

SECULAR JINNAH & Pakistan

What The Nation Doesn't Know



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**THE FOLLOWING IS A PREVIEW OF
*SECULAR JINNAH: WHAT THE NATION
DOESN'T KNOW***

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CHAPTER 1

JINNAH'S NATIONALISM

Over the last six decades historians and analysts have discussed the mystery of Mahomed Ali Jinnah's political 'conversion' from Indian nationalism to Pakistani separatism. It seems ironic that he was the supreme advocate of the Two-Nation Theory, the idea that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations and could not live peacefully together. After all, at one time he was the 'ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity', who wanted Indians to set aside their communal differences and stand united as one nation in the fight for Indian independence from the British. Yet this same man later demanded partition, and from the moment he made the demand he always maintained that Pakistan would be a state based on 'Islamic ideals'. The focus therefore has always been on Jinnah's so-called 'ideological' persuasion: was he a secularist or was he a communalist? Was his outward 'conversion' to the Two-Nation Theory matched by a genuine internal, psychological change? If it was genuine, then what kind of Islam did he follow? If it was not genuine, then did he really aim for partition at all?

In this chapter I will attempt to show that it was Jinnah's innate sense of humanity, coupled with his experiences in the turbulent history of British India, which helped him discover his later faith in Islamic idealism. In fact, as I will also show through the course of this book, the question is less about Jinnah himself, and more about Islam and the Two-Nation Theory, both of which need to be examined from Jinnah's particular point of view versus that of his contemporaries.

Here we will examine Jinnah's political career from the very beginning to the point of his abandonment of Indian nationalism. Two major events together altered Jinnah's ideological perspective. The first was the Round Table Conferences of 1930-31; the second was the Indian provincial elections of 1936-7. In short, his failure to secure freedom for India as a 'secular Muslim' is the chief cause of his 'conversion'.

Inter-communal tension

The communal tension between Muslims and Hindus in British India has a long history dating back to the period of Muslim rule in India, which lasted almost a millennium and had come to a formal close less than twenty years before Jinnah's birth. (Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal Emperor, lost his throne to the British in the Mutiny of 1857 – the last ditch attempt of Muslims, aided by Hindus unwilling to submit to British rule or tolerate Christian missionaries, to hang onto their power). Many Pakistani historians have analysed the growth of the Hindu-Muslim divide starting from this period, from the beginning of British Raj, which introduced secular education, bureaucracy and parliamentarianism, and then of course the mutual distrust between the Hindus and Muslims, as it is considered the historical basis of the 'Two-Nation Theory' which led to the creation of Pakistan. Here however it should suffice to say that some Muslim rulers were better than others. It is hardly surprising that ordinary Hindus in British India had an overall negative perception of the Muslim period. From

their point of view, Muslims from Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia had invaded and forced India to become part of the Muslim world. Some rulers had destroyed Hindu idols and temples, and had forced people to convert to Islam. Of course other rulers treated their citizens amicably regardless of their religion, at a time when civil equality was practically unheard of in other parts of the world. It has been even been suggested that the Mughal empire was the world's 'first secular state', given that Hindus frequently had prominent positions in governance, in finance and in the military.¹ The Muslims also brought with them philosophy, art, architecture, and literature that enriched India, accounting for countless willing conversions to Islam. But this doesn't detract from the fact of Hindu resentment towards Muslim imperialism, a feeling that was perhaps made stronger by the fact that when it finally ended, it was only succeeded by British imperial rule.

Following the 1857 Mutiny and the end of Muslim rule, Muslims isolated themselves and shunned all things that were British, including education, at the cost of their own socio-economical advancement. Muslim religious leaders issued a *fatwa*, or Islamic decree, to declare learning the English language as *haram* (prohibited). Subsequently very few Muslims were educated and even fewer worked in offices or had jobs in civil service. The Hindus meanwhile began attending universities, getting respectable jobs in offices and courts and becoming socio-economically advanced.

Nevertheless all Indians wanted self-rule, or *swaraj*, whether sooner or later. This was the reason for the formation of the All India National Congress in 1885. Although many Muslims joined the Congress in the early years, the question that was to frequently haunt them was what 'self-rule' meant, especially later when Hindutva (Hindu nationalist) movements began to rise and assert themselves.² The All India Muslim League was thus set up in 1906 to defend Muslim interests, and also, in view of the fact that Muslims were themselves partly to blame for their own problems, to 'promote among the Musalmans of India feelings of loyalty to the British Government'.³ The Congress meanwhile was more openly committed to self-government, albeit within the British Empire.

Seeking national unity

Mahomed Ali Jinnah (born 1876 in Karachi) was a staunch Indian nationalist and an advocate of a united India for many years. At the very beginning of his career, even when he was practising law full time, he strongly associated himself with the All India National Congress party and quickly became one of its brightest young stars. His mentors were non-Muslim liberal politicians such as Hindu Gopal Krishna Gokhale⁴

¹ Garth N. Jones, 'Pakistan: A Civil Service in an Obsolescing Imperial Tradition', in *Asian Journal of Public Administration*, December 1997, Vol. 19. No. 2 p.351

² The Hindutva (still in existence today) is a movement for Hindu nationalism. It originated in British India when right-wing Hindus advocated a purely 'Hindu India'. They preceded Muslims in advocating a theory of 'two nations' but whereas Muslims made this the basis for self-determination, the Hindu version advocated a re-conversion of non-Hindus (especially Muslims). Its ideals were represented in groups such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Hindu Mahasabha. The latter in particular had a considerable influence on Hindu attitudes and even in politics.

³ As resolved at the first Session of the All India Muslim League, Dacca, 30 December 1906 (S.S. Pirzada (ed.) (1980 reprint) *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947* New Delhi: Metropolitan Book Co., Vol. I p.6) (Hereinafter *Foundations*); incorporated in the Aims and Objects of the League from 1907 onward.

⁴ G.K. Gokhale (1866-1915), a prominent member of the Indian National Congress from the time it was founded in 1885. Considered one of the foremost Indian nationalist leaders of the

and Parsi Dadabhai Naoroji,⁵ and this no doubt affected his attitude towards communal relations and separate electorates, which he opposed in principle, against majority Muslim opinion of the time.⁶ Living though he was in British India, in which the social and intellectual divisions between Hindu and Muslim were manifest, he believed that India's freedom would only be possible if the two communities worked together as equals.⁷

Muslims as equal

At the same time he actively demonstrated his concern for safeguarding the interests of his own community. In his very first speech in Congress in December 1906, in which a resolution was moved on the issue of *Waqf-i-ala-aulad* (Muslim law dealing with inheritance and trust) he expressed his appreciation that a question affecting solely the Muslim community was being raised by the Congress. It showed, he said, that Muslims could stand 'equally' on the Congress platform.⁸ Jinnah voiced this sentiment again the next day at the same Session: 'The Mahomedan community should be treated in the same way as the Hindu community. The foundation upon which the Indian National Congress is based, is that we are *all equal*'.⁹ Later he also took on the *Waqf* issue himself, sponsoring the Musalman *Waqf* Validating Bill through the Viceroy's Legislature in 1913.¹⁰

It was Jinnah's anti-imperial stance rather than an indifference to Muslim interests

early twentieth century, he exerted an early influence on both Jinnah and Gandhi. He was amongst the liberal politicians who believed in nationalism over communalism. He was the first to call Jinnah the 'ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity'.

⁵ D. Naoroji (1825-1917) a professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and the first Indian to become a professor in an academic institute of British India. He founded the British Indian Society in England, where he also settled permanently and entered politics. Naoroji was the first Indian to be elected to the House of Commons, but he faced considerable racism. Jinnah met Naoroji whilst studying in England and no doubt this contact contributed to Jinnah's anti-imperialist and pro-self-government aspirations.

⁶ For the rest of his life, Jinnah would always hold both Gokhale and Naoroji in high esteem, describing Gokhale as 'a great Hindu', 'a tower of intellect', a man who 'championed the cause of the Mussalmans; and saying of Naoroji that he 'inspired us with some hope of a fair and equitable adjustment [in the early 1900s]'. See Presidential Address delivered at the Muslim League Annual Session, Delhi, 24 April 1943. (K.A.K Yusufi (ed.) (1996) *Speeches, Statements & Messages of the Quaid-e-Azam* in four volumes Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, Vol. III, p.1693-4) (Hereinafter 'Yusufi')

⁷ See Jinnah's letter to Syed Wazir Hasan, Secretary of the Muslim League, 21 May 1913, in which he expresses such thoughts clearly. (S.S. Pirzada (ed.) (1984-6) *The Collected Works of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah* in three volumes Karachi: East-West Publishing, Vol. I p.94-6)

⁸ Speech at Indian National Congress Annual Session, Calcutta, 27 December 1906. (R. Ahmad (ed.) (1996-2006) *The Works of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1893-1924)* in six volumes Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Vol. I p.79) (Hereinafter *Works*). Interestingly, the Muslim League was to come into being just three days later on 30 December.

⁹ Proceedings of the Indian National Congress Annual Session, Calcutta, 28 December 1906. (*Works*, Vol. I, p.81). Emphasis in original.

¹⁰ The British Raj had been interfering with Muslim *waqf* laws since around 1873, denying Muslims the right to make settlements of their property by way of *waqf* to their children and extended families. (S. Mujahid (1981) *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation* Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, p.5-6) The Validating Bill (5 March 1913) sought to reverse British policy give the Muslims the right to make use of the *waqf*.

that explains why he refrained from joining the essentially pro-British Muslim League until 1913, some seven years after it was founded. When he did, it was because the League had brought its official rules more in line with a nationalistic programme, and that too under his personal guidance.¹¹ Thereafter it was through his membership of both parties that he worked for a political union of Hindus and Muslims.

Jinnah cemented his reputation as the ‘ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity’ in 1916, when as president of the Muslim League he was the chief actor in rallying the two major communities in a cooperative agreement which became known as the ‘Lucknow Pact’.¹² Through the Pact the Congress formally recognised the right of Muslims to have ‘special’ electorates, and implicitly recognised them as being on an equal footing with Hindus. In return the League was to support the national aims of the Congress. Jinnah thus demonstrated his respect for Muslim opinion even if he did not fully agree with it personally.¹³ From the very beginning, Jinnah made it clear that he did not think of his community as a ‘minority’, but an ‘equal’ part of the Indian body politic. This was the reason that he was not keen on separate electorates for Muslims. He did not have any particular alternative word to describe his view of the Muslim position, but in later years he would state that his Lucknow Pact was based on the principle that the Muslims were a separate ‘entity’, whilst Congress had insisted on treating them as a ‘minority’ to be ‘governed and ruled by the Hindu majority’.¹⁴

Gandhi’s innovation

Before 1920, most of the old generation of Congress leaders had died, and Mahatma (‘Great Soul’) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) arrived on the scene.¹⁵ He had returned from South Africa in 1915, where he had witnessed the worst racial discrimination against his countrymen and developed his form of non-violent protest, the *Satyagraha*,¹⁶ or ‘passive resistance’ in response to what he saw as the evil

¹¹ The Muslim League altered its official stance in 1912, once the British had reversed the partition of Bengal (partitioned in 1905, giving Muslims dominance in the East; it was annulled in 1911). Though he was still a Congressman, Jinnah was consulted by the League Secretary, Syed Wazir Hasan, on changing the League Rules. Jinnah attended a League meeting in Lucknow in December 1912 where a draft constitution was prepared and later adopted in March 1913. The League now adopted a creed of seeking ‘self-government through constitutional means ... by promoting national unity... and by co-operating with other communities for the said purposes’. (See Syed Shamsul Hasan (1976) *Plain Mr Jinnah* Karachi: Royal Book Company, p.311-324).

¹² The Lucknow Pact (properly called ‘Congress-League Scheme of Reforms’) represented a joint declaration from the Congress and League platforms that Indians expected to see a new constitution after the end of WWI, in which they would be granted self-government. In return for separate electorates the Muslim League was expected to support the Congress in its independence movement. This Pact served to bring together the two communities until the mid-1920s. Syed Wazir Hasan was the author of the original draft of the Pact; it was modified and finalised by Jinnah. (S.S. Hasan 1976, p.13)

¹³ See Jinnah’s testimony at the Joint Parliamentary Committee, London, 13 August 1919, in which he affirmed that he contemplated the ‘early disappearance’ of separate electorates. When asked if he would like to ‘do away in political life with any distinction between Mohammedans and Hindus’ he answered: ‘Yes. Nothing will please me more than when that day comes’. (*Works* Vol. V p.202)

¹⁴ Speech at Aligarh University Union, Aligarh, 6 March 1940. (Yusufi Vol. II, p.1157)

¹⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) also entered the scene at around this time; he joined the Congress in 1920. A political disciple of Gandhi, he was amongst the new generation of Congressites pushing hard for total independence rather than just dominion status.

¹⁶ *Satyagraha* – a Hindi word meaning literally, ‘force born from truth’.

outcome of modern materialism. Though he and Jinnah were equally ardent nationalists, were both London-educated barristers, and were both influenced by Gokhale, they had different approaches in dealing with the imperialist rulers. Jinnah believed in slow and steady constitutionalist methods, using 'British law skilfully against the British';¹⁷ Gandhi however was impatient for immediate results; he advocated civil disobedience and velvet revolution. He also wanted his people to return to their religious and cultural roots; and this was the basis of his approach to Indian nationalism. Unsurprisingly, Gandhi's more direct approach would prove most popular with ordinary Indians, Muslim and Hindu alike, for the time being. Gandhi had a natural flair for mass politics; his simple Hindu lifestyle and use of religious and cultural symbolism appealed to millions of Indians and also religious leaders. Yet this was to be the point that would divide Muslims and Hindus again, starting with Jinnah, within a few years.

Cooperation versus non-cooperation

In the years during and following World War I (1914-18), two issues occupied Indian minds. First, the British had been expected to bring in constitutional reforms that would give Indians self-government, in return for the service that native Indians had given to them in aiding the war effort. Secondly, the British and their allies pursued the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire following their victory in the war, and Indian Muslims were strongly opposed to it. This was the start of the Khilafat movement, and we shall return to it shortly.

Jinnah had been following a policy of 'cooperation' with the British Government since 1917, to help bring about constitutional reforms that would be to the satisfaction of Indians.¹⁸ His aim was not to support British interests, but to build up democratic methods to fight the bureaucracy.¹⁹ He also understood the need for a 'gradual transfer of responsibility' to the Indians.²⁰ In order to hang onto its imperial control, the British Raj had deliberately adopted a tactic of giving little at the all-India level, and merely making concessions such as separate electorates for Muslims and landlords at the provincial level. This suited Muslims in provinces such as the Punjab, and tended to frustrate Jinnah's efforts to move towards a strong centre that would give Indians greater control.²¹

In March 1919, when Viceroy Lord Chelmsford permanently enforced the Rowlatt Act in an attempt to curb anti-British uprisings,²² Gandhi and Jinnah were amongst the

¹⁷ A.S. Ahmed (1997) *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: the Search for Saladin* London: Routledge, p.6

¹⁸ For an overview of Jinnah's work on constitutional reforms from 1917-20, see Dr. Riaz Ahmad's introduction in *Works* Vol. V, xxvi-xxxii.

¹⁹ See Jinnah's speech at the All-India Home Rule League, Kandewadi, 24 January 1920. (*Works* Vol. V, p.336-354).

²⁰ Jinnah's evidence at the Joint Parliamentary Committee, 29 January 1919, as cited in R. Ahmad *Works*, Vol. V, xxvii.

²¹ For a detailed discussion, see David Page, 'Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the System of Imperial Control in India 1909-30' in M.R. Kazimi (ed.) (2005) *M.A. Jinnah: Views and Reviews* Karachi: Oxford University Press, p.1-22

²² The British enlisted Indian soldiers for WWI, with the promise that they would give India dominion status (virtual sovereignty within the British Empire) in return. The Rowlatt Act consisted of 'martial law' measures taken during the war to control unruly public elements. Under the Act, anyone living in the British Raj who was suspected of terrorist activities could be detained indefinitely without trial. With the soldiers back home and Indians feeling agitated, the British extended the Act. Jinnah and Gandhi alike labelled it a 'black' Act. (M.R.

foremost leaders to attack it on the basis that it infringed civil liberties. Each expressed his disdain in his own manner. Jinnah resigned his Bombay seat on the Viceroy's legislative council. Gandhi started his *Satyagraha*, calling upon Indians to stage a nationwide non-cooperation movement against the government of British India, involving the boycott of British goods and civil services. Unfortunately, he did not anticipate that his programme would heighten communal passions in the way that it did. When Gandhi was subsequently banned entry into the Punjab, and two other Hindu leaders arrested for making seditious speeches, Amritsar became the scene of a bloody disaster. Fierce rioting ensued with the result that a number of Europeans were killed. In April 1919, after the British had imposed a ban on public meetings, protesters gathered in Jallianwala Bagh, an enclosed garden area with narrow entrances. They were unarmed. British troops sent to control the disturbances fired upon and killed 400 people and wounded 1200.²³ This act was seen as a point of no-return for Indians. They lost faith in British justice and with it their faith in constitutional cooperation also waned.

A humiliating form of martial law was next enforced in the Punjab,²⁴ and a horrified Gandhi called off the non-cooperation. The memory of the incident would stay with the Indian people. When at a Congress Session²⁵ it came to the question of accepting the reforms as embodied in the new constitution, the Government of India Act 1919, the Congressites with Amritsar still on their minds were determined to reject them. At this stage, Gandhi and Jinnah were in agreement that the reforms should not be rejected out of hand, and that they should at least be accepted in the name of cooperation, whilst pushing the government to modify them.²⁶

Meanwhile, the Khilafat issue was the main concern of Indian Muslims. They wanted to prevent the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire by Europeans including the British, and they wanted to save the Caliphate of Turkey in order to retain the Caliphate's control on Islam's holy places. They were also motivated by their anxiety to preserve the last symbol of the declining political Muslim world. Jinnah had been the first Leaguer to bring up the Khilafat issue in the 'Lucknow Pact' Session in 1916, but otherwise Indian Muslims lacked organisation in expressing their grievances. In November 1919, Muslims held a conference presided by Fazlul Haq, where they formed a Khilafat Committee. Jinnah and Gandhi both attended, and both were also amongst the deputation of Indians led by Mohammad Ali Jouhar who presented the Khilafat Conference's grievances to the Viceroy on 19 January 1920. When the deputation failed, Gandhi (who just three weeks before had advocated cooperation) proposed a new civil disobedience movement, to force the British Government to address both the self-government issue and Khilafat issue simultaneously. He threw himself into the cause, chairing a committee charged with chalking out a programme for the civil disobedience, identifying the cause with Indian *swaraj*,²⁷ and aiming to bring about a Hindu-Muslim rapprochement.²⁸ Jinnah was uncomfortable, less with

Afzal (ed.) (1980) *Selected Speeches & Statements of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah* Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, Punjab University, p.112; S. Wolpert (2006) *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* New York: Oxford University Press, p.4).

²³ S. Wolpert 2006, p.4

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Congress Annual Session, Amritsar, 1-2 January 1920.

²⁶ See speeches of Gandhi and Jinnah at the Congress Annual Session, Amritsar, 1-2 January 1920. (*Works* Vol. V, p.271-3; 273-4 respectively)

²⁷ *Swaraj* – Hindi word (from Sanskrit) meaning 'own rule'

²⁸ This was the time that Hindu-Muslim solidarity reached its peak. As a token of goodwill, and a mark of appreciation of the Hindu support on the Khilafat issue, the Muslim League passed a resolution forbidding as far as possible the sacrifice of cows, an animal sacred to

the idea of 'non-cooperation' itself, and more with Gandhi's execution of it. He was wary of inciting religious passions for a chiefly political cause, more so because of what had recently happened in the Punjab. He had kept a respectful distance before, and was about to do so again. 'He believed', as veteran Leaguer Shamsul Hasan writes, 'that resignations from services and boycott of Government institutions without making alternative arrangements would inevitably results in unendurable hardships for the Muslims. He felt that time [sic] was not ripe to subject the people to such a severe test'.²⁹ Ironically, Jinnah's cautious attitude would later prompt other Muslim leaders to unfairly complain that he was utterly disinterested in the Khilafat cause.³⁰ Yet he was not the only one to demonstrate his misgivings. Particularly significant is the case of the Muslim idealist who started off as the secretary of the Khilafat Committee, but resigned because he felt that the movement and the 'object of some of its members' were 'dangerous' to Muslims.³¹ He was the Islamic philosopher Dr. Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938).

In September 1920, both the Muslim League and the Congress held Special Sessions to consider Gandhi's resolution on non-cooperation. At the Congress Session in Calcutta (5-7 September 1920), the majority of the Congressites were opposed to Gandhi's resolution, but Gandhi's supporters from the Khilafat Committee including Shaukat Ali and Abul Kalam Azad saw to it that more delegates attended to vote in Gandhi's favour.³² At the League Session meanwhile, Jinnah tactfully explained his own position. Whilst deploring the British policy of having used 'India's blood and India's gold' to 'break Turkey and buy the fetters of the Rowlatt legislation',³³ and warning that this might force Indians to take up non-cooperation, he added: 'though

Hindus, during the Muslim 'Bakr Eid' festival (festival following the annual *Hajj* pilgrimage). Hindu leaders such as the Nehrus and Gandhi attended this session. (All India Muslim League Annual Session, Amritsar, 29 December 1919 – 1 January 1920; *Works* Vol. V, p.258)

²⁹ S.S. Hasan 1976, p.18

³⁰ Dr. Riaz Ahmad has cited from Jinnah's testimony at the Joint Parliamentary Committee, 29 January 1919, showing that he presented the Muslim grievance 'not as a matter of foreign policy' but as a chiefly religious one. Dr. Ahmad suggests that Jinnah was aware that Turkey's fate was 'sealed', owing to Turkey's decision to ally with the Central Powers, and so the British would not and could not do anything to prevent it. Still, Jinnah did his duty by his community as a Muslim representative and voiced their grievances wherever he could both in England and in India. For further details, see introduction in *Works* Vol. V, xxxv–xxxvii.

³¹ See Iqbal's letter to his friend (M. Niaz-ud-din Khan) dated 11 February 1920, in M. Iqbal (1954) *Makatib-i Iqbal banam Niaz-ud-din Khan* Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal, p.27. He also declined Gandhi's invitation to become Vice-Chancellor of the Jamia-Millia Islamia institute, which had been founded by the Khilafat Committee to educate Muslims during the non-cooperation movement (when Indians were boycotting British Indian colleges). Iqbal in this letter expressed his doubts about the 'religious aspect of the question of Education'. (See letter dated 29 November 1920; L.A. Sherwani (ed.) (2008 reprint) *Speeches, Writings & Statements of Iqbal* New Delhi: Adam Publishers, p.245-6). Though his ambivalence on the Khilafat issue puzzled his contemporaries at the time, his later writings offer some clues to suggest that he had looked at events in terms of the bigger picture. In 1928 he expressed his approval of the Turks' decision to dispose of the Caliphate, because to his mind, the imperialism long associated with it needed to go. He wrote: 'In its essence Islam is not Imperialism. In the abolition of the Caliphate which since the days of the Omayyads had practically become a kind of Empire it is only the spirit of Islam that has worked out through the Atatürk'. (Reply to Jawaharlal Nehru's criticism of Iqbal's statement on Qadianism and Orthodox Muslims, January 1936. Sherwani (ed) 2008, p.234)

³² S.S. Hasan 1976, p.19

³³ Presidential address at AIML Special Meeting, Calcutta, 6 September 1920. (*Works* Vol. V, p.432)

not necessarily the programme of Mr. Gandhi'.³⁴ Nevertheless, the resolution was adopted unanimously.

But it was Gandhi's next move that would effect the division between the two leaders. In October 1920 Gandhi had the constitution of the Home Rule League (of which he had replaced Annie Besant³⁵ as chairman) changed so that it declared (implicitly but noncommittally) a severance from the 'British connection' and to make 'unconstitutional and illegal' methods permissible.³⁶ Jinnah and many of his colleagues were dismayed; he and eighteen others resigned.³⁷ Gandhi soon wrote to Jinnah asking him to reconsider. Jinnah explained why he could not do so:

I thank you for your kind suggestion offering me 'to take my share in the new life that has opened up before the country'. If by 'new life', you mean your methods and your programme [of civil disobedience and demand for undefined *swaraj*], I'm afraid I cannot accept them; for I am fully convinced that it must lead to disaster. But the actual New Life that has opened up before the country is that we are faced with a Government that pays no heed to the grievances, feelings and sentiments of the people; that our own countrymen are divided; ... that methods have already caused split and division in almost every institution that you have approached hitherto ... and your extreme programme has for the moment struck the imagination mostly of the inexperienced youth and the ignorant and the illiterate. All this means complete disorganisation and chaos. ... I do not wish my countrymen to be dragged to the brink of a precipice in order to be shattered.³⁸

His accusations were harsh, but they were only confirmed a few months later, when Gandhi repeated the performance by similarly altering the constitution of the Congress at the Nagpur Session of December 1920. Jinnah denounced the move, arguing that the correct course of action would be for Congress to pass a resolution issuing notice that the Government must address the reforms or face the possibility of severance. Changing the creed could hardly be 'considered as a notice'³⁹ (as Hindu leader Lala Rajpat Rai had claimed in his defence of the move). Respecting the democratic principle, Jinnah acknowledged that Congress was expressing the Indian will to make a declaration of independence, but stressed it did not have the means to

³⁴ Ibid. (p.433-4). Emphasis mine.

³⁵ Annie Besant (1847-1933), born in London, later moved to India and fought for Indian nationalism. She founded the Home Rule League in 1916 and was its president; but left because it had become 'intertwined' with religion. (H. Bolitho (1954) *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan* London: John Murray, p.83)

³⁶ Letter to Gandhi, 31 October 1920. (*Works* Vol. V, p.463-4). In fairness, Gandhi was telling the truth when he claimed that he was open on the question of whether *swaraj* was to be attained 'with or without the British connection' (see letter to Jinnah asking him to return to the Home Rule League, 25 October 1920; *Works* Vol. V, p.458), as is evidenced in his later politics. The change itself however was also unconstitutional because it had been passed with 109 votes to 42 (S. Mujahid 1981, p.525), falling four votes short of the three-quarter majority support usually required to validate a resolution, according to the rules and regulations of the Home Rule League. (*Works* Vol. V, p.463).

³⁷ Resignation letter, 5 October 1920. (*Works* Vol. V, p.441-2)

³⁸ Jinnah to Gandhi, 31 October 1920 (Op. cit. p.465)

³⁹ Jinnah at Congress Annual Session, Nagpur, 28 December 1920. (*Works* Vol. V, p.507)

carry it out.⁴⁰ He also warned that India would not be able to get ‘independence without bloodshed’, and that to assume otherwise was to make ‘the greatest blunder’. His pleas were not only ignored, but utterly condemned by both Hindus and Muslims present.⁴¹ This was the last Congress Session that Jinnah would attend. Thereafter he quit the Congress; but though he had received equally bad treatment from Muslims, Jinnah did not quit the Muslim League.

Deteriorating Hindu-Muslim relations

The loss of faith in the British Government and new zeal for revolutionary activism had initially brought the Muslims and Hindus together, but now it began to drive them apart. The Congress’ support of Gandhi’s revolutionary approach conflicted with Jinnah’s methods and so the Lucknow Pact was effectively abandoned. Some Hindu groups were now increasingly promoting Hindutva, an exclusivist Hindu nationalism. The militant Hindu Mahasabha in particular opposed the Lucknow Pact and separate electorates. Meanwhile Congress antipathy towards Muslim political demands and a growing anti-Muslim religious movement at a social level would lead to Hindu-Muslim riots over the coming years.⁴²

In addition, the foremost Muslim activists of the Khilafat movement were growing disillusioned with Gandhi.⁴³ They complained that non-Muslim Indians did not participate in the movement with the enthusiasm that the Muslims had expected from them.⁴⁴ The British also played their part in facilitating the estrangement between the two communities, in their differing treatment of Hindu and Muslim leaders.⁴⁵ Of course Muslims were also to blame for their own misfortune. The extreme religious slogans employed by Khilafat activists⁴⁶ and the subsequent Moplah rebellion⁴⁷

⁴⁰ He referred to the Congress constitution of 1907 in which it was laid down that Congress had neither the ‘will nor the means’ to call for severance. (*Works* Vol. V, p.506)

⁴¹ Shaikat Ali was apparently enraged to the point that he even attempted to attack Jinnah. (S. Mujahid 1981, p.525-6; A.S. Ahmed 1997, p.62)

⁴² From the early twentieth century, Hindu movements of *sangathan* (organisation) and *shuddi* (re-conversion) and reciprocal *tanzeem* and *tablegh* (organisation and proselytising) Muslim movements had also sprung up. In his letters to Jinnah in summer 1937, Iqbal would describe such developments including the riots as a ‘civil war’ – a term that would be deployed by Jinnah also in his presidential speech in the historic League Lahore Session of 1940.

⁴³ The Ali brothers switched their allegiance to Jinnah and the League after losing faith in Gandhi. Mohammad Ali Jouhar (1878-1931) resigned from the Congress in 1924 and rejoined the League to which he remained a staunch supporter for the rest of his life. His elder brother Shaikat Ali (1873-1938) supported Jinnah in popularising the League’s cause up until his death.

⁴⁴ S.S. Hasan 1976, p.22.

⁴⁵ In 1921 the British imprisoned more Muslims (including the Ali brothers for two years), whilst acquitting Hindu leaders (though of course they also imprisoned Gandhi in 1922 for two years). For a detailed discussion, see *Works* Vol. V, xxxv; and Vol. VI, xxxii-xxxiii; see also I.B. Wells (2005) *Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity: Jinnah’s Early Politics* Delhi: Permanent Black, p.125

⁴⁶ There is no doubt that religious extremism tainted the Khilafat movement in India. Even its most prominent leaders sometimes made statements or raised religious slogans that were bound to incite fanaticism. It is for this reason that so many Hindus saw the Khilafat movement as representing a Muslim ‘pan-Islamic’ movement. See B.R. Ambedkar (1946a) *Pakistan or Partition of India*. Bombay: Thacker & Co. Ltd and S. Chavan (2007) *Mohammad Ali Jinnah: The Great Enigma* New Delhi: Authors Press for detailed critiques.

served to drive a wedge between the two communities. Though the *Satyagraha* approach was supposed to be strictly non-violent, once again it had turned bloody. Gandhi called off the non-cooperation movement in February 1922, shortly after a mob set fire to a police station in Chauri Chaura, United Provinces, resulting in the deaths of 22 policemen (he was subsequently jailed for two years). The Muslims resented his decision as he made it without consulting them. The Indian Muslims were later left bewildered when in 1924, the Turks themselves decided to abolish the Caliphate.

The lone ambassador

Although communal tensions continued to rise over the next decade, Jinnah did not give up seeking a possible rapprochement between the two communities. He focused on building up the League (which had become sidelined with the dominance of the Khilafat Committee) and by the mid-1920s its standing was somewhat improved. In 1927, Motilal Nehru ⁴⁸ suggested that if Muslims gave up demanding separate electorates he might convince the Congress to concede other Muslim demands. ⁴⁹ The Delhi Muslim Proposals were the result. The essence of the proposals was that Muslims would be prepared to give up their demands for separate electorates if Sindh (a Muslim majority area) was allowed to separate from Bombay, if representation was to be weighted on the basis of population in the Punjab and Bengal (the Muslim majority provinces), and a third of seats were allocated to Muslims in the Central Legislature. But soon after Congress showed a willingness to accept the proposals, the British conveniently stepped in with the appointment of the Simon Commission to produce a new constitution. There was uproar as not a single Indian was included in the Commission. Congress called for its boycott, as did most Leaguers, including Jinnah. But not all Leaguers agreed with the boycott; nor did they agree with the joint electorates outlined in the Delhi Muslim Proposals. The Muslim League soon split into two factions on these points, with Jinnah's faction supporting them, and Mian Muhammad Shafi's ⁵⁰ opposing them. ⁵¹

⁴⁷ In Malabar, Bombay in 1921, the Moplah Muslims were particularly active, but in their religious fervour what had started out as an anti-British movement had turned anti-Hindu (as an uprising against the Hindu money-lenders and landlords), and so the Moplahs declared the setting up of an Islamic kingdom. They looted and killed as well forcibly converting Hindus to Islam. See Ambedkar 1946a, p.153-4 for a harrowing account. Again the British response was decisive, but deadly: over 2300 Moplahs were killed, and 25,000 convicted of rebellion. (A.S. Ahmed 1997, p.65)

⁴⁸ Motilal Nehru (1861-1931) lawyer and politician, was father of Jawaharlal Nehru and a friend of Jinnah. Their fallout over the Nehru Report (1928; see below) and Jinnah's estrangement from Congress no doubt affected the political relationship between Jinnah and Jawaharlal Nehru.

⁴⁹ Abdul Razzaq Shahid, 'All-India Muslim League: Split and Reunification (1927-30)' in *Pakistan Journal of History & Culture*, Vol. XXVIII, No.1, 2007; p.156

⁵⁰ Sir Mian Mohammad Shafi (1869-1932) was a Punjab leader and founding member of the Muslim League.

⁵¹ Most Leaguers had originally supported the proposals. Shafi's later opposition (backed by Iqbal) has traditionally been put down to his pro-British stance. But evidence suggests that it was chiefly due to the fact that the Hindu Mahasabha had challenged the representative character of the Congress, considering itself the true authority to speak on behalf of Hindus. It opposed giving Muslims a majority in any province and wanted to impose joint electorates. In view of the Mahasabha position, Provincial Leaguers in Punjab, and later Muslim representatives across India, began to withdraw their earlier support. (A.R. Shahid 2007, p.157)

A year later, in response to the British Government's challenge that the Indians should try and draft a constitution on which they would all agree, the various parties of India met at the All Parties Conference at Calcutta, in February 1928. The Nehru Report (authored by Motilal Nehru) was written and published following the conference, demanding full independence (i.e. not just dominion status within the British Empire). It did not fully meet the demands in the Delhi Muslim Proposals, yet it rejected separate electorates. Muslims had demanded a third of seats at the centre; they were offered a quarter. Sindh was to be given the right of separation, with the caveat that it must be financially self-sufficient. Unsurprisingly the Muslim League rejected the Nehru Report. To offer a compromise, Jinnah put together his famous 'fourteen points' (actually fifteen), summarising the bare minimum demands of Muslims including: a requirement that residuary powers be given to the provinces; that Muslims representation at the centre must be a third; Muslim religion, culture and education must be safeguarded; separate electorates and weightage must be granted; and that Sindh must be separated from Bombay. The Congress would not concede to these demands, but at least Jinnah's efforts helped to repair the rift in the Muslim League.⁵²

The Round Table Conferences

In November 1930, Jinnah left for England to attend the first of the Round Table Conferences,⁵³ and found himself in the middle of a deadlock. Muslims were now fully committed to separate electorates, and to strong provincial autonomy,⁵⁴ and the Congress was committed to the Nehru Report and so refused to attend. Congress leaders in India had felt they had complied with the demands of the Delhi Muslim Proposals, and so refused to concede separate electorates; and in fact they were not interested in further constitutional discussion unless the Nehru Report was fully implemented.

The British of course wanted to retain control at the centre, this being the substance of their imperial power, and they didn't want to hand it over to Indians, at least not immediately.⁵⁵ This motivated their decision to bring the Indian Princes (representing around 562 states, ruling almost two fifths of Indian territory between

⁵² The League reunited in February 1930. For details, see S. Mujahid 1981, p.392 fn

⁵³ The aim of the conferences was to resolve the constitutional crisis. Jinnah himself advanced the idea of holding the conferences in a letter to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald on 19 June 1929. (S.S. Pirzada (ed.) 1984-6 Vol. III, p.365-70)

⁵⁴ At this point Jinnah differed with Iqbal, a strong proponent of the fullest provincial autonomy. Iqbal's famous address advocating a 'Muslim India within India' was soon to be delivered at the Allahabad Session of the League in December 1930. Iqbal's political stance of course was motivated by the need to preserve Islamic idealism. Keeping residual powers out of the centre and in control of the provinces would enable Muslims to have control wherever they were in majority, whereas in the centre these powers would always be in Hindu control by a majority of three to one. Only later did Jinnah comprehend this 'international' problem as the overwhelming factor.

⁵⁵ They formally justified this by saying that they were worried about writing a new constitution when a 'large party' (i.e. the Congress) was missing from the proceedings and so it may wish to 'wreck' it by the principle of non-cooperation. Jinnah reminded the British Government that 70 million Muslims, the 'depressed classes', the Sikhs and Christians were no party to the non-cooperation movement; and besides which, he added: 'that party which you characterise as a large party – and I admit that it is an important party – it has not got the support of the bulk of the Hindus'. (Plenary Session, First RTC, 28 November 1930; M.R. Afzal (ed.) 1980, p.313)

them) to the Conference. The Princes wanted to retain their despotic rule in their territories, which in turn was maintained by the imperial status quo.⁵⁶ Disinterested as the Princes were in a 'democratic' set up which might later adversely affect their interests, their inclusion in the talks could only serve to delay a constitutional settlement, and thus give the British more time in power.⁵⁷ Further, most of the Princes were either Hindus or represented Princely States that had Hindu majorities. Their inclusion at the all-India centre (assuming they even sincerely agreed to it) would serve to simultaneously dilute Muslim representation and bolster Hindu representation.⁵⁸ Iqbal's statement at his Allahabad address in December 1930 summarises the problem succinctly. In his opinion:

The best course, I think, would have been to start with a *British Indian Federation only*. A federal scheme born of an unholy union between democracy [i.e. all-India federation] and despotism [i.e. the Princes] cannot but keep British India in the same vicious circle of a unitary Central Government.⁵⁹

Meanwhile back in England, Jinnah (faced with the obstacles put up by the Princes) also said that he had 'serious doubts' about the 'all-India federation materialising', and so, like Iqbal, he pushed for British India at least to 'go ahead' and set up its own federation.⁶⁰ He also emphasised that a Hindu-Muslim settlement was in his opinion '*sine qua non*'⁶¹ if there was to be any hope of a constitutional solution.⁶² His sympathy for the Muslim view notwithstanding, at this point he still was still thinking like a traditional Indian nationalist and continued to fight for communal unity. So whilst he supported Muslims on certain questions, such as the separation of Sindh from Bombay⁶³ and provincial autonomy, he believed that these were essentially matters of giving Muslims political 'safeguards', and that these, once conceded, would bridge the communal gap hindering the process of constitution-building. To Jinnah, getting power for Indians at the centre was his primary aim, and this could only be done if the communities were politically united as one nation. He thus told the British: 'India wants to be mistress in her own house',⁶⁴ and simultaneously stressed: 'you must give responsibility at the Centre – subject, of course, to my first condition',⁶⁵ by

⁵⁶ The Princely States had their origins in the end of the Mughal period. They had forged alliances with the East India Company when it began taking a political hold in India. The States were totally independent, and each was ruled by an Indian Prince, except that the British government controlled their relations with other states and internationally.

⁵⁷ They didn't want to give up their sovereignty, and so were evasive when it came to discussing which subjects ought to be surrendered to the centre of the all-India federation. Jinnah understood the Princely States wished to retain their 'sovereign states' but stated – assuming an all-India federation was on the cards – that they would be expected to surrender certain powers to the centre. Instead of affirming their commitment, the Princes merely asked what the British Indian provinces were willing to surrender. (See Jinnah's remarks, First RTC, Federal Structure Committee, 5 December 1930; M.R. Afzal 1980, p.324-5)

⁵⁸ See Iqbal's Allahabad address for his criticisms on this point. (Sherwani (ed.) 2008, p.16)

⁵⁹ Ibid. (p.17)

⁶⁰ Federal Structure Committee, 31 January 1931. (M.R. Afzal 1980, p.355)

⁶¹ *Sine qua non* – Latin; essential condition or prerequisite

⁶² Op. cit. p.354

⁶³ He advanced a strong case for the separation of Sindh on 12 January 1931 at the Defence Committee (See his speech in M.R. Afzal 1980, p.380-5)

⁶⁴ Plenary Session, First RTC, 28 November 1930 (M.R. Afzal 1980, p.314)

⁶⁵ Federal Structure Committee, 13 January 1931 (M.R. Afzal 1980, p.355)

which he meant the communal factor: 'I maintain that *unless you provide safeguards* for the Mussalmans that will give them a complete sense of security and a feeling of confidence in the future constitution of the Government of India, and unless you secure their cooperation and willing consent, no constitution that you frame for India will work for 24 hours.'⁶⁶

Philosophical difference

Jinnah's was the voice of a 'secular Muslim', for whom a communal problem could be resolved with political safeguards.⁶⁷ He did not yet appreciate Iqbal's tactful warning in Allahabad that national homogeneousness in India – a 'continent' – was extremely difficult to achieve; that 'Hindu India' would need a 'complete overhauling of her social structure' (meaning its caste system) if it was going to seriously demand the creation of a nation-state for all Indians; and that it needed to acquire the kind of political and ethical homogeneousness that Islam provided as a 'free gift'.⁶⁸ Iqbal had doubts that this could be resolved in the near future, and so he proposed the creation of a 'Muslim India within India'.⁶⁹ By this he did not mean (as he assured his audience) the introduction of 'religious rule'.⁷⁰ Nor was he necessarily making a 'demand' for a separate Muslim state at this time; he was merely making a 'guess' at what was coming in the future.⁷¹ Nevertheless, Iqbal drove home the point that the problem was 'international and not national', that 'the Muslims of India are the only Indian people who can fitly be described as a nation in the modern sense of the word', and that this 'justified' the Muslim League's insistence on resolving the communal problem first and foremost.⁷² He supported the Muslim demand for 'residuary powers in the provinces' (the technical phrase for 'sovereign states')⁷³ based on his acute awareness of the dichotomy between Muslim and Hindu idealism – a concept that would later be better known as the 'Two-Nation Theory'. He was already on the path of Muslim separatism. Jinnah however was clinging to the composite Indian nationalist ideal for the time being.

A couple of days before Jinnah went back to London for the second Conference,⁷⁴ the Students' Union of Bombay organised a farewell party. Here he made a statement that would prove strangely portentous:

I am an Indian first and a Muslim afterwards, and I agree that no Indian can ever serve his country if he neglects the interests of the Muslims,

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.354

⁶⁷ Through the course of this book, I will explain the difference between the three liberal categories of thought in Pakistan: the pure secularist, the 'secular Muslim', and the 'non-sectarian Muslim'. (See in particular Chapter 5 and Myth no. 10 (Chapter 10))

⁶⁸ Iqbal's Allahabad address (Sherwani (ed.) 2008, p.12, 26)

⁶⁹ Op. cit. p.10

⁷⁰ Op. cit. p.12

⁷¹ See Iqbal's letter to *The Times*, 12 October 1931 for his clarification about the 'guess'. (Bashir Ahmed Dar (ed.) (1967) *Letters and Writings of Iqbal* Karachi: Iqbal Academy, p.119–120)

⁷² Iqbal's Allahabad address (Sherwani (ed.) 2008, p.25, 26)

⁷³ This technicality about 'residual powers' as 'sovereignty' – which I have taken from the text of one of Jinnah's speeches at the First RTC (1 December 1930; M.R. Afzal 1980, p.319) is important in interpreting the line '...“Independent States”' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign' in the Lahore Resolution of 1940.

⁷⁴ Jinnah came back to India for just over a month and remained in England after the second RTC. He did not return until 1934.

because it is by making Muslims strong, by bringing them together, by encouraging them and by making them useful citizens of the State that you will be able to serve your country. What is a State? What is representative government? *Does it mean that the 70 million Muslims should be tied hand and foot in a Constitution where a particular class of Hindus can possibly tyrannise over and deal with them as they like?* Is that representative government? Is that democratic government? Certainly not. ... I have said this openly. I have no eye on any party. I have no mind for popularity. I can tell you honestly that the Hindus are foolish, utterly foolish in the attitude that they have adopted today. *Differences must be settled among ourselves.*⁷⁵

He also highlighted the cause both of Muslims and the so-called 'Untouchables' (the lowest caste of Hindus), emphasising that if their collective interests were not looked after, India would not be 'a strong nation'.⁷⁶

Political difference

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal was one of the delegates at the second Conference (he had not attended the first). Already wary of British motives with regards to the centre, he felt it would be better to at least get some sort of responsible government going in the British Indian provinces whilst the issue of the all-India central government was still being hammered out.

Jinnah meanwhile maintained his line from the year before: 'I want you also to remember that no constitution you will frame will be acceptable to the Muhammadans unless their demands are complied with'.⁷⁷ Even when asked to offer an 'alternative' solution in case of an 'absence of a communal settlement by agreement', he insisted: 'you cannot possibly enact any constitution without a Hindu-Muslim settlement.'⁷⁸ Yet in his anxiety to prove that the Muslims would 'not stand in the way of the constitutional progress of India', he also expressed his acceptance of the British view that provincial government could not be introduced immediately, and that therefore 'Provincial autonomy and responsibility at the Centre must take place simultaneously'.⁷⁹

This in Iqbal's eyes was a 'very grave error',⁸⁰ since the issue of central responsibility could not be resolved until the all-India federation was set up; and that could not be set up until all parties agreed to participate – including the Princes. As for dealing with the prickly problem of provincial autonomy, this was last on the British Government's list of things to do. Hence to ask for provincial autonomy and central responsibility together was to ask for the impossible. As Iqbal later pointed out, this only deferred discussions on the Hindu-Muslim issue, and Muslim demands for provincial autonomy

⁷⁵ Speech at farewell party, Muslim Students Union, Bombay, 4 September 1931. (R. Ahmad (ed.) (1994) *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Second Phase of his Freedom Struggle, 1924-1934* Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, p.220-1)

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Second RTC, Federal Structure Subcommittee, 26 November 1931. (M.R. Afzal 1980, p.409).

⁷⁸ Ibid. (p.409-10)

⁷⁹ Ibid. (p.407, 410)

⁸⁰ See Presidential address at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Conference, Lahore, 21 March 1932 (Sherwani (ed.) 2008, p.34). Iqbal was certainly referring directly to Jinnah's 26 November declaration, though he did not take Jinnah's name.

in Bengal and Punjab were not adequately addressed.⁸¹

Gandhi's condition

Meanwhile the British had also released Gandhi from prison so he could act as the representative of the Congress at the second RTC.⁸² At the Minorities Committee set up to work through minority concerns, Gandhi provoked his compatriots by suggesting that the Congress was the only representative party of the Indian people, that the Indian minority delegates were unrepresentative as they were nominees of the Government (between them they actually represented around 46 per cent of the Indian population),⁸³ and that the Congress would address the minorities problem only after it had attained power.

The Muslim delegation expressed a willingness to cooperate with the Congress in return for concessions on their demands. Gandhi accepted this in his personal capacity but refused to wire the Muslim offer to the Congress Executive. In addition he expected Muslims not to support the Untouchables' (present-day Dalits) demand for separate electorates and even drafted an agreement for the purpose.⁸⁴ This minority group, some 60 million strong, was by far the worst off community in India. The 'Untouchables' were socio-economically disadvantaged and suffered terrible discrimination on account of their belonging to the lowest rank of the Hindu caste system. As such, they didn't even count as a legitimate caste. Gandhi however was adamant that they were part of the Hindu community and thus should not to be treated as a political minority⁸⁵ (he'd used a similar argument against Muslims to the effect that they were mere Hindu converts to Islam).⁸⁶ The Muslims did not accept this condition.

Gandhi's own offer for a settlement on behalf of the Congress – a mere rehash of the Nehru Report – was summarily rejected by all minorities including Muslims. The minorities finally came together and issued joint demands in the form of an Indian

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Congress had not attended the first conference because Gandhi was in jail for starting the civil disobedience movement over the British monopoly on salt. Though offered the chance to leave jail for the conferences, he had refused to attend unless other political prisoners were released. Gandhi attended the second conference as the lone Congress representative on condition that he must end the civil disobedience movement (the agreement was called the Irwin-Gandhi Pact). At the third conference, neither he nor Jinnah attended, but it is historically notable for the fact that it was at this time that the name 'Pakistan' was coined by Choudhuri Rahmat Ali, a student in Cambridge, and his ideas were circulated amongst RTC delegates, though not treated seriously. For details see Chapter 7.

⁸³ This is what the minorities told the British Prime Minister when they handed him the Minorities Pact referred to above. (See B.R. Ambedkar (1946b) *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables* Bombay: Thacker, p.67)

⁸⁴ See B.R. Ambedkar 1946b, p.72-4, 269 (Ambedkar also said: 'It must be said to the credit of the Muslim delegates that they refused to be a party to such a black act' (p.324)). See also Iqbal's Presidential address at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Conference Lahore, 21 March 1932 (Sherwani (ed) 2008, p.32

⁸⁵ Dr. Sheila McDonough has remarked that Gandhi actually had a 'paternalistic attitude' towards the Untouchables. He genuinely wanted to reform Hinduism and tackle the issue of untouchability, but naturally could not accept Untouchables separating themselves from Hinduism even politically. In this he was thinking in terms of an Indian nationalistic unity. For details, see S. McDonough (2002) *The Flame of Sinai: Hope and Vision in Iqbal* Lahore: Iqbal Academy, p.166-73)

⁸⁶ The same thought process was behind the *shuddi* (re-conversion) religious movement advocated by right-wing Hindus.

Minorities Pact; these were in turn rejected by Gandhi. Nevertheless the minority delegates (except the Sikhs) signed and handed the Pact to the British Prime Minister at the final Minorities Committee meeting in November 1931.

Jinnah spurned

To make matters worse, not all in the Muslim ranks appreciated Jinnah's insistence on Hindu-Muslim unity, or his preference for joint electorates. For example, Mian Fazl-i-Husain, a pro-British Punjabi leader and predecessor to Sikandar Hayat Khan, expressed his discomfort with Jinnah speaking on behalf of Muslims at the Conferences, given that Jinnah's views were not always acceptable to them.⁸⁷

Jinnah now realised that he was alone at the RTC. Looking back five years later he was to remark:

I displeased the Muslims. I displeased my Hindu friends because of the 'famous' 14 points. I displeased the Princes because I was deadly against their underhand activities and I displeased the British Parliament because I felt right from the beginning and I rebelled against it [*sic*] and said that it was all a fraud. Within a few weeks I did not have a friend there.⁸⁸

The British realised this too, which is why they did not bother to invite him to the third conference (in fact it was not attended by Congress either). In later years Jinnah would describe these events and his own part in them in starkly self-deprecating terms:

... Many efforts [to secure safeguards for all minorities] had been made since 1924 till the Round Table Conference. At that time, there was no pride in me and I used to beg from the Congress. I worked so incessantly to bring about a rapprochement that a newspaper remarked that Mr. Jinnah is never tired of Hindu-Muslim unity. But I received the shock of my life at the meetings of the Round Table Conference. In the face of danger the Hindu sentiment, the Hindu mind, the Hindu attitude led me to the conclusion that there was *no hope of unity*. I felt very pessimistic about my country. The position was most unfortunate. The Mussalmans were like dwellers in No Man's Land; they were led by either the flunkies of the British Government or the camp followers of

⁸⁷ See letter of Fazl-i-Husain to the Governor of the UP (Sir Malcolm Hailey) cited in S. Mujahid 1981, p.393. Fazl-i-Husain also had ambitions that were Punjab, rather than Muslim India, orientated, whereas Jinnah always represented Muslims at the all-India level. He even attempted to create alliances with like-minded pro-British leaders in Sindh, NWFP and the UP (See S. Mujahid 1981, p.394-5 for details). In an attempt to gain support from the Punjab, Jinnah would later ask Fazl-i-Husain to preside at the Annual Session of the League in April 1936 where it would be decided to contest the provincial elections (see below), but as a supporter of the very reforms in the 1935 Act that the League officially denounced, the Punjab leader turned it down. Fazl-i-Husain died just three months after the Session, in July 1936.

⁸⁸ Public speech at Lahore, March 1936 (W. Ahmad (ed.) (1992-2003) *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: The Nation's Voice*, in 7 volumes Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, Vol. I, p.26) (Hereinafter 'NV')

the Congress. Whenever attempts were made to organise the Muslims, toadies and flunkys on the one hand and traitors in the Congress camp on the other frustrated the efforts. I began to feel that neither could I help India, nor change the Hindu mentality, nor could I make the Mussalmans realise their precarious position. I felt so disappointed and so depressed that I decided to settle down in London. Not that I did not love India; but I felt utterly helpless.⁸⁹

Iqbal validated

In fact, it is Iqbal who emerges as the greater Muslim hero at the RTC. When Jawaharlal Nehru (who had not attended the RTC) accused the Muslims of being uncooperative and reactionary at the Conference, Iqbal released his own statement correcting this misconception: '[Nehru] has been led to believe that Mr. Gandhi offered personally to accept all the Muslim demands on condition that Muslims assured him of their full support in the political struggle for freedom and that reactionaryism rather than communalism prevented Muslims from accepting this condition. This is a perfectly wrong statement of what happened in London.' He referred to the Aga Khan's statement that Muslims would have cooperated with the Congress at the RTC in return for concessions on their demands, and that Gandhi had refused to wire this Muslim offer to the Congress Executive. Iqbal also deplored Gandhi's 'most unrighteous condition' to stifle Muslim support for the Untouchables: 'It was pointed out to him [Gandhi] that it did not lie in the mouth of Muslims to oppose those very claims on the part of the Untouchables which they were advancing for themselves'.⁹⁰

Furthermore, Iqbal correctly predicted that immediate provincial government was the only viable option for constitutional progress. He had suspected from the beginning that some Muslim delegates were 'badly advised by certain English politicians in rejecting the immediate introduction of responsible government in the provinces of British India'.⁹¹ Since the Minorities Committee had also failed to reach an agreement, he dissociated himself from the delegation soon after handing in the Minorities Pact, and did not attend the Federal Structure Committee (as the Muslim delegates had formally made the decision not to attend).⁹² Yet the delegation did later attend the Committee, where Jinnah indicated his support of the simultaneous introduction of provincial autonomy and central responsibility. Subsequent constitutional developments (as we shall see shortly) substantiated Iqbal's position on provincial government.

The neglected minority

Following the end of the second Conference and in view of the failure by the Indian leaders to come to an agreement, in January 1932 the British granted some of the Muslim demands by way of a Communal Award, the most significant being that Sindh

⁸⁹ Speech at meeting of the Aligarh Muslim University Union, 5 February 1938. (Yusufi Vol. II, p.723) Spellings retained from original.

⁹⁰ See Iqbal's statement explaining the attitude of Muslim delegates to the RTC, 6 December 1933. (Sherwani (ed.) 2008, p.287-8)

⁹¹ Iqbal's Presidential address at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim Conference, Lahore, 21 March 1932 (Sherwani (ed.) 2008, p.34)

⁹² Ibid.

was separated from Bombay. The other minority group of significance, the 'Untouchables', demanded that the same concessions of the Award be also granted to them. When the British were on the verge of granting the Untouchables their rights, Gandhi began a fast to the death in protest. The leader of the Untouchables, Dr B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) was forced to compromise, resulting in the 'Poona Pact' in September 1932.⁹³

Jinnah for his part had also fought Gandhi on the issue of the Untouchables' demands at the Conference and pleaded with him to grant them separate electorates if they wished. In 1935, Jinnah would express his appreciation of the Poona Pact in principle (though not the methods employed to achieve it), which he viewed as a 'protection and safeguard' for the Depressed Classes.⁹⁴ Jinnah believed that the Poona Pact had sufficiently safeguarded the Untouchables' rights and thus worked in the greater interests of securing national unity.⁹⁵ He would eventually realise that his view in this matter was misguided.⁹⁶ (Years after the event, he would often remark that he had always been more concerned for the plight of the Untouchables than even for the Muslims.)⁹⁷

A new beginning

Jinnah remained in England following the end of the second RTC. He lived in Hampstead, where he resumed his legal practice. Back in India, the Muslim League was floundering. Muslim Leaguers unanimously elected Jinnah League president in his absence, and pleaded with him to return.

The Indian nationalist in Jinnah was down, but not out. As he himself testified,⁹⁸ even after his return in April 1934 he looked for a way to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity, right up until the provincial elections of 1936. Perhaps he had held Gandhi as the sole culprit for wrecking communal unity at the RTC.⁹⁹ In February 1935, he and then

⁹³ Though the Pact reserved a number of seats for the Untouchables at the provincial and central level (whilst retaining joint electorates) Ambedkar resented Gandhi's religiously-informed politics and later called him 'the greatest enemy the Untouchables have ever had in India'. (B. Nichols (1944) *Verdict on India* London: Jonathan Cape, 1944, p.38) Ambedkar also adopted a political line similar to that of the Muslims. He told Beverley Nichols: 'The key-note of my policy is that we are *not* a sub-section of the Hindus but a separate element in the national life.' (Op. cit. p.40; emphasis in original). Post-partition he became India's first Law Minister and a major contributor in drafting the constitution.

⁹⁴ Speech at the Legislative Assembly, 4 February 1935. (W. Ahmad (1991) *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Speeches, Indian Legislative Assembly 1935-1947* Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, p.32)

⁹⁵ Jinnah said that he had 'begged' of Gandhi to reconsider his stance about the Untouchables, 'but ultimately he [Gandhi] did realise ... by recognising and giving this protection and safeguard to the Depressed Classes, won them over, and today he is still working for their amelioration'. (Ibid.)

⁹⁶ Jinnah commented on the same incidence with reference to Ambedkar's writings at the League Session at Delhi in April 1943, and expressed his thorough disapproval of Gandhi's attempts to manipulate the Muslims and Untouchables at the RTC. (Yusufi Vol. III, p.1700)

⁹⁷ See *ibid*; also Jinnah's address to the Eid Reunion Gathering, New Delhi, 5 November 1946 (Yusufi Vol. IV p.2447)

⁹⁸ See speech at meeting of the Muslim University Union, Aligarh, 5 February 1938 (Yusufi Vol. II, p.724)

⁹⁹ See Jinnah's presidential speech, AIML Annual Session, Delhi, 24 April 1943. (Yusufi Vol. III, p.1689-1725)

Congress President Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963)¹⁰⁰ agreed upon a Jinnah-Prasad formula in which again separate electorates would be given up in return for concessions to safeguard Muslim interests. But the formula failed because of disapproval from the Hindu Mahasabha.¹⁰¹

By now, the Government of India Act 1935 had been formulated by the British following the failed Round Table Conferences, and it was enacted in August that year. It substituted the previous unitary system for a federal structure, and involved British Indian provinces alone. Rulers and leaders throughout the subcontinent were uncooperative for their individual reasons, and so only the provincial portion of the Act could be put into effect. This at least moved India forward, in line with Iqbal's views at the RTC.

The provincial elections began in 1936. Though Jinnah had always had an aversion to provincial politics, he led the League in contesting the elections. This was the first time that the League had contested elections at an all-India level. Jinnah's intent was to bolster support for the League as well as to look after Muslim interests. The League, which had always been considered by most as a body of upper-class Muslims with no mass following, adopted a mass contact policy for the first time in 1936,¹⁰² with Jinnah stating his intent to put the League in 'a position so as to be able to speak with unchallenged authority for the 80 million Musalmans in India', even whilst expecting to 'cooperate' with progressive bodies including the All India National Congress.¹⁰³ 'Cooperation' in this case no doubt meant the formation of coalitions after the elections, in accordance with the constitution.¹⁰⁴ He toured all over India, giving numerous talks in universities and colleges, and at public meetings, as well as leading the League. Now sixty years old, he began to establish his 'super star'¹⁰⁵ status in this campaign, raising the profile and popularity of the League almost single-handedly.¹⁰⁶ The Muslims of India soon began calling Jinnah 'Quaid-i-Azam', meaning 'Great Leader'.

Testing Iqbal's nationalism

In 1936, Jinnah had not completely given up on Indian nationalism, but he was beginning to show signs of change. He had met with Iqbal a number of times in

¹⁰⁰ Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963) later became the president of India when it became a republic in 1950.

¹⁰¹ Jinnah issued a statement on 7 July 1937 explaining the issue (NV Vol. I, p.151-2).

¹⁰² The League resolution dated 12 April 1936 declared that the League would contest the elections because it was essential that the Muslims 'organise themselves as one party'. (NV Vol. I, p.573).

¹⁰³ Press statement, 24 July 1936. (NV Vol. I, p.61)

¹⁰⁴ Under the 1935 Constitution, Muslims remained in a statutory minority in the legislatures even in provinces where they were a majority. 'Even if they scored 100 per cent success,' Jinnah explained in 1946, 'they could not form Ministries without entering into a coalition'. (NV Vol. IV, p.478)

¹⁰⁵ See A.S. Ahmed 1997, p.91-92 for some remarkable examples of how much Indian Muslims hero-worshipped Jinnah.

¹⁰⁶ From the late thirties onward, the number of Muslims joining the League rose exponentially, as reflected in the numbers attending its Sessions. At the 1930 Allahabad Session where Iqbal gave his famous address, fewer than 75 delegates attended. In April 1936, the number of delegates at the League session numbered 200, with 5000 attendees; a year later in Lucknow, it rose to 2000 delegates and 15,000 attendees. By the time of the historic Lahore Session of 1940, the number of attendees was reportedly over 100,000 (S. Mujahid 1981, p.35-36). In the forties, the League's membership would number in the millions.

England and they had long been colleagues. But 1936-8 was a period in which Iqbal became Jinnah's self-attested 'spiritual support'.¹⁰⁷ We know little of the ideas exchanged between them during this crucial period, except for what exists in Iqbal's letters to Jinnah, and Jinnah's own comments on them. Tragically, Jinnah's replies are missing, but he did later write that Iqbal had 'played a very conspicuous part' behind the scenes in uniting Muslims in minority and majority provinces.¹⁰⁸ As he also confessed, Iqbal's views (which were at any rate 'substantially in consonance' with his own) had 'finally' led Jinnah to the 'same conclusions' as Iqbal regarding the 'constitutional problems facing India'; and they were later given 'expression' in the 'united will of Muslim India as adumbrated in the Lahore resolution' (the League's most famous resolution which demanded Muslim independence).¹⁰⁹ At any rate Jinnah's political decisions, his speeches and statements provide ample evidence of the gradual but definite 'ideological' shift from 'secular-Muslim' to simply 'Muslim', in the Quranic sense of the term. By 1938, this shift would be complete; but it was not a 'religious' change. Jinnah had no theological discussions with anyone, at least not on record. The letters of Iqbal, influential though they were, contain statements not on Islam as a 'religion', but on 'Islam as a moral and political force'.¹¹⁰ In the end, Jinnah's 'conversion' would actually come as a result of his political experiences in this period.

Possibly the very first time that Jinnah used the term 'nation' instead of 'minority' was on 12 April 1936, when the League resolved to contest the elections.¹¹¹ He remarked that the Muslims needed to 'organise themselves', to 'compel the Congress to approach them for cooperation'. Then 'the Muslims could arrive at a settlement with the Hindus as two *nations*, if not as *partners*'.¹¹² That this occurs in 1936 is also significant, in that it is the earliest direct indication of Iqbal's influence. Both the words 'nation' and 'partner' appear here. 'Partner' is indicative of Jinnah's long-held belief in Indian nationalism, in which Hindus and Muslims were to be politically become one unit. 'Nation' however is a word Jinnah had never used before; and most importantly, he would almost never repeat it over the following three years. In view of the time gap, it is almost as if Jinnah in 1936 was about to test a theory. Were Hindus and Muslims capable of acting as two partners, as he vainly hoped, or was Iqbal's theory of two nations about to become an established fact?

A prophecy fulfilled

Though the Congress won the elections, Jinnah looked upon the results optimistically. The figures showed that the Congress won a majority in seven out of eleven provinces, whilst the League did not win a single one. The League candidates won barely five per cent of the Muslim votes.¹¹³ However the League did secure almost half the number of seats it had contested (Jinnah himself claimed figures of between 60-

¹⁰⁷ Speech at public meeting to mourn Iqbal's death, Calcutta, 21 April 1938. (Yusufi Vol. II, p.795)

¹⁰⁸ See Jinnah's foreword in M. Iqbal (1974 reprint) *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah* Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, p.5 (originally published 1942; hereinafter referred to as '*Letters of Iqbal*')

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. (p.6; a spelling error has been corrected).

¹¹⁰ Iqbal to Jinnah, 20 March 1937

¹¹¹ Waheed Ahmad has noted that this is the first appearance of the word 'nation' coming from Jinnah, to the best of his research. (NV Vol. I, p.368 fn)

¹¹² See Brief Minutes of the Proceedings of the AIML Annual Session, Bombay, 11 & 12 April 1936. (NV Vol. I, p.40)

¹¹³ Bolitho 1954, p.113

70 per cent).¹¹⁴ This was a remarkable achievement, given that the League had merely existed on paper in 1934 before Jinnah's return to the scene, that Congress had had a two year head start in organising its Parliamentary Board, and that the traditional provincial parties had maintained a strong hold on their respective provinces for many years.¹¹⁵ This was enough to convince Jinnah that making the League the 'unchallenged authority' of Muslim India was a feasible goal. Reminding the Leaguers that they'd had a mere six months in which to contest the elections, he thus assured them that there was 'no need for us to despair' about the results.¹¹⁶

The Congress meanwhile took its victory in the elections as indisputable proof that it alone was the authoritative representative of the Indian people.¹¹⁷ Before the elections were even over, it had assumed a 'Muslim mass contact' policy to win Muslim support by promoting its socialist policy,¹¹⁸ and thus to try and topple the League. In the provinces where it had secured a majority, the Congress now expected the League (and other parties) to effectively dissolve itself and sign the Congress pledge unconditionally. In the UP (a Muslim minority province), where the League had won 29 (plus one special seat) out of 64 Muslim seats, it sought a coalition ministry with the Congress; but Congress was not obliged, on the strength of its position in the UP Legislature, to do so.¹¹⁹

Assured of its political domination, the Congress next got to work on the social system. The Wardha Scheme of education, the brainchild of Gandhi, was enforced in the Congress-ruled provinces in March 1938. Its commendable provision of free, self-sustaining and compulsory primary education notwithstanding, it had many facets that were deemed unacceptable to Muslims, including the inculcation of the concept of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and the introduction of the Hindustani language¹²⁰ (whilst suppressing Urdu. Muslims were already sensitive to the issue because the British had replaced Persian and Urdu with English as the official language of India in the previous century). In addition, the song *Bande Mataram* (an anti-Muslim song from a Hindu novel)¹²¹ was to be sung in all schools, though it was denied that the song was being

¹¹⁴ Jinnah claimed figures of between 60 and 70 per cent in success rates in the 'seats contested by the League candidate'. See his Lucknow Session speech, 15 October 1937 (NV Vol. I, p.177), and also his foreword to *Letters of Iqbal* (p.4). Z.H. Zaidi has suggested that this discrepancy might be explained by the fact that the League did not contest all Muslim seats available; for instance it did not put up any candidates in Bihar, Orissa, NWFP or Sindh. (See Z.H. Zaidi, 'Aspects of the Development of Muslim League Policy', in C.H. Philips & M.D. Cartwright (eds.) 1970 *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives* Massachusetts: MIT Press, p.253)

¹¹⁵ In Bengal the League secured a third of seats, but only one seat in the Punjab.

¹¹⁶ Presidential address, AIML Annual Session, Lucknow, 15 October 1937. (NV Vol. I, p.177)

¹¹⁷ J. Nehru declared even before the elections were over that there were only two parties India – the British and the Congress. Jinnah retorted in a press statement that there was a third – the Muslims. (Public speech, Calcutta, 3 January 1937; NV Vol. I, p.108)

¹¹⁸ See footnote 128

¹¹⁹ A. Jalal (1994 reprint) *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.32.

¹²⁰ Hindustani was neither pure Hindi nor Urdu, but a mixture of both. Hindi and Urdu have similarities in vocabulary and grammar, but use different scripts. In combining them, Muslim critics felt their language was being culturally undermined.

¹²¹ *Bande Mataram*, meaning 'Hail to the Motherland', appeared in the novel *Anandamath* by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, published in 1882. It was a political novel based on the Sanyasi rebellion that occurred against Muslim rule in Bengal. (See editorial note, NV Vol. I, p.545-7 for further details)

made a national song, and all children were expected to salute the picture of Gandhi, which Muslims considered idolatrous. Though Gandhi's scheme did not officially include religious education of any kind in its syllabus, Muslims and indeed other communities believed that this was nevertheless an institute for the imposition of Hindu culture.¹²² This was what Jinnah was referring to when he accused the Congress of being 'absolutely determined to crush all other communities and cultures in this country and establish Hindu Raj'.¹²³ The League produced three reports cataloguing Muslim experiences and complaints, and the *Dawn* produced a series of 32 articles based on a six-week investigation in the U.P. and Bihar.¹²⁴

Of course, Gandhi had made never made a secret of his intent to make Hindustani the lingua franca of India and his philosophy of *Ahimsa* a part of the national consciousness. He had said that non-violence was a universal truth to be found in every religion, and practised by all sages and prophets from Rama and Buddha to Jesus and Muhammad, and that therefore it could be made a cohesive force to unite all Indians. Jinnah was not entirely unsympathetic to this sentiment and never had he objected to the idea of national integration in principle, but he couldn't accept any programme which imposed one culture and simultaneously suppressed another. He made this clear at a student union in early 1938, even as he was heckled by Hindu students. The *Hindustan Times* reported after the event:

[Jinnah] would not grudge it, if they decided that Hindus all over India should have one common language. 'Let me have the same desire – that all Muslims should learn Urdu. It is through language that ideas spread. If you compel us to learn Hindi, our children will be saturated with Hindu culture. Language is a medium to acquire ideas'.¹²⁵

The Light meanwhile reported his speech as follows:

... the Hindus have sought to impose upon us *Bande Mataram* in the Assembly Halls and expect us to salute it. They have sought to impose Hindi upon the Mussalmans. Whilst I respect the philosophy and culture of others I love and adore my own, and can never agree to the coming generation thus being lost to Islam.¹²⁶

¹²² Conversely, Hindus resented the Muslims for what they perceived as a Muslim 'superiority complex' carried over from the time that they ruled the subcontinent.

¹²³ See Presidential address at AIML Session, Patna, 25 December 1936. (NV Vol. I, p.329).

¹²⁴ The League reports were known as the 'Pirpur Report', November 1938 (reporting grievances in all Congress Provinces), the 'Shareef Report', December 1939 (covering Bihar), and 'Muslim Sufferings under Congress Rule', December 1939 (a reprint of a press statement by A.K. Fazlul Haq on the situation in Bengal). (See short overview in NV Vol. I, p.548-551)

¹²⁵ Speech at Students' Union, Anglo-Arabic College, Delhi, 3 February 1938, as reported in *Hindustan Times*, 4 February. (Yusufi Vol. II, p.718) A couple of students reportedly challenged Jinnah's claim that the Congress was a Hindu organisation. He counter challenged them with the question of why colleges upheld a segregation practice in their dining halls. (Ibid. p.715)

¹²⁶ Speech at meeting of the Muslim University Union, Aligarh, 5 February 1938, as text appears in *The Light*, February 1938. (Yusufi Vol. II, p.729)

The slow awakening

Jinnah before the mid-1930s is probably best described as a 'secular Muslim'.¹²⁷ We already know that he always wanted Muslims to be treated as 'equal' rather than as a 'minority', and so he had stuck fast to the principle of Indian nationalism, ignoring all distinctions of caste and creed, to try and unite Indians against the British. But two major events – the Round Table Conferences, and the provincial elections of 1936-7 – together served to change Jinnah's perspective forever. At the RTC he had learned that his noble ideals appealed to no one. If at that time he had blamed Gandhi alone for introducing religion into politics, then the provincial elections proved otherwise; Iqbal's warnings about the inextricable connection between the Hindu caste system and Congress politics were proven correct. That many of the biggest leaders of Congress (the Nehrus, C.R. Rajagopalachari, M.M. Malaviya) belonged to the Brahmin and other higher castes was no accident; it was by virtue of their castes that they had the socio-economic advantages to facilitate their entry into positions of power. A great many of them did not, in theory at least, allow their religion to dictate their politics, but their culture and societal structure – the essence of their *nation* – was too great a force; it was practically unstoppable. So whilst the agnostic socialist Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru¹²⁸ expressed surprise and concern at hearing that Muslims (and other communities) were complaining of communal tyranny,¹²⁹ he was in no position to do anything about it. His political constituents also happened to be the religious disciples of Gandhi, and then in Congress itself there were those conservative Hindus who believed in authoritarianism even whilst upholding Gandhian non-violence. This was certainly the case with prominent Congressman Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950), second-in-command after Nehru, known as the 'Iron Man', who also happened to be chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board supervising the Congress-dominated ministries after the elections. This is why Dr. Ambedkar candidly wrote:

It is no use saying that the Congress is not a Hindu body. A body which is Hindu in its composition is bound to reflect the Hindu mind and support Hindu aspirations. The only difference between the Congress and the Hindu *Maha Sabha* is that the latter is crude in its utterances and brutal in its actions while the Congress is politic and polite. Apart from this difference of fact, there is no other difference between the Congress and the Hindu *Maha Sabha*.¹³⁰

Jinnah and Iqbal also expressed similar opinions to the effect in 1937. Iqbal wrote privately to Jinnah in June:

The Congress President has denied the political existence of Muslims in no unmistakeable terms. The other Hindu political body, i.e., the Mahasabha, whom I regard as the real representative of the masses of

¹²⁷ For evidence of this in his speeches, see Myth no. 10 (Chapter 10)

¹²⁸ Nehru introduced a socialist policy for the Congress to try and raise the living standards of the Indian people, but was met with some resistance by conservative and capitalist elements, most famously from Sardar V. Patel. In addition the introduction of this policy to combat poverty was used to try and woo Muslims via mass contact.

¹²⁹ In January 1939 Nehru offered to refer the complaints of the League against the Congress ministries to an impartial tribunal. Jinnah in turn requested that Nehru first read the Pirpur Report. See Jinnah's press statement, 5 January 1939 (NV Vol. I, p.342-3)

¹³⁰ B.R. Ambedkar 1946a, p.30

the Hindus, has declared more than once that a united Hindu-Muslim nation is impossible in India.¹³¹

Jinnah said publicly at Lucknow in October:

On the very threshold of what little power and responsibility is given, the majority community have clearly shown their hand that [sic] Hindustan is for the Hindus; only the Congress masquerades under the name of nationalism, whereas the Hindu Mahasabha does not mince words.¹³²

The commencement of World War II brought an unexpected end to the Congress-dominated government. On 3 September 1939, Viceroy Linlithgow declared that Britain was at war with Germany and that India was expected to assist in the war effort. Congress leaders were outraged that they had not been consulted before the announcement. Their response was to demand immediate independence. Linlithgow rejected the demand, and by November Congress ministers had resigned from the provincial cabinets, automatically putting the British back in power. Many Congress leaders ended up in jail. The League meanwhile was more supportive of the war effort, a decision that would make the British somewhat more sympathetic to Muslim sentiments up until partition. The League marked a 'Day of Deliverance' from Congress rule on 22 December. These events left the League in a position to develop a mass Muslim following relatively uninhibited by Congress interference until the end of the war in 1945.

The aftermath of the 1936-7 elections had no doubt proved an ominous sign for the future of Muslim India. Muslim provincialist leaders including Sikandar Hayat Khan of Punjab, Fazlul Haq of Bengal, and Saadullah of Assam saw the merit of joining the League to strengthen their own power, and they did so in October 1937 at Lucknow. The Muslim League for the first time became an all-India body for the Muslims in name and in spirit.

Jinnah is not on record having used the word 'nation' again until 1939 (barring only two exceptions we will cite shortly), not quite a year after Iqbal's death, when he addressed staff at the Aligarh University. Aligarh was the legacy of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan the educationist (1817-1898), who had encouraged Muslims to educate themselves in Western languages and in the sciences, at a time when such pursuits had been decreed *haraam* (prohibited). As all Pakistanis know, Sir Syed is also credited with having been the first to describe the Hindus and Muslims as two nations. Jinnah appealed to the Aligarh intelligentsia to stop thinking as 'careerists' seeking posts within the 'Bureaucratic' or the 'Congress camp', and to stop 'styling themselves as Nationalist Muslims' (the common term for Indian Muslims who worked in Congress). He wanted them to 'grasp one principle – self confidence and moral, cultural and political self-consciousness'. He also said: 'I make no secret of the fact that Muslims and Hindus are two *nations* and the Muslims cannot maintain their status as such unless they acquire national self-consciousness and *national self-determination*.'¹³³ From then on, Jinnah became the supreme advocate of the 'Two-Nation Theory'. It is not without significance that in his famous exposition of the theory in his most important speech at Lahore in March 1940, he borrowed from the thought of the Aligarh professors.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Iqbal to Jinnah, 21 June 1937. (*Letters of Iqbal*, p.22-23)

¹³² Presidential address at the League Session, Lucknow, 15 October 1937. (NV Vol. I, p.178)

¹³³ Public speech, 12 April 1939. (NV Vol. I, p.368)

¹³⁴ See our discussion of Jinnah's presidential speech at the Lahore Session, in Chapter 7

From 1939 onward, the League increasingly adopted a hardliner policy and began contemplating alternative constitutions to the 1935 Act that would give Muslims the widest autonomy possible. Some Muslims would always remain unenthusiastic about such moves. Indeed, Khalid Shamsul Hasan has remarked, with direct reference to Jinnah's April 1936 speech, that 'the Quaid's idea of organising the Muslims as a nation was not acceptable to the Muslim leadership.'¹³⁵ Nevertheless on 23 March 1940, Jinnah and the League passed the historic 'Lahore Resolution' making a demand for (eventual) total independence. It soon became better known as the demand for 'Pakistan'. Though some people would always believe that the Lahore Resolution was a 'bargaining counter', and that the League's aim was simply parity in an all-India centre, Jinnah always insisted that it was a serious demand for partition. Over the next few years, the British, the Congress and other small parties came up with a number of schemes in an attempt to offer a constitutional solution that would be to the satisfaction of all and would facilitate the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. Most of these schemes invariably leaned in favour of a united India. Jinnah and the Muslim League never quite committed to any of these schemes (with perhaps one exception which at any rate was not quite as it seemed on the surface. We will review this later).¹³⁶

In an interview in 1946, Jinnah stated: 'India is a state of nationalities including two major nations, and all we claim is a distinct sovereign state for our nation – Pakistan.' The man who had once described himself as an 'Indian first and a Muslim afterwards' now dismissed the idea of India as one united country: 'I don't regard myself as an Indian'.¹³⁷ Pakistan would emerge the following year.

Fathers of the nation

Iqbal's influence on Jinnah is unquestionable. In the thirties, Jinnah had not been wholeheartedly supportive of Muslim 'separatist' demands, viewing them as a mere political 'safeguard'. In fairness to Jinnah, provincial autonomy was purely a political pursuit even for many of the Muslim leaders who demanded it at the time. Iqbal's support of these same demands however was based on his far-sighted philosophy, and so his peculiar position was somewhat misunderstood. In 1930 Iqbal had spoken of securing some form of independence in the Northwest of India, focusing on the Muslim-majority areas and particularly the Punjab. Jinnah by contrast had hitherto always been focused on the centre, which in theory would look after the interests of Muslims all over India.

From 1937 onward, when Congress rule began in the provinces of British India and its effects became increasingly manifest, Iqbal made a number of comments and suggestions in his letters that would later be expressed in Jinnah's political actions. Iqbal also wrote that he considered Jinnah 'the only Muslim' capable of leading the

¹³⁵ K.S. Hasan (1992) *Sindh's Fight for Pakistan* Karachi: Royal Book Company, v. (Khalid Hasan was the older brother of the Muslim Leaguer Syed Shamsul Hasan.)

¹³⁶ The Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 offered by the British in 1946 is viewed by some as proof that Jinnah was prepared to accept a place in a united India. In this book we will show that the League's acceptance was both reluctant and conditional, in view of both the implications of the Plan and Jinnah's negotiations with Viceroy Wavell. See our review in Chapter 11.

¹³⁷ Interview to foreign editor, *News Chronicle* (London); Delhi, 12 April 1946. (NV Vol. IV, p.624)

Muslims through the ‘storm’ of the political crisis.¹³⁸

His comments include:

- The whole future of Islam as a moral and political force in Asia rests very largely on a complete organisation of Indian Muslims. (20 March 1937)
- The League will have to finally decide whether it will remain a body representing the *upper classes of Indian Muslims or Muslim masses*. (28 May 1937)
- If Hinduism accepts social democracy it must necessarily cease to be Hinduism. For Islam the acceptance of social democracy in some suitable form and consistent with the legal principles of Islam is not a revolution but a return to the original purity of Islam. ... in order to make it possible for Muslim India to solve these problems it is necessary to redistribute the country and to provide one or more Muslim states with absolute majorities. *Don't you think that the time for such a demand has already arrived? ... Muslim India hopes that at this serious juncture your genius will discover some way out of our present difficulties.* (28 May 1937)
- The atheistic socialism of Jawaharlal is not likely to receive much response from the Muslims. The question therefore is how is it possible to solve the problem of Muslim poverty? And the *whole future of the League* depends on the League's activity to solve this question. (28 May 1937)
- I have come to the conclusion that if this system of [Islamic] Law is properly understood and applied, at least the right to subsistence is secured to everybody. But the enforcement and development of the Shariat of Islam is impossible in this country without a *free Muslim state or states*. (28 May 1937)
- A separate federation of Muslim provinces ... is the only course by which we can secure a peaceful India and save Muslims from the domination of non-Muslims. Why should not the Muslims of North-West and Bengal be considered as nations entitled to *self-determination*, just as other nations in India and outside India are? (21 June 1937)
- The Muslims of North-West India and Bengal ought at present to *ignore Muslim minority provinces*. (21 June 1937)
- The League ought to concentrate all its activities on the North-West Indian Musalmans. (11 August 1937)

Until the end of his life, and as we shall see throughout this book, Jinnah frequently borrowed ideas directly from Iqbal – including his thoughts on Muslim unity, on Islamic ideals of liberty, justice, and equality, on economics, and even on practices such as prayer. Jinnah's use of the term ‘nation’, again taken from Iqbal, is the most significant. The philosopher in turn had borrowed his concept of nationalism from both Ernest Renan¹³⁹ and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and discussed it in light of his knowledge of the Quran. Iqbal's concept of nationality was not based strictly on communalism, or religious affiliation. It was based on the Islamic worldview, which we will review in Chapter 6.

Jinnah was thus inspired by Iqbalian thought when he said:

¹³⁸ Letter dated 21 June 1937 (*Letters of Iqbal*, p.20-1)

¹³⁹ Iqbal even mentioned Renan's characterisation of what constitutes a nation in his Allahabad Address.

The ideology of the League is based on the fundamental principle that Muslim India is an independent nationality. ... We are determined, and let there be no mistake about it, to establish the status of an independent *nation* and an independent *State* in this subcontinent.¹⁴⁰

Central to this concept of 'nationality' (and separate from the territorial demand)¹⁴¹ was 'Muslim unity', a theme recurrent in most of Jinnah's speeches in the last few years of his life, both before and after partition. By the end of 1938, he had dropped the term 'Hindu-Muslim unity', and had become the advocate of 'Muslim unity' instead. To the best of my research, Jinnah's last references to Hindu-Muslim unity may have been in June 1938, when he said that Muslims were ready for 'communal unity' (i.e. between Hindus and Muslims), but that this unity could only be arrived at 'between two equal parties'.¹⁴² At a post-election League Executive Council meeting in March 1937, Jinnah was reported as having told his colleagues: 'Sink or swim; die or live; but live as a united *nation*.'¹⁴³ Similarly on 8 October 1938 he called for 'cooperation between the various communities in India', adding that 'India is a country of different *nationalities*'.¹⁴⁴ These latter examples of the word 'nation' are both before his address at Aligarh University cited earlier; they represent Jinnah's transition from advocating 'Hindu-Muslim unity' to communal 'cooperation'. It also reflects the growing enthusiasm for Muslim independence both in himself and in his contemporaries. In the speeches that followed, Jinnah increasingly focused on building Muslim unity alone, mainly in view of preparing them for the long-term goal of partition.¹⁴⁵ He did not speak of 'Hindu-Muslim unity' after the end of the 1930s. But since in Islam 'Muslim unity' is only a precursor to universal human unity, Jinnah always spoke of 'friendship' and 'cooperation' with other communities and even forming pacts, and always upheld these principles in his dealings with these communities. He was never a 'communalist' inducing a fear of the religious 'other'. Like Iqbal, he was neither seeking nor endorsing a theocracy for the Muslim state; this was why he wanted to set Muslims 'free from the reactionary elements of Muslims' including the 'undesirable elements' within 'Maulvis and Maulanas'.¹⁴⁶

Jinnah's political decisions and his ideas on Islam as a polity also follow Iqbal's thinking almost perfectly after 1939. Throughout the rest of this book, I will attempt to show the links between the thoughts in Iqbal's letters above as well as his other statements, with those of Jinnah in the forties. The founder of Pakistan constantly reminded Muslims to unite on the basis of their 'nationality', right up to his death on 11

¹⁴⁰ Presidential address, AIML Annual Session, Madras, 14 April 1941 (Yusufi Vol. III, p.1386)

¹⁴¹ For reasons on why this separation of nation and state is important, see criticisms of the Muslim religious leaders against the Two-Nation Theory in Myth no.8.

¹⁴² Speech at public meeting, 5 June 1938 (NV Vol. I, p.258)

¹⁴³ Meeting at ML Executive Council, New Delhi, 21 March 1937. (NV Vol. I, p.136)

¹⁴⁴ Address at the Karachi Municipal Corporation, Karachi, 8 October 1938 (NV Vol. I, p.291; emphasis mine.)

¹⁴⁵ For example: when at a function in 1944 a Sikh religious leader in 1944 urged Jinnah to 'propagate the mission of unity and fuse the masses with the universal whole', Jinnah replied in his address that he endeavoured to obey the principles of his faith, and had before him 'the humble task of uniting the *Musalman*s and working for their social, educational and political uplift'. (See *Civil & Military Gazette* report of Jinnah's public address at a tea party, Lahore, 28 March 1944; NV Vol. III, p.443; emphasis mine)

¹⁴⁶ Speech at meeting of the Muslim University Union, Aligarh, 5 February 1938 (Yusufi Vol. II, p.727). *Maulvis* and *Maulanas* are terms for Muslim clergy. Jinnah also indicated that he was not referring to *all* Muslim clergy, but to a 'section of them'.

September 1948. He pulled it off within his own lifetime – just.

The problem was that few people in the Muslim leadership had ever learned the real meaning of the Two-Nation Theory. Within a few years, the fragile unity maintained by Jinnah began to falter. Personal jealousies and intrigues amongst the leaders resurfaced to the detriment of Pakistan at all levels: socially, economically and politically. Worst still, academic, political and public opinion on the Pakistan idea and indeed Jinnah's ideological stance soon became sharply divided.

And this is where the story really begins.