Hunter's remarkable book. But the process of conciliating the Muslims of upper strata really started a decade earlier. In 1861, at the request of the Governor General, Abdul Latif wrote an article entitled 'A Minute on the Hooghly Mudrassah' (Calcutta, 26 December,
1861). In this article, Abdul Latif advocated a combination of traditional religious teaching with modern Western education for the Muslims and appealed to the government to take necessary steps for this purpose.  

In 1863 he founded the Muhammedan Literary and Scientific Society of Calcutta "to impart useful information to the higher and educated classes of the Mahomedan Community."  

Abdul Latif had close connections with Sir Syed and he invited the latter to Calcutta and Sir Syed gave lecture in the Society.  

Thus it can be stated that a sort of Muslim solidarity was emerging, though at a slow pace, crossing the boundaries of province since the second half of the last century and that Muslim consciousness at the primary level was an upper and middle class phenomenon. However, by the middle of eighteen seventies, the 'Society' had more than five hundred members.  

The members of this 'Society' were Muslims from upper strata and they were only concerned in protecting and expanding their interests. The members of this 'Society' were conscious about a separate identity that they slighted Bengali language and they never talked in

Bengali. They felt proud of Urdu and swaggered that Urdu was their mother tongue. Abdul Latif also took efforts to 'Islamise' the Bengali language. Though he was a leading spokesman of 'Muslim interest', he himself divided his coreligionists into two categories. The first was upper and middle class Muslims who migrated to Bengal and the second was men of humble origin - the natives of Bengal. According to him, Urdu was the mother tongue of the former and Bengali of the Muslims of lower strata. He opined that Sanskritised Bengali language of the educated Hindus should be replaced by an 'Islamised' Bengali enriched with Arabic and Persian words.

By this time, the Ashraf Muslims or the Muslims of upper strata went further and tried to convince the Muslim masses that it was not Bengali but Urdu which was the mother tongue of the Bengali Muslims. No doubt that this type of strong sense of separate identity hindered the normal growth of the majority of Bengali Muslims and helped to widen the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims.

At the endeavour of Abdul Latif, Maulavi Karamat Ali of

87. Ibid, p.177.
88. Ibid, p.171.
Jaunpur gave a lecture under the auspices of Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta on 23 November 1870 proving that 'jihad' against the British was unlawful. He argued that British India was a dar-ul-Islam (a land which is abode of Islam) rather than a dar-ul-harb (a land which is hostile to Islam). He also asserted that Muslims of India enjoyed full liberty regarding their religious practices under the British rule and that most of the injunctions of Islam in the sphere of marriage, divorce, dower and inheritance remained intact under the British rule. He also advised the Muslims to abandon their antipathy towards the British.

Thus Maulavi Karamat Ali, an influential religious teacher, tried to transform the 'dar-ul-harb' into a 'dar-ul-Islam' and helped the Muslim communalist immensely to build up a distinct political movement loyal to the British and anti-Hindu in character in the future.

To return to Abdul Latif's educational efforts in 1868 at the second Conference of Bengal Social Science Association (founded in 1867) he threw some light on the problems of Muslim education and discussed how the Muslims could establish their

rights by adopting the facilities of English education. He described the Calcutta Madrassa as the main source of Muslim consciousness. He opined that Madrassa oriented educational system was able to maintain the unity and cohesion of the 'Muslim Samaj'. Though he asserted that the Muslim mind was eager to grasp the blessings of European civilisation, his main object was to maintain a separate Muslim identity and to combine this with English education. It should be mentioned that Abdul Latif was not ready to imbue his co-religionists with the democratic ideas of the West; he remained interested only in reaping the fruits of English education for material benefits of the toddling Muslim Middle class. For example, in behalf of the rising Muslim middle class, Abdul Latif argued that recruitments in the official posts should be made partially by competition and partially by nomination so that the Muslims could get a fair share in the public employments. He justified his arguments on the ground that as the Muslim bhadraloks lagged behind its Hindu counterpart, it would be injustice to them if the public appointments were made on the basis of open competition. He stated,

"... so long as the Government recognise the desirability of giving a fair proportion of public employment to the Mohammedans, no

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exclusive system of competition for recruitment is possible, for it is impracticable under present circumstances for the Muslims to compete on equal terms."\(^9^3\)

Abdul Latif tried to safeguard the interests of the English educated Muslims and made efforts at the same time to encourage the Madrassa system of education for his coreligionists. He became successful in 1873 to persuade the government to sanction a grant of Rs. 50,000 annually for spreading education among the Muslims. By this grant three Madrassas were opened in Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi.\(^9^4\) It is unnecessary to emphasise that the British intention was to keep the Muslim mind in the narrow surrounding of dogmatism and traditionalism and that is why they set up Madrassa, lest the Muslims by taking advantage of English education became emulous of democratic and revolutionaries ideas of the West.

Another luminary of the Muslim cause was Syed Ameer Ali who belonged to an aristocratic Muslim family of Bengal. While, on the one hand, he glorified Islam and felt proud of Islamic traditions even of outside India, on the other, he strove for the upliftment of the emerging middle class of his own community at


home. Ameer Ali glorified Islamic traditions almost in a manner which the Hindu leaders often used in proving the superiority of the religio-cultural traditions of Hindu India. But while the Hindu leaders identified Hinduism with Indianness, Ameer Ali insisted upon Pan Islamic outlook for glorification of Islam, which crossed the boundary of Indian subcontinent. "While the barbarians of Europe who had overturned an effete empire were groping in the darkness of absolute ignorance and brutality", Ameer Ali observed, "the Moslems were occupied in the task of civilization."95 According to him, Islam was the best of religions, it inaugurated the reign of intellectual liberty.96 He was well aware of the dimmed glory of Islam but that was due to the faults of its adherents, it was not the fault of the religion itself. Three causes were responsible for the decline: "(i) Lack of culture among the community generally; (ii) material decadence; and (iii) the intellectual lag. The object of his interpretation was to demonstrate the absence of conflict between Islam and demands of modernity."97 He found no confrontation between active support to the British rule and the reinforcement of the principles of Islam. Active support to the British rule was necessary, Ameer Ali thought, for the expansion of education and material advancement of the Muslim community. Both the

96. Ibid. p.106.
purposes needed stability of the British rule in India. He averred that the alternative to the British rule was either anarchy or another foreign domination. In this context also, Ameer Ali was closer to Sir Syed. He avowed, "I feel that for many years to come British rule in India is a vital necessity."

Long before the formation of the Muslim League, Ameer Ali felt the need of establishing a separate organisation for the Muslims, for he believed, that the crux of the 'Muslim problem' was political. Practically, his intention was to organise the educated Muslims as a loyalist body, whose interests were directly tied with the British rule. Like the moderate Congressmen, Ameer Ali too was loyal to the backbone and while he was devoted to the Muslim cause, he was also devoted to the interests of the British empire.

He founded the National Mohammedan Association in 1877 to augment and protect the interests of the Muslim upper classes and soon he opened several branches of his Association in different parts of India. He claimed his organisation as the "de facto and de jure representative organisation of the Muslims."


asserted that the Muslims formed a homogeneous community102 distinct from the Hindus; one of the main objects of his organisation ran as follows, "our main object is to bring about some degree of solidarity among the disintegrated masses of Mohammedan society ..."103 Later he proclaimed this view unambiguously and denounced individualism, the basic value of the capitalistic or democratic civilisation as the "curse of Musalman communities" and uttered "the unity of interests between the various classes comprising Musalman society."104 While speaking in behalf of the 'Muslim interest', he was also aware of the "more alert rivals."105 Thus he found two conflicting monolithic interests in the Bengali society of the Hindus and the Muslims. Though Ameer Ali was an eloquent personality on behalf of the 'Muslim interests', he, like the moderate Hindu intelligentsia, "made no effort to communicate with the Bengali speaking Muslims of his own provinces, an indication of the social and educational distance between the minority of educated Muslims in Calcutta and other towns and the majority of cultivators, particularly in the rural areas of east Bengal.106

In spite of this lag between the educated and the poor

105. Ibid, p.211.
Muslims, Ameer Ali emphasised the separateness and distinctive characteristics of the Muslims to protect the interests of the Muslims of upper classes. And this led him to suggest that the University examination should not be the basis for public recruitments\textsuperscript{107} because his co-religionists lagged behind the "more alert rivals" and supported separate electorates and denominational universities.\textsuperscript{108} In 1883, his Association declared that

"the Association cannot believe that the introduction of representative institutions in this country in their entirety will be to the advantage of the Mohammedans. The principle of representation must be carefully considered in connection with the rights of the minority. Nor can the Association give consent to the introduction of any system which would result in the minority being utterly swamped in every department of state."\textsuperscript{109}

In 1885, however, Ameer Ali's Association supported the Congress, but in the following year it retracted its support\textsuperscript{110} Like the contemporary leaders of Muslim separatism, Ameer Ali also thought that the idea of common nationality and common citizenship would be detrimental to the Muslim interests. To

\textsuperscript{109} Ibić, p.15.
safeguard a separate Muslim interest, he went further and insisted that the Muslims should not be regarded as a minority but as a "distinct nationality."\textsuperscript{111} He emphasised that "the Hindus and Muslims are not the followers of two sects or communities, but of two wholly different systems..."\textsuperscript{112} Before a London audience also, Ameer Ali expressed more or less the same view.\textsuperscript{113} The conception of the moderate Congress leaders of the Indian nation as a conglomeration of believers of different faiths was not acceptable to Ameer Ali. After the emergence of Hindu nationalism and militant politics, Ameer Ali's conviction became more rigid. Before the emergence of the Muslim communalists as an organised political force in Bengal, Ameer Ali prepared the way for such an organisation which would speak for the frustrated and envious Muslims of upper and middle classes and would rank the common people of the community simply by appeal to religionism.

It may be stated now that at the primary stage, Hindu-Muslim rivalry had been an upper and middle class phenomenon. Elites of both the communities contended for the same sop offered by the British. As the Hindu bhadraloks were better organised

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\textsuperscript{111} Moin Shakir. \textit{Op.cit}, p.16. \\
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, p.16. \\
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(due to its earlier emergence) and outstripped its Muslim counterpart, the late comer Muslim upper and middle classes found no other clencher than religion to form themselves a pressure group against a "Hindu interest." So the predecessors of the Muslim League, Sir Syed and Ameer Ali joined hands to reach their ends. P. Hardy has observed,

"Sir Saiyid Ahamad Khan, speaking for the Muslim upper classes in the upper provinces, and Amir Ali, speaking for the National Mahommedan Association with its predominantly Bengali Muslim membership, were able to join hands across provincial boundaries and personal rivalries to form a communal political tie against the Bengali Hindu 'examination-wallah'." 114

While the Muslim leaders were engaged to uplift their coreligionists of upper and middle classes, the British ruler appeared as the custodians of Muslim interest and implemented its policy of bolstering the Muslim middle class by arranging a biased educational system. The imperialist rulers passed a Resolution in 1871, the inwardness of which was to mould the Muslim mind according to a separatist garniture. The Resolution stated,

"The Governor-General-in-Council is desirous that further encouragement should be given

to the classical and vernacular languages of the Mohammadans in all Government schools and colleges. This need not involve any alteration in the subjects, but only in the media of instruction. In avowedly English schools established in Mohammadan districts, the appointment of qualified Mohammadan English teachers might with advantage be encouraged. As in Vernacular schools, so in this class also assistance might be justly given to the Mohammadans by grants-in-aid to small schools of their own. Greater encouragement should also be given to the creation of a vernacular literature for the Mohammadans - a measure the importance of which was especially urged upon the Government of India by Her Majesty's Secretary of State on more than one occasion."

The Resolution was communicated to the various local governments and overnight a change took place in the attitudes of the bureaucracy regarding the Muslims. Thus the seed of separatism was injected into the artery of the body-social of Bengal and other provinces which marred the way of the growth of a common national sentiment among the pupils of both the communities. Ishwari Prasad and S.K. Subedar have remarked,

"The Resolution couched in most liberal terms had within it the seeds of Muslim separatism which grew up into the tree of Pakistan. It encouraged the establishment of separate schools for Muslims with

Muslim teachers. It encouraged the development of a separate Muslim literature with a bias towards Arabic and Persian which were to be taught. The Resolution changed the medium of instruction and encouraged the appointment of Muslim teachers and gave it to understand that the Government was rather very sympathetic to Muslim welfare. As was designed the expected result followed; the Hindu boys shunned the institution where Muslim religion was taught, where the teachers were mostly Muslims and the stress was more upon Arabic and Persian. The Muslim boys in turn were naturally more attracted towards the schools where their religion was taught and the teachers were of their religion. The result was the gradual separation of Hindu and Muslim boys from the very beginning. The friendship of early childhood and the tolerance developed and taught on the playfield was prevented. 116

That the imperialists intended to communicate a biased educational system to the Muslims would be more visible from the following fact. With the beginning of the seventies of the last century, the Bengal government recommended that the Muslims should be given education in general schools with "special class to teach" them "Arabic or Persian after their fashion", but the government of India encouraged and patronised the promotion of Madrassa system of education. 117 In 1884, however, the government of India


tackled the whole problem of Muslim education with a special consideration. In 1906 a new scheme was put into operation which appointed inspecting Maulvis to supervise 'Makhtabs' with a view to popularise Muslim primary education and not the general primary education. The government was so keen to impose a sense of separatism among the Muslim pupils that it gave special importance to Urdu teacher in high schools even when percentage of Muslim students was only ten. The government had experienced that a modern system of education led a considerable section of Hindu youths to political activities, which were detrimental to the interests of imperialism. Now the cunning British rulers invented a device, that is, a biased educational system for the Muslims which would serve double purposes. First, it would inject the poison of separatism among the students of both the communities and second, it would help the Muslim students to turn their face to religious orthodoxy and dogmatism instead of rebellion. Shila Sen has rightly observed, that the "orientation towards the traditional modes of learning at the primary level, a definitely retrogatory step, fostered by Government and agreed to by the leaders was perhaps the greatest snag in the modernisation of the Muslim community." In the words of P. Hardy, such an

118. Ibid, p.11. This demand was raised by the National Mahommedan Association in 1882. Vide, Anisuzzaman, Muslim Manas O Bangla Sahitya, Calcutta, Muktadhara, 1971, p.85.


120. Ibid, p.13.
educational policy of the imperialist government "helped to endow the Muslims with a separate social as well as religious personality, which needed to be recognised in British policy."121

British Policy of Religious Neutrality

The thinking and activities of the Muslim leaders and a biased educational system sponsored by the British rulers implanted a sense of separate identity among the Muslims of upper and middle classes. Such a sense of separate identity widened the gulf between the rising Muslim middle class and the Hindu bhadraloks who had already outstripped them economically, educationally or politically. But such a clash of interest between Hindus and Muslims in the field of education of governmental posts or in trade and commerce was only confined to the middle class periphery. To create hostility between the common people of the two communities a more subtle device was necessary and so the British rulers adopted the policy of religious neutrality. Apparently the "British were reluctant to interfere with the socio-religious customs of either the Hindus or the Muslims,"122 but practically they followed the policy of offering equal


encouragement to both Hindu and Muslim orthodoxy and parochialism under the cloak of religious neutrality. The process, however, really started in early days of the Company rule,

"... what Warren Hastings and his successors persisted in putting forward as Indian laws and custom took the direction of patronizing the religious orthodoxy instead of encouraging the liberal ideas which had gained ground in Indian society in the previous period and which ... were ushering in a progressive life in India with a permanent rapprochement between the Hindus and Moslems and the eradication of decadent customs and institution ... As a result, Brahminism and Islamic orthodoxy reasserted themselves with the support they received from the ruling authority."\[123

In a later period, the framework in which communal riots erupted was provided by the British policy of religious neutrality which the imperialism faithfully followed.\[124 The object of this policy was to grant fullest liberties to the Hindus as well as the Muslims in the observance of their religious ceremonies in exuberance no matter how meaningless, superstitious or baneful to the communal relations they might be. The British policy provided an 'absolute right' to each community in the name of religious freedom and the religious freedom of one community struck the susceptibility of the other.


For example, the British rulers made the question of cow slaughter a bone of contention between the Hindus and the Muslims. Lord Lansdown, the Governor-General (1888-1894) declared the "freedom of religion" of the subjects of both the communities and said,

"We are ... bound to secure to both the great religious denominations of freedom from molestation or persecution in the exercise of their religious observances ... The law secured the Mohammadans the right of following the ritual which has been customary to them from their forefathers; while it secures to the Hindus protection from outrage and insults and for this reason forbids the slaughter of cattle with unnecessary publicity or in such a manner as to occasion wanton and malicious annoyance of their feelings...

I would therefore say to the Mohammadans - Do you in the exercise of your religious duties take thought of the susceptibilities of your Hindu fellow countrymen, perform your religious rights and duty perform them reverently unobtrusively and in such a manner so not to wound the feelings of your Hindu neighbours; while to the Hindus I would say, by all means organise ... your societies for protecting cattle from ill treatment..."125

In the nutshell, Lansdowne asked the Muslims to slaughter the cow and to Hindus to protect the cow and "promised both the strong arm of the Government in their divergent aims."126

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126. Ibid, p.27.
the slaughter of cow had always been a taboo to the Hindus and was regarded as a sinful act by them. On the other hand, cow-sacrifice was an optional part in the religious festivals of the Muslims. Lansdowne's proclamation stirred up both the communities. Cow protection movement appeared as a symbol of the sense of Hinduness, while cow-killing assumed a part of Muslim identity and Muslims' self assertion. As a consequence of British policy the mutual understanding of the past disappeared and active encouragement for cow slaughter as well as cow protection envenomed the social life of the sub-continent. It should be mentioned here that during the First War of Independence, the Muslim patriots assured the Hindus that cow killing would be put to an end if the Hindus took part with them in the war of freedom.127 The British rulers knew it and so they prevented the way of mutual settlement of the issue between the two communities in a normal and peaceful way. So when in 1888 Mir Musaraf Hossain proposed that Muslims should abstain from cow slaughter for the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, the orthodox Muslims protested against the proposal and fulminated Mir Musaraf as 'Katir' or anti-Islam.128

The British policy of religious neutrality provided another source of Hindu-Muslim tension. It granted the right to the Hindus to pass religious processions accompanied by musical bands before the mosque. The British policy of religious neutrality encouraged the Hindus to play bands louder when passing by a mosque and instigated the Muslims to perform the 'Kurbani' or sacrifice of cow with more vigour and unnecessary vehemence. The British policy encouraged each community to observe its religious festivals in exuberance, to parade its religion on the streets and to organise religious processions under armed guards and police escorts "creating psychological commotion in the minds of the other." The British device was to encourage each community to believe that vehement expressions of its orthodoxy and excessive religious craze would not only be permitted by the administration but would be approved and protected. This sort of religionism was not the demand of religion itself, as Rabindranath observed, rather it was the audacity on the part of any of the communities to hurt religious sentiments of the other.

Thus the British policy of religious neutrality became

the most potent force for spreading communal hatred. From the British point of view, it was a great success in the implementation of the 'divide and rule' policy. The race for white collar jobs between the middle class of the two communities and the consequent ill feelings were confined only to the upper strata of the society, but the policy of religious neutrality strengthened the sense of 'identity' among the common people of the two communities concerned and poisoned every walk of life.

**Muslim Literature**

While the British policy of religious neutrality inflamed the religious frenzy of the Hindus and the Muslims, another factor contributed steadily to the growth and fulfilment of a separate Muslim identity; it was a Muslim literature written in 'Musalmani Bangla'. It was the outcome of the British patronage for creating a "vernacular literature for the Mohammadans". Such a literature in 'Musalmani Bangla' was also influenced by the thinking and ideas of some Muslim leaders who suggested that Urdu should be the mother tongue of the Bengali Muslims, or at least, Sanskritised Bengali language should be Islamised by incorporating Arabic, Persian and Urdu words.

We have discussed earlier that as an inseparable part of Hindu revivalist movement, the Bengali Hindu literati and writers created a tradition of Bengali literature which was
essentially pro-Hindu in character. Even the school textbooks were not free from Hindu bias. If literature claims to be the mirror of life, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Bengali (Hindu) literature, with a very few exception, reflected Hindu aristocracy and Hindu upper class society, Hindu history, Hindu mythology, Hindu patriotism, Hindu moral values and Hindu egotism, in a word, Bengali (Hindu) literature of those days was marked by a flurried and solicitous search for a Hindu identity. Similarly, with the rise of a separate Muslim consciousness, there emerged a separate Muslim literature which in turn fed Muslim communalism and provided one of the ground-works of Muslim 'nationhood'. Such a literature, enriched with Islamic religious fervency and its supposed superiority provided the leading Bengali Muslims not only an emotional bond with Muslims of other parts of India, it also enabled them to establish a sentimental 'umbilical cord' with West Asia and thereby it strengthened the sense of separatism among them. Like the Hindu literati the Muslims also began to portray Islamic traditions and its superiority, Muslim history, Islamic mythology etc. and all these harped on the same string, that is Pan-Islamic outlook. The Bengali Muslim writers discovered the atavism with the dwellers of West Asia. They


133. For a brief but worthy discussion of Muslim communal novels of Bengal, see Rashid Al Faruquee. Op.cit, pp.41-49.
regarded the impassable desert of West Asia as holy land and rejected the Ganges or the green fields of Bengal as Hindu. Even some sweet smelling flowers became proper to be forsaken to them as anti-Islam. \textsuperscript{134} To these fervent writers Indian history appeared as Hindu history and Akbar became nationalist Muslim and Aurangzeb became the Muslim Leaguer. \textsuperscript{135} Undoubtedly, such a communal literature in 'Musalmani Bangla' was the natural reaction to the writings of some Hindu writers like Bankim Chandra, but it was engaged in a quest of 'Muslim culture', Muslim identity and the congruent ideological weapon of a religionised politics. The communal literature in 'Musalmani Bangla' attuned the mind of Bengali Muslims with their coreligionists of other parts of India and helped them to think of a monolithic Islamic culture as a clencher of Muslim nationhood. So an annotator of the two-nation theory argued:

"Their (Muslim) idea of nationality is not based on identity of race or community of economic interest or attachment to the geographical boundaries of a particular territory it rests on a definite life outlook and social policy ... They are deeply conscious of their separate cultural characteristics which have developed from their adherence to an all-embracing creed and certain moral


\textsuperscript{135} Ibid. p.39."
principles governing all aspects of life.
It is this separate cultural characteristics
which entitle them to claim for themselves
the status of a separate nationality..."136

Demographic Factor

Another factor and that was demographic, which helped the
Muslims of Bengal to assert their identity distinct from the
Hindu community. Till 1871, in Bengal Hindus formed the majority
of the total population of the province.137 But during the
ending years of the last century, the number of Muslim population
increased. And since then the number of Muslims began to expand
unabated.138 This change in the proportion of the Muslims in the
total population of 'Bengal-proper' made the Muslims self conscious
and it led them to self assertion.139 In 1872 in the census
report of 1871, H. Beverley wrote that majority of the Bengali
Muslims originated from the lower strata of the Hindu community.140
In 1883 James Wise also expressed the same view. He held that the
Bengali Muslims were not the descendants of Mughals or Pathans,
they were converted from Bengali Hindus.141 Khondkar Fuzli Rubbee,

136. Quoted in ibid, p.95.
140. Ibid, p.167.
dewan of Murshidabad state, refuted this opinion and published a book entitled 'The Origin of the Muhammadans of Bengal' in 1895. In this book he tried to show that the sword did not spread Islam in Bengal, rather, the ancestors of the majority of Bengali Muslims were immigrants from Arab, Iran and Afghanistan. Such an assertion helped the educated Muslims to become conscious about a separate identity. Many of them discovered pure 'Islamic blood' in their veins and felt proud of it. These aristocrat Muslims tried to influence the Muslims of lower strata and thereby to compete with the Hindu bhadraloks to get advantages from the government.

Thus the Muslims of upper strata in Bengal discovering not only a cultural tie with West Asia through a separate Muslim literature, but also attempting to establish a relationship of blood and flesh with their real or imaginary ancestors of West Asia simply broadened the chasm between the two communities. This Pan-Islamism was the antipodes of Hindu outlook which identified Indianness with Hinduism. Now by the beginning of the twentieth century the feasibility of a joint Hindu-Muslim struggle against the imperialism vanished. And this was the actual intention of

143. Ibid, p.168.
144. Ibid, p.172.
the British. Now the politics of the two communities began to follow two different courses easily distinguishable from each other. The cunning British ruler was waiting for the just moment. In 1905 Bengal was partitioned and the Muslim communal leaders made their first debut as an active political force. In 1906 the All India Muslim League was conceived and since then the religionised politics of the Muslim communal leaders got a definite and concrete shape.

Partition of Bengal and the Communal Politics

Since the beginning of the present century, Bengal became the cynosure of Indian politics. It was Lord Curzon who claimed the credit of striking a blow at the growing national spirit by dividing Bengal on communal lines and of creating open and avowed hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims. Under the garb of administrative convenience, Lord Curzon announced the final decision of partitioning Bengal on 19th July 1905. On 16th October two new provinces came into being, East Bengal with a Muslim majority and the other, that is, West Bengal with a Hindu majority. In fact, even before 1905, the imperialist government thought of such a partition of Bengal which would hinder the rapidity of the growing national sentiments among the

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Bengalis. So Curzon during his visit to Dacca in February, 1904 addressed the Muslim landowners and said that the partition "would invest the Mohamedans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Muselman Viceroy and Kings." There was, however growing resentment among the Hindu bhadraloks since the scheme of the proposed partition was made known. More than three hundred protest meetings were held in various parts of Eastern Bengal in January 1904 alone. A storm of passionate protest swept over the country, the like of which there was nothing to compare in recent Indian history.

On the 16th October, 1905, the partition of Bengal came into force. On that historic day,

"immense numbers of people in the two divisions of the partitioned province abstained from lighting their kitchen fire, went about bare footed, performed ceremonial baths in rivers or sacred tanks and tied on one another's wrist the sacred 'rakhi', a piece of silk or cotton thread, as a symbol of fraternal unity." Actually Curzon's view was to set up in Dacca a rival Muslim

147. Ibid, p.225.
148. Ibid. 225.
centre to the Hindu centre of Calcutta. And his aim was fulfilled. The new province, promised Muslims of upper and middle classes new avenues for material advancement. On the other hand, Calcutta centred Hindu bhadraloks found the partition as detrimental to their interests, because the new province could cut off its dependency on Calcutta and would emerge as a self-sufficient urban centre with its own high court, university, industry, port and commercial and business marts. So the widespread protest against the partition of Bengal was predominantly Hindu bhadralok oriented movement. At the initial stage of the movement some Bengali Muslims took part in it or opposed the partition scheme, even Sallim-ullah-Khan, the Nawab of Dacca was against the partition. But this small section of Bengali Muslims had little influence on their coreligionists, majority of the Bengali Muslims supported partition and acted against the anti-partition and Swadeshi movement. On the other hand, the Hindu character of Swadeshi and anti-partition movement failed to attract the Muslim masses. Even the Nama Shudras of East Bengal

150. Ibid, p.35.

did not take part in the movement and acted against the Swadeshi movement because of its (Hindu) upper caste character.\textsuperscript{155} Besides, some economic consequences of the boycott (of British goods) movement went against the poor Muslims, who either remained aloof or joined the Muslim pro-partitionist camp. Therefore, the movement in support of and against partition became a confrontation between the two communities and the Hindu orientation of the anti-partition movement led Muslims to believe that their interests would only be protected in the hands of the Muslim leadership.\textsuperscript{156}

While the Hindu leaders, as we have seen earlier appealed to religion and used Hindu symbols for solidarity of the (Hindu) masses, the Muslim leaders too appealed to Islam and used religious leaders for the same purpose, that is, to achieve the support of the Muslim masses. But objects of the two camps were diametrically opposite. The former was against the partition and the latter supported it. It is known that the pro-partitionist Muslim leaders took the help of Muslim religious personalities for breeding anti-Swadeshi feelings and for preaching the 'benefit' of the partition among the Muslim masses. A governmental report observed:


"The principal attraction at the Muhammadan meeting was the presence of a very celebrated Maulana named Abu Bakr, who came from Pher Phura in the Hooghly District and delivered a dissertation on religious subjects, on the benefit of the partition, and on loyalty to the British Crown. He exhorted his bearers to take no part in Bengali demonstrations against the action of the Government; he also prayed for the recovery of the Sultan of Turkey. Abu Bakr is a very powerful Maulana - the most powerful in Bengal and his presence added largely to the effect of the gathering."

Besides, some Muslim papers worked vigorously against the Swadeshi movement and called for the help of Islam for the said purpose. For example, in 1908 'Islam Pracharak' wrote that the Hindu Swadeshi movement deviated from the path of justice and was against Islam. Islam did never oppose foreign trade and imports of foreign goods. It further added that it was never possible for a religion like Islam to dictate such an unnatural and peculiar directive. Rather it tantamounted to a sinful act, it further added. In 1907, the same paper ridiculed the Hinduised nationalism and rejoiced pointing out at the failures of the Swadeshi movement. It wrote that the baseless Swadeshi movement looked like the image of God of the Hindus, it was externally glamorous but inanimate in reality.

However, the tension between the two communities caused by pro and anti-partition attitudes soon turned into mutual hostility and avengeful temperament when influential Muslim leaders like Sallim-ullah-Khan, Nawab Syed Ameer Hussain of Calcutta and Nawab Ali Chaudhuri of Mymensingh entered the political arena as strong supporters of the partition and began to work vigorously against the Swadeshi movement. The Central National Mahomedan Association and some other Muslim religious groups also joined Nawab Sallim-ullah-Khan and took part in propaganda against Swadeshi leaders. Nawab Sallim-ullah became a study horse for spreading communal feelings among the Muslim masses. He received a loan of Rs.100,000 at a low rate of interest and thus his support was won over. He not only became the patron of the Mohammedan Provincial Union, an anti-Swadeshi movement organisation, with the object of "uniting the Mohammedans of the new province", but also expressed the view of popularising the benefit of the partition among the Muslim masses. For this purpose, he tried to exploit the religious sentiments of the common Muslims by appointing mercenary religious leaders. From a village in East Bengal, Srinivasa Sastri reported to Gokhale on 27 January 1907, 160

that except a few educated persons and the weavers, the Muslims on the whole were against the boycott movement. Anti-Swačeshi feeling was universal among them. This opposition to the patriotic movement, Sastri pointed out, was "the work of a band of Maulvis paid by the Nawab of Dacca and helped by the police."¹⁶³

There is also evidence that some Muslim religious leaders turned the social and economic grievances of the poor Muslims into communal hatred and thus fed the politics of communalism. The fanatic Mullahs persuaded the common Muslims that the government of the new province had now passed into their control and aroused in them a blind fury against the Hindu landowners and traders. Thus communal affrays became widespread in Eastern Bengal.¹⁶⁴

Thus the Muslim communal leaders took resort to religionism for spreading the poison of communal hatred and antagonism between the common people of both the communities. They circulated widely the 'Red Pamphlet' which was attuned with argute communal passion. The 'Red Pamphlet' appealed,

"Ye Musalmans, arise, awake, do not read in the same school as the Hindus. Do not buy anything from a Hindu shop. Do not touch any article manufactured by Hindu hands. Do


not give any employment to any Hindu. Do not accept any degrading office under a Hindu; you are ignorant but if you acquire knowledge you can at once send all Hindus to Jehannam (hell). You form the majority of the population of this Province. Among the cultivators also you form the majority... The Hindu has no wealth of his own and has made himself rich only by despoiling you of your wealth." 165

Soon the desired results occurred, communal clashes broke out and the mutual sympathy that prevailed during the pre-British days was wrecked. A special Magistrate, himself a Muslim, observed in a rioting case that,

"The evidence adduced on the side of the prosecution shows that, on the date of the riot, the accused had read over a notice to a crowd of Musalmans and had told them that the Government and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca had passed orders to the effect that no body would be punished for plundering and oppressing the Hindus. So after the Kali image was broken by the Musalmans the shops of the Hindu traders were also plundered." 166

It was also announced among the Muslims that the government had permitted the Muslims to marry Hindu widows in Nikah. 167

166. Ibid., pp.31-32.
167. Ibid., p.32.
Meanwhile, an assault was made on Nawab Sallim-ullah by Hindu rowdies, which further kindled the mutual hatred between Hindus and the Muslims. Incidents of use of force by the Hindus against the Muslim shopkeepers also occurred. To fan the malice of both the communities the British rulers imported a number of Muslim officers from the united Provinces for manning of the intelligence branch of police and appointed them to suppress the revolutionary activities of Hindu revolutionaries. "The result was that the Hindus of Bengal began to feel that Muslims as such were against political freedom and against the Hindu community."  

So the British device of creating hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims produced expected results and the partition issue brought the two communities poles asunder in the political field.

The Birth of the All India Muslim League

Brining the two communities against each other centering round the partition issue, the Argus-eyed British imperialism did not diddle, it fathered the All India Muslim League in 1906. The

British bureaucracy had already declared that between its two wives, that is the Hindus and the Muslims, the Muslim was the "favourite wife". Practically, the special favour to the communal Muslims was an imperialistic trick to "make-weight against Hindu nationalism." And now the imperialistic manoeuvre presented to its "favourite wife" an organisation from which it would articulate its demands and aspirations.

In the words of Maulana Muhammad Ali (Presidential Address to the Indian National Congress, 1923) the All India Muslim League came into being by the 'Command Performance' arranged by the imperialism. Lord Minto, who succeeded Lord Curzon as Viceroy, cleverly manipulated the communal tension that followed the partition of Bengal and devised the most potent recipe for permanent communal antagonism in the country, that is, a political platform for the communal Muslims and communal representation. He took the guileful policy that the government was innocent enough and the decision of introducing communal representation was the consequence of Muslim demand. However, a message was secretly sent to Nawab Muhsin-ul-Mulk of Aligarh College

171. Ibid, p.4.
through Mr. Archibald, the Principal, that the Nawab should take a delegation of prominent Muslims from all parts of India to the Viceroy and ask for special concessions to the Muslims including the following appeals:

"1. A substantial number of Muslims should be taken in government services and the Legislative Council by nomination.

2. Where election was necessary, there should be separate constituencies for Muslim candidates and they should be elected exclusively by Muslim votes." 175

In the first day of October, 1906 the "Muslim deputation" headed by H. H. Agha Khan met the Viceroy, Lord Minto immediately announced his acceptance of the demands of the said delegation that the Muslims' position should be estimated "in the respect to the political importance" of the community and "the services that it has rendered to the Empire..." 176

The imperialists rightly considered the matter as an event of historical importance. A 'farsighted' official of the British government wrote to lady Mento, the wife of the Viceroy, that :

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175. Ibid, p.55.
"I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a big thing has happened today, a work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition."177

During the next three months the task of establishing a separate political platform for the communal Muslims on the all India level was easily accomplished under the direct inspiration of the imperialistic manoeuvre. Thus the All India Muslim League came into being in December 1906 at Dacca concocting aristocratic and well-to-do Muslims from different parts of India by the British imperialism. The League inscribed on its banner, loyalty to the Crown, an oath of combating the "rebellious spirit"178 of the Congressmen, and the distinctiveness of the Muslim community based on religious passion. For, except the appeal to Islam there was nothing which could rank the Muslim people behind its leadership. Regarding the communal Muslims' move towards becoming a political community, P. Hardy has observed:

"Social and economic, regional and linguistic divisions between Muslims in British India ran deep. Apart from religion it was difficult to see what tie associated the Mappilla(Mopalah) cultivator of the Malabar coast and the descendant of Mughal office-holders in the North

Western Provinces, or the Muslim cultivators of eastern Bengal and the Muslim lawyer of Calcutta." 179

For this very reason the Muslim Leaguers asserted that the Islamic brotherhood was the highest common factor for political unity among the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent.

The League's objectives as it enunciated in its inaugural session ran as follows:

"(a) To promote, among the Musalmans of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government, and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intention of the Government with regard to any of its measures.

(b) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Musalmans of India, and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government.

(c) To prevent the rise, among the Musalmans of India, of any feeling of hostility towards other communities, without prejudice to the other aforementioned objects of the League." 180

As a sign of loyalty, the nascent Muslim League, in the same session, took resolution supporting the partition of Bengal and condemning the boycott movement. 181 Practically, the first

181. Ibid. p. 91.
activities of the Muslim League "were an almost word-for-word repetition, along communal lines, of those of early Congress twenty years before." 182

After the formation of the League, Bengal politics took a new turn. Nawab Sallim-ullah appeared as the sheet-anchor of the Muslim communal politics in Eastern Bengal. The Nawab took the task of popularising the aims and objects of the Muslim League and of uniting the Muslims in favour of partition. 183 In 1907, Bengal Provincial Muslim League came into being under the presidency of the Nawab and the government recognised this branch-organisation as the sole spokesman of all matters concerning the Muslims of Eastern Bengal. 184

Morley-Minto Reform

As the Agah Khan deputation "demanded and secured the right of separate representation for the Muslim community", 185 the British imperialism soon granted it to the communal Muslims.

To expand the imperial and provincial legislative councils the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909 introduced in India whi what is commonly called the communal electoral system "which in a way foreshadowed the birth of Pakistan." 186 In evaluating the socio-political significance of the principle of "separate electorates", Fischer noted that once the British had introduced it, "a Moslem could vote only for a Moslem candidate, and a Hindu only for a Hindu. The mischief produced by this institution was incalculable because it made religious differences the deciding factor in every political contest." 187 Indeed, the policy of separate electorates was destined to "poison the social life of districts and villages and make a hell of India" as was observed by the 'Moslem Herald' some years earlier. 188 It struck at the roots of any democratic electoral system even under the aegis of British domination and made the religious identity as the determining factor in the field of politics for both the electorate and their representatives. The British intention was to bring about a perpetual division between the Hindus and the Muslims and no better device could be innovated than the system of communal representation. Sunderland noted,

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"... no scheme could possibly have been devised more destructive of national unity, or more certain to create jealousy, rivalry and hostility among all religious sects, especially between Mohammedans and Hindus." 189

The system of communal representation, however, was successfully extended and elaborated in the subsequent reforms of 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms) and reached the climax through the Government of India Act of 1935 which provided separate representation not only for the Muslims but for the Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo Indians and the depressed classes (Scheduled Castes) "till India became a mosaic of these separate compartments ... the injury they [the separate electorates] have caused to every department of Indian life has been prodigious. Out of them have grown all manner of separatist tendencies and finally the demand for a splitting up of India." 190

However, the Reform of 1909 was a great victory of Muslim communalists; they accepted it with elation and expressed gratitude to the Viceroy:

"The hearts of the Mahomedans of India were filled with deep gratitude to the Government,

and they saw that, in the new Councils, not only would their interests be safeguarded owing to the presence on them of a sufficient number of their own real representatives, but that the state of things thus created would secure the stability of British Government, which they look upon as their very own, and would prevent the Hindu dream of Swaraj from being realised. 191

Thus the system of separate electorates not only provided Muslims "a separate constitutional identity" 192 but also made religion the determining factor in all political activities and gave a constitutional outlet of religionised politics of both the communities.

It is rather astonishing that the Congress did not oppose the system of communal electorates vehemently; only Surendra Nath Banerjee and Madan Mohan Malaviya raised their voice against the system, but for Gokhale's silence they could not proceed further. 193 It should be remembered however, that Malaviya went against the system of separate electorates because of the apprehension of discontent of the Hindus, 194 not for any democratic, non-sectarian outlook.

194. Ibid, p.78.
The communal Muslims' gratitude to the British soon turned into suspicion due to some national and international events. The causes of this shift of position of the communal Muslims has been described by F.K. Khan Durrani, a pro-Pakistani theoretician:

"The first jolt to Muslim loyalty came from Italy's invasion of Tripoly in the autumn of 1911 and the British Government's share in it. It was followed by another powerful shock administered by the Repeal of the Partition of Bengal shortly after (in December 1911)...

These two blows to the Muslim loyalty were followed by a third one when the Balkan States attacked Turkey in the autumn of 1912 with the full moral support of Britain." 195

These events following one after the other in quick succession caused a change in the policy of the Muslim League. In 1913, when the Muslim League met in the annual session it declared "the ideal of the League the attainment, under the aegis of the British Crown, of a system of self-government suitable to India." 196 The national and international events which caused a change in the policy of the Muslim League, was further reinforced at the end of 1914 when Turkey emerged as an allied power of Germany in the first world war against England.

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venerated the Sultan of Turkey as the leader of Islam, the Khalifa, so as the Khalifa was now at war against England it reacted heavily on the Muslim mind which led the Indian Muslims to anti-British feeling, because, "Pan-Islamic sentiment was then unusually strong."197 Thus it was not British domination over India, but an international issue which provoked the Muslim Leaguers to change their political line. This change of attitude of the League brought it nearer to the Congress and the leaders of the two organisations decided to hold their annual sessions at the same place and in 1916, the League and the Congress accomplished the famous Lucknow Pact, which brought another victory for the communal Muslims, as it was proved in the future. The Lucknow Pact accepted separate electorates for the Muslims and provided safeguards for religious minorities in provincial legislatures.

Hindus were given better representation in Bengal and the Punjab where they formed the minority, and on the same principle, Muslims were given reservation of seats in the five provinces where they were in a majority.40 per cent of the non-official seats in the legislature were to be received by the Muslims of Bengal as they were little over the number of the Hindus in the province. By this scheme the Congress "formally

recognised communal politics and came to an understanding with the League."\(^{198}\) Another historian has noted that for the Congress the Lucknow Pact "was a surrender to Muslim communalism and separatism."\(^{199}\) In fact, the Lucknow Pact provided the logic for sustaining the two-nation-theory. Later, the Lucknow Pact became a locus standi to the communal Muslims from which they fought for Pakistan. Thus, F.K. Khan Durrani argued:

"The Pact was, however, of far-reaching importance in its implications. By that Pact, the Congress acknowledged the fact that the Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations, and that while the Congress itself was the representative of the Hindus, the Muslim League represented the Muslim community. The Congress has now \(^{194}\) resiled from this position and claims to represent the whole of India, whereas the Muslim League stands true to its position of 1916 and insists that the Congress is a Hindu organisation and has no right to the Muslims whom, as a matter of fact, it does not represent. Hindu writers of Congress persuasion now call the Lucknow Pact "the greatest blunder the Congress has ever committed." It may have been a blunder in the eyes of those who are cherishing dreams of Hindu imperialism. But it represented the true facts of the situation, and if the Hindus and the Muslims are ever to come to an amicable settlement, it will be on the basis that they constitute two different and separate nations."\(^{200}\)

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The Congress leaders thought that appeasement of the Muslim League which meant an encouragement to the religionised politics of the Leaguers, would pave the way for constitutional agitation and for getting administrative sops. But actually by accomplishing the Lucknow Pact they divided the Indian people into two compartments for ever. In 1916, the Indian nation was divided on the basis of religious creeds and that division never wiped out. M.R.A. Baig has rightly remarked:

"Lucknow in 1916 was the shadow cast before the coming event which occurred on 15 August 1947 ... the granting of separate electorates to Muslims made, by default, the non-Muslim constituencies into Hindu constituencies. The "two-identity theory" now became a national reality."

However, the repercussion of the Lucknow Pact on the Bengali Muslims was not happy indeed. Majority of them showed repugnance to the provisions of the Pact and denounced it as "a betrayal to the community's interests." According to the opponents of the Pact, the protection of Muslims' communal interests was the paramount duty of the leaders of the community. The opponents of the Pact left the Bengal Muslim League and joined the Central

National Mohammedan Association and then formed the Indian Moslem Association. The Muslim leaders, who repudiated the Lucknow Pact, demanded a greater Muslim share in the legislative bodies. In an address the Central National Mahomeddan Association stated:

"For England now to place the Indian Moslems, without proper, definite and ample safeguards, under the heels of a hostile non-Muslim majority, would, your humble memorialists venture respectfully to submit, be a cruel act of breach of faith and violation of trust."204

The anti-Pact Muslim leaders called for the help of religion and declared, "In the West religion and politics can be separated but in the East never."205

In the meantime, the relations between the two communities worsened after the communal riot in Shahbad district in Bihar in 1917. The Muslim communal papers were still engaged in writing inflammatory articles; 'Naqqash' an Urdu paper wrote:

"... mere expression of ... sentiment will not stop the mouths of the enemies of Islam. Practical steps should be taken. They [The Muslims] should act on the motto, iron must be hammered by iron."206

204. Quoted in ibid, p.116.
206. Ibid, p.120.
Soon in Calcutta a communal riot broke out in Burra Bazar area between the Marwaris and the Muslims. The communal Muslim leaders understood that violence was an effective weapon for political action. They also realised the value of the watch-cry 'Islam in danger', the agency of Mullahs to evoke communal passion and the importance of the mosque as a rallying point. 207

Khilafat Agitation

In spite of these activities of the ultra communalists headed by Syed Nawab Ali Chaudhuri, the Bengal Muslim League under the leadership of Fazlul Huq collaborated with the Congress on the basis of the provisions of the Lucknow Pact. Pan Islamic sentiment was still haunting in the minds of the Indian Muslims. In such a situation, the incorporation of the recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee in the Government of India Acts in 1919, a naked and brutal expression of imperialist rule, and the massacre killing by British troops in Jallianwala Bagh (April 13, 1919) inflamed the accumulated hatred of the Indian masses irrespective of religious creed against the British Raj. Indian people showed an uproarious protest against the atrocities of the imperialism. In this stormy upsurge, the alliance between the Congress and the

207. Ibid, p.123.
Khilafat Committee of the militant Muslims headed by Ali brothers developed into a powerful joint front of the Hindus and the Muslims. And the British rulers anxiously observed the "unprecedented fraternisation between the Hindus and Muslims." With the growing intensity of the struggle, however, "the Muslim League slowly faded out of the picture."209

In the Khilafat days, religious passion was the overwhelming force which outdid mere political aspirations of the militant Muslims. They thought that as the integrity or freedom of other Muslims states were dependent on India's liberation, "it was not merely a political but a religious duty of Indian Moslems to fight for the independence of India."210 For the militant Muslim leaders, as Abul Kalam Azad has noted, there was no alternative to the programme of non-cooperation with the government sketched by Gandhi, if Muslims people really wanted to help Turkey.211 For the promotion of the concept of Muslim brotherhood - a concept which had a great emotional and religious appeal to the Muslims, Mohammad Ali, the undisputed leader of the Khilafat agitation, used religious symbols, decorated his speeches with lengthy quotes from the Quran and the Hadith, and connected


the institution of Khilafat and Pan-Islamic ideology to the religious belief and practices of the Indian Muslims.²¹²

Like the other parts of the country, in Bengal also the Khilafat-non-cooperation movement became a mass movement in which the Hindus and the Muslims took part. Khilafat Committees, distinct from already existing Congress Committees, were established in most of the districts of Bengal with the same immediate objective.²¹³ Thus the Pan-Islamic emotions and sentiments of Muslims were successfully linked up with the political programmes of the Congress.

However, the Hindu-Muslim unity was ephemeral. In the religio-political passion of the Khilafat days, in 1921, Hasarat Mohani expressing the views of the more militant ulama, demanded that the Congress and the Muslim League should strive to attain complete independence.²¹⁴ The militant Muslims thought that without the attainment of complete independence of India, the Khilafat question could not be settled. But Gandhi appeared as wet-blanket and rejected Hasarat Mohani's proposal on the ground that the complete union between the Hindus and the Muslims was

yet not accomplished and hence the demand for complete independence could not be incorporated in the creed of the Congress.215

Gandhi argued:

"Let us understand our limitation. Let Hindus and Muslims have absolute, indissoluble unity. Who is here who can say with confidence: Yes, Hindu-Muslim unity has become an indissoluble factor of Indian nationalism?"216

In the solving of the question of Hindu-Muslim disunion, Gandhi was a failure and under his leadership the "two identity theory" reached its climax.217 Thinking himself always a Hindu, Gandhi appealed for unity as a Hindu leader; to him the Hindus were "we" and the Muslims were "they".218 While his political strategy was to Indianise Pan-Islamism, he thought that participation in the Khilafat movement would be the best opportunity of cow protection.219 On the one hand, he was eager to protect the 'British Empire' and thus wrote to the Viceroy, "... the safety of the British Empire depends upon the just treatment of the Khilafatist demand and the India's claim to Home Rule".220 On the

216. Ibid, p.189, footnote.
other hand, in defence of espousing his Khilafat Pact, he uttered, ",... in laying down my life for the Khilafat, I ensure the safety of the cow, that is my religion, from the Musalman knife."221

Now all these confusing and self-contradictory talks made Gandhi an enigma, "beyond the reach of average human comprehension." However, the short-lived union between the two communities soon collapsed with the sudden withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement by Gandhi in February, 1922.

Relapse of Communal Strife

The subsequent period of frustration opened the way for communal disharmony all over the country and Bengal was no exception. In the upper India, the Hindu communalists started the 'Shudhi' and 'Sangathan' to bring back into the fold of Hinduism those who had embraced Islam. So As a reaction to such efforts on the part of the Hindu communalists, the Muslim communalists started 'Tabligh' and 'Tanzeems' and the county was caught in the grip of terrible Hindu-Muslim riots.223 In Bengal also, communal violence erupted. Defeated in the political objective

221. Ibid, p.90.
national energy turned into communal frictions and there were occasional riots. The question of cow slaughter or noisy processions before the mosque came into prominence and caused Hindu-Muslim riots. The formation of organisations like the Bengal League for the Protection of Hindu Women (from Muslim attacks) and Cow Protection League further contributed to communal furor of both the communities. Movement for preventing music before mosque was also started. The accumulated tension broke out in a serious riot in the city in April 1926 which surpassed the Calcutta of 1918 in violence and duration.

Bengal Pact

In the mean time, Chitta Ranjan Das formulated his Hindu-Muslim Pact, popularly known as Bengal Pact in 1923 based on some provisional agreement with some Muslim leaders. The main clauses of the Pact were:

1) Representation in the Legislative Council

228. Ibid, p.59.
was to be in proportion to the size of the population and through separate electorates for the Muslims.

2) In local bodies, the majority community in each district had to share 60 per cent of the seats and the minority community 40 per cent.

3) Fifty-five per cent of government posts were to be fixed for the Muslims.

4) No resolution concerned with religious faith of any community was to be passed by the Legislative Council without the consent of three-quarters of the elected representatives of that particular community.

5) There was to be no music in procession before mosques, and the Muslims were to enjoy the freedom of killing cow for religious purposes.

Indeed the Bengal Pact was an "electioneering device" which poured success to Das. But the announcement of the Fact "shook the Bengal Congress to its very foundation" and Das was accused of "trying to buy Muslim support". The "Hindus were not prepared to pay" such a high price by which Das bought the

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Muslim support. It threatened the Hindu landed, commercial and professional interests and thus it became a source of contention between the Hindus and the Muslims.\(^23^4\)

In fact, the Bengal Pact justified the 'reasoning' of the principle of separate electorates and blocked any possibility of separation between politics and religious affinity. It looked at the two communities as two separate homogeneous monolithic interest groups. It considered only backwardness of the Muslim professional class' and 'established Hindu interest' ignoring the fact that poverty and exploitation had no religious mark and thereby it marred the way of development of class politics.

The two identity theory which the Bengal Pact had espoused, became more strong in the future. The Muslim rural voters - susceptible to religious and communal appeals because of the tyranny of Hindu landlords and moneylenders, became "cannon-fodder"\(^23^5\) in the battle of politics. The Muslim communal leaders used the symbols of Islam-mosques, shrines and religious festivals which cut across the dividing lines of class and other economic-political interests and made their religio-political creed easily


communicable to the masses. The Muslim communal leaders successfully manipulated religious symbols in their political battle and used them to fan the fires of communal estrangement.\textsuperscript{236}

**Simon Commission**

In February 1928, Simon Commission arrived India to inquire into the working of the Act of 1919 and to make further reforms. All political parties and leaders except some liberals and a section of the Muslim League decided to boycott the Commission because there was not a single Indian in the Commission, - "a slap in the face of Indian expectations."\textsuperscript{237} On the 3rd August, 1928, the Bengal Council elected a seven-member Committee to assist the Commission. Fazlul Huq supported separate electorates and said that the introduction of joint electorates with adult suffrage would not be helpful to the Muslims. The Muslim women would be more reluctant to go to polling booths because they were more backward than the Hindu women and they maintained stricter 'purdah' than the Hindu women. In Bengal, Muslim voters were practically divided in equal proportion between males and females, so Muslims would lose considerably.\textsuperscript{238}

Suhrarwardy in his evidence before the Commission openly placed

\textsuperscript{236} Ibid, p.220.


religion above nationalism; he said, "... joint electorates cannot compose religious differences. Moslems are not prepared to give up their religion for the sake of nationalism." Since such assertions served imperialists' intention to perpetuate communal hostility, the Commission accepted the plea in favour of continuation of communal politics and remarked:

"We are of opinion that under existing conditions in Bengal separate communal electorates must be retained for election to the legislature, and should be extended to all local self-governing bodies as well where adequate representation should be provided for all communities." 240

Nehru Report

In August 1928, the Nehru Committee submitted its report. It recommended joint mixed electorates for both the Indian Parliament and the provincial legislatures with reservation of seats for Muslims in the provinces where they were minority but no such reservation in the Muslim majority provinces (similar safeguards for non-Muslims in N.W. Frontier Province). It also provided no reservation of seats for any community in Parliament. 241 Regarding the communal relations, it pointed out that fullest

239. Quoted in ibid, p.62.
240. Quoted in ibid, p.62.
religious liberty and cultural autonomy to all would solve the communal problems. The Report stated:

"Communalism can only go when the attention of the people is directed in other channels, when they take interest in questions which really affect their daily lives rather than in fancied fears, based on an artificial division of society." 242

The All India Muslim Conference under the leadership of Aga Khan rejected the Nehru Report,243 but the All India Muslim League, through Jinnah, demanded, among other things, that one-third of the seats in the future Parliament in India should be reserved for the Muslims, and there should also be reservation of seats in Bengal and the Punjab on a population basis.244 The Congress refused to agree with the demand of Jinnah and the possibility of an alliance between the Congress and the League vanished.245

The Communal Award

The British ruler further added fuel to the fire of

243. Ibid, p.103.
Hindu-Muslim tension by announcing the communal award on 16 April, 1932. It granted the Muslims in Bengal, who formed 54.7 per cent of the population, 119 seats (out of 250 seats) as against 80 seats to the Hindus including the depressed classes. The Muslim League whole-heartedly supported the Communal Award but ultra communalist Muslims in Bengal remained dissatisfied because they had a higher demand of seats in the Council for their numerical superiority. The Hindu bhadraloks felt indignant and they understood the fact that the advantages of the new situation would go to the Muslims. And the Muslims realised the immense benefit of utilizing the administration for the wellbeing of their community.

The first elections under the 1935 Act of Provincial Autonomy were to be held in January, 1937. The Krishak Praja Party (1929) with a large following of Muslims under the Presidentship of Fazlul Huq decided to combat the Muslim League in the election. The conflict between the League and the Praja Party centred round the question of abolition of the Permanent Settlement. While the Praja Party presented its progressive economic programmes, the League gave emphasis on Muslim solidarity

and the question of protecting religious and cultural rights of the Muslims. Observing the Praja Party's popularity among the common Muslim peasants, the League resorted to religionised politics, the practical implications of which was to bring the Mullahs and maulvis in the battle of election politics. 'Azad', a paper in Bengali, since its inception, talked about the teachings of Islam in favour of the Muslim League. In an editorial (10 January 1937) "Value of Vote" the paper wrote:

"As a Muslim is the property of Allah, so also his vote is the property of Allah. It is the directive of Islam and Imam that the vote is not given against Allah and his followers."249

In another editorial, the paper warned its readers in a tone of high pitched communal feelings:

"Muslim Bengal be careful, the elimination of Muslims and establishment of Hindu Raj is the conspiracy."250

A dramatic situation developed when Nazimuddin, the League candidate, accepted the challenge of Dr. R. Ahmed to contest Fazlul Huq from any constituency and Nazimuddin decided to contest Huq in Patuakhali constituency. Patuakhali became the crux of the election battle. The League mobilised all the resources.

250. Ibid, pp.84-85.
possible means for arousing religious passion of the voters in favour of Nazimuddin. Religion became the handmaid of politics. The Muslim League viewed the contest with utmost importance. Nawab of Dacca himself reached Patuakhali for canvassing in favour of Nazimuddin. The incessant talks of Islam were preached, religious sanctions were passed and 'futwas' were issued by Maulana Abu Bakr, the famous Pir of Phur Phura in support of the League candidate. Mualanas and Maulvis thronged from all parts of Bengal at Patuakhali to persuade the rural voters not to go against Islam and to exercise their franchise in favour of Nazimuddin. Student-followers of the League from other parts of India were also brought to Bengal to canvass for the League. 251

The results of the election, however, clearly showed that the Congress exercised a "remarkable influence" in Hindu voters, 252 but the Muslim votes were split up. The Muslim League only got about one-third of the reserved seats and showed poor results against the Krishak Praja Party in some constituencies including Patuakhali. In overall consideration the Congress got 60 seats, the Muslim League 40, independent Muslims 41, the Krishak Praja Party 35, Europeans 25, the independent scheduled caste group 23 and independent caste Hindus 14. 253 In such a

251. Ibid, p88.
situation, no single party was able to form the government. Yet the results of the election showed clearly that the division of the electorate along the line of religion was complete in Bengal.254

The indecision of the All India Congress Committee about acceptance of office stood in the way of the formation of a coalition government between the Congress and the Krishak Praja Party. The Praja Party was thus compelled to form a coalition with the Muslim League. Fazlul Huq, instead of coalescing with the League, joined it with a large body of followers. Huq's joining the League had a great significance. A coalition of the Congress and the Praja Party could pave the way for Hindu-Muslim understanding but "The Praja Party's merger with the League made the Ministry almost wholly communal, and gave communalism a foothold to expand."255

On 15 October, 1937, at the League Council meeting in Lucknow, Fajlul Huq was embraced by Jinnah amidst joyous shouts "Allah-O-Akbar" and Fazlul Huq declared that "he would be under the banner of the League without any reservation."256

Huq's joining the League gave a new impetus to the


communal politics of the League. Jinnah got the much awaited opportunity to claim about the League as the sole representative of the Muslims of Bengal as well as India. Till 1937, the Muslim League was a small group of well-to-do Muslims, but as Myron Weiner has noted,

"It was in the three years between 1937 and 1940 that the League grew from a limited-interest group to a vast mass movement which was to win its demand for a Pakistan state of eighty million people."257

Among many other devices adopted by the Muslim League to expand its sphere of influence, perhaps, the most important was its labour policy. Suhrawardy, the Minister for Commerce and Labour, injected his stooges into labour politics and thereby became able to drive a wedge between the Hindu workers and Muslim workers.258 Thus religious passion not only pervaded the minds of upper and middle strata of the society, it also prevented the possibility of the growth of a strong working class solicarity.

The propaganda machinery, both official and non-official, was extensively used to gain support for the Muslim League. 'Azad', the spokesman of the League, reminded its readers that it was a

Hindu conspiracy which caused the downfall of Muslim rule in Bengal on the Plassey battle ground and now they were making the same conspiracy to bring an end to the Muslim minority in Bengal in order to establish a Hindu raj. 259

Fazlul Huq, taking shelter under the umbrella of communal politics, now stood whole-heartedly for Jinnah's cause. On 17 April 1938, at the special session of the League in Calcutta, he delivered a lecture in which he attacked the Congress as "determined to crush and subdue the Muslims" and condemned the "communal bigotry" and "characteristic intolerance" of the Hindu Mahasabha. He asserted,

"It is our incumbent duty to bear constantly in mind that in India we hold the integrity and safety of Islam as a sacred trust. ... We must fight the battle of Islam alone and with our own resources. ... Let us prepare to fight, if need be, on a double front and with our backs to the wall... May the all-merciful God guide these deliberations on the right lines and may your decisions bring nearer the day of Islam's deliverance in India." 260

In the second day (18th April) Fazlul Huq presented a more provocative speech. With communal rage, he declared,

"The League is not yet properly organised,

259. Ibid, p.121.
yet it is worth hundreds of National Congress. Each and every one of the League is a lion and a tiger ready to shed the last drop of his blood for the sake of Islam." 261

In another speech, to make political profit and to gain popularity among communal Muslims, he proclaimed that in Bengal revenge would be taken in reply to oppressions on Muslims in other states. 262

Thus, Fazlul Huq, who a few days ago fought against the Muslim League, standing firmly on non-communal issues and won the election against the League candidate by virtue of his bold programmes of economic reforms, was now sitting on the lap of Muslim communalism and asking his co-religionists to combat the "communal bigotry" of the Hindu Mahasabha.

On the all-India scene, Jinnah was preaching arrogantly the dream of a Muslim raj against the Hindu raj. Religious frenzy was raised to the peak which chafed the Muslim mind not against the British but against the Hindus. Observing the situation, Dr. Muhmu<ref>Ref text not found</ref> Jung wrote,

"The doctrine of aloofness was preached ad-

nauseam in a most unrestricted and irresponsible language. Out of the clouds of circumlocution and confusion arose the cry of Islam in danger. The Muslims were told that they were disunited and were about to be crucified by the Hindus. Religious fervour was raised to a degree where it exhibited itself in blind fanaticism. ... In the name of Muslim solidarity Mr. Jinnah wants to divide India into Muslim India and Hindu India."263

The Sindh Provincial Muslim League Conference (October, 1938) was presided over by Jinnah and attended by a number of prominent Muslim leaders from all parts of India. In the Conference, Fazlul Huq, whose metamorphosis took place recently, emphasised Muslim solidarity glorifying a saga from Muslim history. He was greeted by the audience with & "a wild burst of cheering" when he said,

"If Muhammad bin Qusim, an eight year old lad, with 18 soldiers could conquer Sindh then surely nine crores of Muslims can conquer the whole of India."264

Such high pitched communal feelings expressed by the League leaders simply aggravated Hindu-Muslim tension and served the views of Hindu communalists. Hindu Mahasabha appealed on the

264. Ibid. p.203.
stage as the sole protector of Hindu interest and in the same rigour as the League spread communal hatred. At the Calcutta session of the Hindu Mahasabha in December 1939, V.D. Savarkar, the permanent President of the Hindu Mahasabha, militantly spoke of the Hindus as a nation and of India as "the abode of the Hindu nation." In Hindustan, "the land of the Hindus", Muslims were only "territorially Indians." The Muslims would have the rights of citizenship but they must agree to live in the status of subordinate cooperation, as a minority, with the Hindu nation.265

The Pakistan Resolution: Two-Nation Theory

In such intense communal frenzy came 1940. On 27 March of that year, at the Lahore session the All India Muslim League passed the famous 'Pakistan resolution'. The proposer was 'Sher-e-Bengal' Fazlul Huq.266 The resolution stated:

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* Actually, the Muslim Leaguers did not coin the term 'Pakistan resolution', it was Hindu Press which described the Lahore resolution as 'Pakistan resolution' and Jinnah thanked the Hindus for this transformation. Vide Amalendu De. Pakistan Prostab of Fazlul Huq. pp.46-47.

"... no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent states" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."267

Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman seconded the proposal and by this act he visualised a perpetual antagonism between the two communities even after the partition of the country. Khaliquzzaman said,

"The Muslims in the minority provinces should not be afraid as to what would happen to them after the partition of India into Hindu India and Muslim India. The same thing could happen to them as to the minorities in the Punjab and Bengal."268

The argument was very simple, the minority Hindus of the Punjab and Bengal would remain as security of the minority Muslims in "Hindu India" after the proposed amputation of the country!


The basic foundation of the Pakistan resolution was that the Hindus and the Muslims were two different self-contained homogeneous nations and it was impossible for them to live peacefully and amicably under one central government and the sole basis of these nationalities was religion. This idea was elaborated by Jinnah in his presidential address to the Conference:

"It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions, in the strict sense of the word, but are in fact different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. This misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time. The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature. They neither intermarry, nor interdine together and, indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history... To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state ...

Muslim India cannot accept any constitution which must necessarily result in a Hindu majority government. Hindus and Muslims brought together under a democratic system forced upon the minorities can only mean Hindu Raj. Democracy of the kind of which
the Congress High Command is enamoured
would mean the complete destruction of
what is most precious in Islam ...

Mussalmans are not a minority as it is
commonly known and understood ... Mussalmans
are a nation according to any definition
of a nation and they must have their
homeland, their territory and their state.
... We must be prepared to face all
difficulties and consequences, make all
the sacrifices that may be required of us to
achieve the goal we have set in front of
us.\textsuperscript{269}

Thus the dream of Sir Mohammed Iqbal got a concrete
shape. Sir Syed was afraid of Hindu majority in India after the
termination of the British Raj, and for Iqbal Islamic faith and
nationalism could not go together except in Muslim dominated
countries where no conflict between Islamic faith and nationalism
could arise.\textsuperscript{270} In 1937, Iqbal wrote to Jinnah, "... the
enforcement and development of the Shariat of Islam is impossible
in this country without a free Muslim state or states.\textsuperscript{271} The
idea that the Muslims of India should be politically sovereign
in order to realise the reign of Islam got its headway during this
time. Religious passion became the unbroken thread of politics

\textsuperscript{269} M.A. Jinnah's Presidential Address at the Twentyseventh
Annual Session of the All India Muslim League, Lahore, 22-24
March, 1940. Extracts reproduced in Uma Kaura. \textit{Muslims and
Appendix V.


of separate Muslims' homeland. 'A Punjabi' (Pseuddo) in 'Confederacy of India' argued,

"The Muslims cannot divorce their religion from their politics. In Islam religious and political beliefs are not separated from each other. Religion and politics are associated in the minds and thoughts of all Muslims. ... Their religion includes their politics and their politics are a part of their religion. The mosque not only constitutes a place of their worship but also the Assembly Hall... They are born into a system... Religion and politics are the same to them. Hence Hindu-Muslim unity of nationalism, signifying homogeneity between them in all non-religious matters is imaginable. The Islamic polity in which religion and politics are inseparably united requires perfect isolation for its development. The idea of a common state with heterogeneous membership is alien to Islam and can never be fruitful."272

So establishment of a separate state was necessary for the fulfilment of Islamic ideals. 'A Punjabi' continued:

"A Muslim state may not mean a state in the Western sense of the word to which the Indian Muslims have been accustomed. It may mean a state governed by the Islamic Law as contained in the Holy Quran. It may mean the purging of the Indian Muslims of all the un-Islamic influences which they have contracted on account of their close contact with the non-Muslim communities in India."273


So now politics was directed to purge the Indian Muslims from "un-Islamic influences" which meant deliberate attempts to create communal antagonism between the common people. It was simply incendiarism. Religious passion was cunningly tuned with politics of separate homeland for the Muslims which ultimately meant the demand for a vivisection of India.

The Congress Reaction

The Congress reaction to the League's demand to amputate India is worthy to be noted here. The Congress Working Committee stated:

"... the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will." 274

The Congress declaration was not a negation of the demand of partition but was an indirect acknowledgement of that demand. Such talks of the Congress helped Jinnah to remain obstinate and the British imperialism got the occasion to manipulate the situation. Sir Stafford Cripps said,

"It is easy to understand that the great minorities in India would never accept such a system i.e. a declaration of

Indian independence and a Constituent Assembly to frame a new and free constitution for India. Nor could His Majesty’s Government, who have given pledges to those minorities, consent to their being placed unprotected, while the existing constitution lasts, under a simple and possibly inimical majority rule. It would be a breach of all the pledges that we have given."275

Thus British imperialism instigated the League and communal Muslims to stand firmly on the demand of a separate homeland for the Muslims free from the domination of "inimical" Hindus.

The Bengal Situation : Jinnah-Huq Rift

After the passing of Pakistan resolution, Bengal politics took a more complicated turn. This was caused by a conflict between Jinnah and Fazlul Huq. Broomfield has pointed out that Huq’s action was a "protest against Jinnah’s persistent attempts to interfere in provincial affairs..."276, but it seems that Huq had a strong desire for power;277 and this was the main cause of the rift between Jinnah and Huq. Huq now took a new colour and formed the Progressive Coalition including Krishak Praja Party,

the Forward Bloc and even the Hindu Mahasabha,\textsuperscript{278} in 1941. Forming this coalition, Fazlul Huq described it as an "... augury not only for the cessation of communal strife, but also for the carrying out of a programme for the good of all sections of the people in this country."\textsuperscript{279}

Huq was expelled from the League in December 1941 for "his treacherous betrayal" of the Musalmans.\textsuperscript{280} In reply, Huq criticised the League as "un-Islamic" and "undemocratic".\textsuperscript{281} He also argued that the League leaders were not true Muslims.\textsuperscript{282} Huq declared his plan of organising a new party, The Progressive Muslim League based on the ideals of Islamic brotherhood.\textsuperscript{283} The "ideal of the Progressive Muslim League", he declared "will be Islam first and Islam throughout, but without ignoring the legitimate rights of other communities."\textsuperscript{284} Returning from his earlier communal position, Huq now endeavoured to take a non-communal stand which would secure his leadership among the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{279} Quoted in Shila Sen, \textit{Op.cit}, p.132.
\item \textsuperscript{280} \textit{Ibid}, pp.133-134.
\item \textsuperscript{281} Amalendu De, \textit{Pakistan Prostarb O Fazlul Huq}, p.130.
\item \textsuperscript{282} \textit{Ibid}, p.131.
\item \textsuperscript{283} \textit{Ibid}, p.131.
\item \textsuperscript{284} \textit{Ibid}, p.132.
\end{itemize}
politicians of the two communities. But it is clear that while he took his non-communal stand to get the Hindu support, he also appealed to Islam for getting a foothold among Muslim masses. During 1942-43, Huq and his associates (both Hindus and Muslims) made some efforts to build up Hindu-Muslim unity.\footnote{Ibid, pp.134-144.} One of Huq's objects was to free the Muslim peasants from Jinnah's influence, but such efforts could not retard the growth of communal politics which made Pakistan a reality.

On 28 March, 1943, by Governor's direct intervention, Fazlul Huq was forced to resign\footnote{V.P. Menon. \textit{Op.cit}, p.150.}, and the coalition ministry was toppled. On 24 April, 1943, the League leader, Sir Nazimuddin, formed a new ministry. In effect, it was a Muslim League ministry, although some Hindus took part in it.\footnote{Amalendu De. \textit{Pakistan Prostab...} p.197.}

Indeed, it was a great victory of the pro-Jinnah Muslims and it provided an opportunity to sway the Muslims. Mentioning the growing popularity of the League, Jinnah himself declared,

"We have gone through the crucible fire in Bengal today. Fazlul Huq is no more..."
and I hope for the rest of his life he will be no more. Bengal has shown the way for others. For the last sixteen months Muslims of Bengal have been harassed and persecuted by a man, who, I am sorry to say, is a Mussalman. Today it has been rewarded. For I have just got news that the Huq Ministry has been forced to dissolve because of a successful vote of no-confidence by the Muslim League."288

It is interesting to note that Huq criticised Jinnah and the League as un-Islamic and Jinnah pointed out that Huq himself a Muslim, persecuted Muslims of Bengal. It is clear that both the leaders resorted to Muslim sentiment in the game of power. Both wanted to band together the common Muslims in their divergent aims.

However, after the formation of the League ministry, Nazimuddin appealed for the support of the "leader of Hindu Community", Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, but received the lash: "Hindus of Bengal have no confidence in your Ministry."289

Indeed, there remained no scope of Hindu-Muslim cooperation in Bengal as well as India. The communal politics of the League and its Hindu counterpart were busy to add fuel to the ill feelings of each community about the other. As the ensuing end of the British rule was made known, communal tension reached

the peak and "communal affrays became almost every day affair."

Post War Situation

After the War, new elections were held in 1946 and the results showed that the great majority of the Muslims all over India, except in the N.W.F. Province, supported the Muslim League which secured a miraculous victory in winning 425 out of 492 seats in various legislatures. By 1946, it could be stated that more than ninety per cent of Indian Muslims supported the Muslim League and the charisma of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. In Bengal, the Muslim League, under the leadership of Suhrawardy, won virtually all the Muslim reserved seats in the provincial elections. The elections returned: Congress 86, Muslim League 110, The Hindu Mahasabha 3, Communist Party 3, non-League Muslims 12 and Independent 12 candidates. The results showed that the Muslims of both the Bengal became pro-League. The Muslim League, under the leadership of Suhrawardy, formed a Muslim League ministry with minor Hindu support and Suhrawardy

290. Ibid, p.311.
became the Chief Minister.  

All the League members elected to central and provincial legislatures again raised the demand for Pakistan in a more concrete shape:

"The zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the North-East and the Punjab and the N.W.F. Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the North-West of India ... where the Muslims are in a dominant majority, be constituted into a sovereign state."  

In Britain, the Labour Party which came to power in 1945, decided to a safe evacuation of India. Outside India, the Second World War put an end to the British hegemony in the sphere of international politics. Inside India, demonstrations for the I.N.A. prisoners, the great revolt of the Indian soldiers of the navy in February, 1946 and the growing rage of the people of India made the British imperialists anxious about the continuation of its rule. Mr. Attlee, the British premier, frankly stated on March 5, 1946:

"It is no good applying the formula of the past to the present position. The temperature 

of 1946 is not the temperature of 1920 or of 1930 or even of 1942. The slogans of an early day are discarded. It is a time emphatically for very definite and clear action.  

Thus it is clear that the British imperialists' intention was to come to an amicable settlement with the Indian leaders by which the economic interests of British capital would be maintained even after the political separation of Britain and India. So the Labour Government of Britain sent the Cabinet Mission in March, 1946 with the proposal of a loose federation, but due to political manoeuvre of the three parties concerned, - the British, the Congress and the League, an account of which is beyond our purview, the situation took complicated and acute forms.

The Direct Action Day: Communal Delirium

In such a situation, Jinnah directed the Muslim League to observe a 'Direct Action Day' in order to "prepare the Muslims to achieve Pakistan and assert their first right, to vindicate their honour, and to get rid of the present slavery under the British and the contemplated caste Hindu domination."  


The All India Muslim League embarked to observe the 'Direct Action Day' on August 16, 1946. This declaration of Jinnah brought to Suhrawardy, the chief minister of Bengal, a golden opportunity to demonstrate his influence on the Bengali Muslims and his vigour of getting Pakistan. A few days ago, on 5 August, he wrote an article in The Statesman, Calcutta, in which he provoked the Muslims for 'Direct Action'. He said:

"Bloodshed and disorder are not necessarily evil in themselves, if resorted to for a noble cause. Among Muslims today, no cause is dearer or nobler than Pakistan."

On the eve of 'Direct Action Day', one of Suhrawardy's men called upon the Muslims to adopt the slogan of 'Lar Ke lange Pakistan!' or 'Pakistan by force!'301 Already Jinnah bade "good bye to constitutional methods,"302 so his follower took the advantages of non-constitutional methods, which meant unbridled violence. Suhrawardy declared 16 August as a general holiday. The Hindu members of the legislature protested, but that protest was proved to be futile. At dawn on 16 August, howling in a quasi-religious fervour, Muslim mobs came out in the streets with any weapon capable of smashing a human skull.303

301. Ibid, p.27.
"They savagely beat to a sodden pulp any Hindu in their path and stuffed their remains in the city's open gutters." The Muslim rowdies forced Hindu girls and old men to hold the knife which cut throat of "sacred cows", a terrible act of torturing a Hindu. The police simply disappeared and in the gutters dead bodies of men and women and cows lay side by side, "being picked over by vultures."

Later, the avengeful Hindu mobs came out to slaughter helpless Muslims. Even the Muslim coolies were murdered and Calcutta became something worse than the hell.

In the afternoon, Suhrawardy thanked his listeners for their active work for the sake of Pakistan, who gathered at a mass meeting. Butchery of men was going on a couple of streets away when Suhrawardy was busy in addressing his listeners. The 'Great Calcutta Killings', as it became known, caused the loss of six thousand lives.

304. Ibid, p.28.
306. Ibid, p.32.
The 'Calcutta Killings' changed the destiny of India and the course of history. "The corpses of men, women and children lay stinking in the gutters of Chowringhee Square until ... the vultures picked them clean; and with every mouthful, they picked away the fabric of a unitary India..." 309

Now, all these happened in the name of religion. A Hindu killed a Muslim because the latter was a Muslim, and a Muslim killed a Hindu because of his religious creed. Religious passion made the people hectic, and religious faith became the determining factor for identification of a friend or foe. The internecine riots in Calcutta triggered bloodshed in Noakhali in Eastern Bengal, Bihar and the Punjab. The out group feeling of each community reached the peak and many Bengali Hindus thought that it would be never possible for them to endure a permanent Muslim majority government after the departure of the British. 310

Yet, there had been "a gleam of light in the midst of the gloom." Young people of Hindu and Muslim communities had marched through the streets of Calcutta crying 'Hindu-Muslim ek ho' (Hindus and Muslims unite), with the flags of the Congress and the League tied together. 311 But such good faith of limited

people could not stop the mutual abhorrence of the two communities and it also proved that in the eyes of the common people, while the Muslim League represented most of the Muslims, the Congress stood for the Hindus.

So the Calcutta Killings and its consequences proved Jinnah's claim that Hindus and Muslims could no longer live together peacefully and hence, partition of India on communal lines was the only solution.

Background of Pakistan

In 1933, Jinnah told Rahamat Ali, the first man who coined the word 'Pakistan' that Pakistan was "an impossible dream". But after the Lahore resolution was passed, to some people, outside the League, the demand of Pakistan appeared to be feasible. The Congress repercussion of the Lahore resolution has been already noted, but Gandhi's reaction was of greater importance and deserves mention. In April, 1940, Gandhi wrote,

"I know no non-violent method of compelling the obedience of eight crores of Muslims to the will of the rest of India, however powerful a majority the rest may represent. The Muslims

have the same right of self-determination that the rest of India has. We are at present a joint family. Any member may claim a division."\textsuperscript{313}

In May, 1940 Gandhi commented on the partition proposal that it "has altered the face of the Hindu-Muslim problem. I have called it an untruth ... At the same time I have said that, if the eight crores of Muslims desire it, no power on the earth can prevent it, notwithstanding opposition, violent or non-violent."\textsuperscript{314} Such statements from the leader of the Hindu majority, made Jinnah and his colleagues more vigorous for their demand. But it was Chakravarti Rajagopalachari who with some other Hindu leaders wished to grant Pakistan first to Jinnah,\textsuperscript{315} though in a mutilated form.

In 1943, Rajagopalachari tried to bring about a compromise between the League and the Congress on the basis of Pakistan. It became now obvious that some Hindu leaders had begun to think of Pakistan demand as something reasonable.\textsuperscript{316} The theoretical validity of partition of India was already

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{313} Quoted in Sachin Sen. \textit{Op.cit.}, p.146.
\item \textsuperscript{315} Allen Hayes Marriam. \textit{Op.cit.}, p.92.
\item \textsuperscript{316} A.S. Abid Husain. \textit{Op.cit.}, p.121.
\end{itemize}
recognised by the British imperialism through the Cripps offer of March, 1942.\textsuperscript{317} So, Jinnah was satisfied that the British, the Congress and Gandhi had conceded Pakistan by April, 1942.\textsuperscript{318} The Cabinet Mission of March, 1946 also showed that in Britain too, the statesmen were ready to give the Muslim majority areas the status of an autonomous unit.\textsuperscript{319} By the beginning of December, 1946, the situation in London convinced Jinnah that if he stuck to the demand of Pakistan, he would get it.\textsuperscript{320}

In February, 1947, the imperialists declared that it would transfer power to India by June, 1948.\textsuperscript{321} Mountbatten was sent to India in March, 1947 for taking quick action to decide the fate of India "in a manner that will ensure the future happiness and prosperity of India."\textsuperscript{322}

On March 5, 1947, the Congress Working Committee "had come round to an acceptance of partition of the Punjab and of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{317} Sachin Sen. \textit{Op.\textit{cit}}, p.144.
  \item \textsuperscript{318} Ibid, p.146.
  \item \textsuperscript{319} S. Abid Husain. \textit{Op.\textit{cit}}, p.121.
  \item \textsuperscript{320} Ibid, p.121.
  \item \textsuperscript{321} Sachin Sen. \textit{Op.\textit{cit}}, p.165.
  \item \textsuperscript{322} Quoted in \textit{Ibid}, p.167.
\end{itemize}
On April 20, 1947 Nehru conceded Pakistan in a mutilated form. He observed:

"They (promoters of Pakistan) can have Pakistan if they wish to have it, but on the condition that they do not break away other parts of India which do not wish to join Pakistan."324

While the leaders were busy in such political bargainings, the ill-educated masses of both the communities were still engaged in internecine riots. In April, Gandhi and Jinnah together issued a joint statement which declared:

"We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends, and we call upon all communities in India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder, but also to avoid both in speech and writing any incitement to such acts."325

But such appeal had little effect indeed. It accomplished little signifying the formal approval on the part of Gandhi and the Congress that Gandhi represented only the Hindus while Jinnah was the sole spokesman of Indian Muslims. In fact, "the dual signatures accepted by implication a distinct dichotomy between

Hindus and Muslims." 326

The plan of Mountbatten to divide India and to create the two independent sovereign states, India and Pakistan, was presented to the political leaders on June 2, 1947. The plan was a compromise between 'United India' and 'big Pakistan'. It envisaged a partition of Bengal and the Punjab. It disappointed many Muslims who voted for the League in the elections of 1946 with the hope of getting undivided Bengal and the Punjab. 327 The logic of the Lahore resolution that the Muslim majority areas "should be grouped to constitute independent states" had the equal significance for the non-Muslims also. It meant to the Hindus that only the Muslim majority areas should go to Pakistan and nothing more.

On June 3, Mountbatten in a broadcast announced from All India Radio the British plan to transfer of power directing a partition on communal lines of Bengal, the Punjab and a part of Assam. Nehru, Jinnah and the Sikh leader Baldev Singh praised Mountbatten "for seeking a fair and equitable transfer of power." 328 Even Gandhi, who had said earlier that "If the Congress wishes to accept partition it will be over my dead body" 329 was already

persuaded to change his stand.\textsuperscript{330} So there remained no obstacle to prevent the British trick. Partition became inevitable. The clamour for partition on the basis of religious faiths of the people caused extreme communal riots all over the country.

On June 20, the Bengal Legislative Assembly met to decide the issue of ensuring partition. The representatives of non-Muslim majority districts decided by 58 to 21 votes that Bengal should be partitioned. The representatives of Muslim majority districts decided by 106 to 35 votes against partition of Bengal. When the result of the voting in the other part was communicated, the Muslim members decided by 107 to 35 votes that the State consisting of the Muslim majority districts should be represented in the proposed Pakistan Constituent Assembly. They also decided by 105 to 35 votes that Sylhet of Assam should be amalgamated with the new East Bengal province if the referendum approved such amalgamation.\textsuperscript{331} Suhrawardy and his men along with some Hindu leaders tried to wage a new move to form an independent sovereign Bengal on the basis of unity of Hindus and Muslims.\textsuperscript{332} But the socio-political situation of Bengal was not congenial

\textsuperscript{330} Ibid, p.187.
for such a move and Bengal was eventually partitioned on communal lines.

Maulana Azad could apprehend the consequences of partition of India on communal lines, but Mountbatten assured him that he would take "sternest measure to nip the trouble in the bud." 333 But Azad noted the course of history in a great grief,

"The whole world knows what was the sequel to Lord Mountbatten's brave declaration. When partition actually took place, rivers of blood flowed in large parts of the country. Innocent men, women and children were massacred. The Indian Army was divided and nothing effective was done to stop the murder of innocent Hindus and Muslims." 334

Thus at the cost of 600,000 lives335 independent India and Pakistan came into being on 15 August, 1947, and sixteen million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were forced to leave their homes and "flee to safety from blood-crazed mobs." 336

'Pakistan' : Could it be avoided?

But, could this painful amputation of India be avoided?

Leonard Mosley has asserted that "Pakistan was the one-man achievement of Mohammed Ali Jinnah", and a "little patience" till the death of Jinnah could change the course of history. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre have also expressed more or less the same view. On the eve of partition of India, Jinnah, the architect of Pakistan, "was living under a sentence of death." But the other two parties, the British and the Congress, were in complete ignorance of the fact that Jinnah was on the verge of extinction. Jinnah knew that if the Congress learned that he was dying their political strategy could change. So, either an earlier death of Jinnah or procrastination on the part of the Congress till Jinnah's death, which meant patience, could change the destiny of India. "But", Leonard Mosley has remarked,

"for Nehru and Patel and all the Congress men yearning for the fruits of power, the carrot Mountbatten dangled in front of their noses was too delectable to be refused. They gobbled it down."

By conceding Pakistan to Jinnah, Nehru, as he put it privately,

wanted to "get rid of the headache" "by cutting of the head."\textsuperscript{341} But history of partitioned India has amply shown that the agonizing "headache" has yet not been cured. Maulana Azad realised the future course of history that "Partition would not solve the communal problem but make it a permanent feature of the country."\textsuperscript{342} Recent history has proved that Azad was right.

So Mosley's assertion that little patience on the part of the Congress till Jinnah's death could preserve India's unity is based on an "if". Such assumption neglects the socio-economic-political process which made Jinnah the 'Father of the Pak Nation' and the League, the beacon light of most of the Indian Muslims. Indeed, it is true, that Jinnah was not only the undisputed leader of the League, but also an unreplaceable personality in absence of whom Pakistan movement could lose its vitality, and other leaders of the League could be persuaded to approve of an united India. But the "two identity theory" which was sowed by communal leaders and thinkers of both the communities and nourished by the British imperialism was too difficult for the Congress leaders to uproot. The Gandhian Congress had no effective weapon to combat the monstrous two-nation theory. So even in an undivided India there could remain every possibility

of survival of the 'two identity theory'. The partition of India on the communal lines was the product of a process of religionised politics. The British policy of 'divide and rule' under the cloak of religious neutrality abetted each community to think of the other as rival. The Indian National Congress did not try to eliminate religious, provincial and caste labels from the field of politics. Moreover, the Hinduised politics of Gandhian Congress had no appeal to the Muslims.

On the other hand, majority of the Muslims could not learn to dissociate religion from politics. And taking this advantage, Jinnah and his men could convince the common Muslims of the behoof of a separate homeland for realisation of Islam.

From the standpoint of sociological analysis, several centrifugal currents made Pakistan a reality. First, the traditional feudal elite of upper India had in their minds the glories of their past domination and prestigious status. Freedom from British rule meant to them the rehabilitation of their lost powers and prestige, but it was impossible in a Hindu majority country.* For the westernised elite and educated middle classes undivided India with its Hindu majority foreshadowed a perpetual subjugated

*M.R.A. Baig has related a story, the truth of which he could not verify. The story is that when in the Legislative Assembly in New Delhi it was announced that the British would transfer power to Indian hands on August 15, 1947, a Muslim member rose and cried "Then give us back the empire you took." Vide M.R.A Baig. Op. cit, p.95.
position for the Muslims. For the poor Muslim peasantry, particularly in Bengal, Pakistan proposal raised the hope of emancipation from the exploitation and tyranny of Hindu upper caste zamindars and moneylenders. For the poor industrial workers, the Pakistan proposal raised the similar hopes and aspirations. For the Muslim capitalists and commercial classes Pakistan demand opened new avenues for fuller development free from competition of better organised Hindu and Persian capitalists. And finally, for the religion-oriented Mollas and Maulvis, Pakistan was essential for realisation of Islam in its superlative.

Now all these hopes and aspirations, though often divergent in nature, granulated into a concrete movement and majority of the Muslim community gravitated towards Pakistan and here lies the credit of the Muslim League headed by Jinnah. He subtly made a conjunction of religion and politics following Sir Syed's line of thinking and in that sense, Jinnah was an enlarged and revised version of Sir Syed. Of course, to be fair to Jinnah, it has to be acknowledged that the fear of Hindu domination was accentuated by Hindu communalist movements and Hinduised politics of Gandhian Congress. In the absence of of a class politics, all the divergent hopes and aspirations of various

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classes and sections of the Muslim community were attuned by religionised politics based on supposed homogeneity of Muslim nationhood and thereby religious passion became the sole determinant of every political activity.

Indian socio-political soil was very much congenial for religionised politics. The British and its native stooges took this opportunities. The Congress produced some Muslim leaders from the elite classes, but its inability to reach the common Muslims allowed the cankerous League politics to flourish. So, it would be misleading to pass the buck of partition of India on the Muslim League or the British alone. Directly or indirectly, the three parties, the Congress, the League and the British, were responsible for the division of the country.

But what is sociologically important and worthy to be investigated is the answer to the question of Muslims' political behaviour in the post-partitioned India. Has there been a change in their socio-political behaviour in "secular" India? Furthermore, it is no less important to enquire into the assertions and actual practices of the ruling elite in the field of interrelation between religion and politics in the context of "secularism". It would reveal the nature of continuity and change of the process of intermingling of religion and politics in the post-partitioned India. We would endeavour to seek the answers to these questions and other relevant issues in the subsequent chapters.