

## ***The General Elections of 1945-1946: Quaid-i-Azam's Springboard to Pakistan***

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When Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had returned from England in 1934-35, the Muslim League was almost dead and Muslims in India as a community lacked cohesion, direction, and objective, a leader and a platform. In the next five years until the Lahore session of the Muslim League in March 1940, these gaps had been largely filled. Amongst Muslims, besides the Muslim League, there were splinter groups that projected their own separate cause, nearly all had been supported by the Indian National Congress that claimed to be a secular national body representing everyone in India. It was also the oldest on the Indian political scene. These Muslim groups also supported this claim of the Congress, by and large, including its advocacy for a united India. The Muslim League was thus a big challenge to the Congress, in some ways bigger than the British occupying power, as the League struck at the very root of the Congress conception of Indian unity.

The Muslims formed one-fourth of the Indian population, yet they were dispersed all over India as a minority except in the northwest and north-east. Their majority in Baluchistan and in the provinces of Sindh and the Frontier was substantial, but there they were politically backward, and in the two key provinces of the Punjab and Bengal, they possessed only a marginal numerical advantage in the midst of a large non-Muslim minority population. Jinnah had first to find a territory and then justify his claim to that

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territory. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 had broadly defined the area of Pakistan. Jinnah had also amplified this definition from time to time, at the Jinnah-Gandhi Talks in 1944 and later in response to queries publicly raised by Congress leaders, most recently in his speech on 25 October 1945.<sup>1</sup> His large following increased each day, demonstrated by gatherings and popular devotion shown to him all over India, by resolutions at meetings and, above all, by the results at bye-elections. Despite this popularity and interim electoral success, Pakistan remained a tall claim. The representative character of the body over which Jinnah presided had yet to be fully established, it had the problem of being recognized as the sole Muslim body. Wavell did not accept this status of the League at Simla of July 1945 in his programme of forming a Viceroy's Council.<sup>2</sup> The Congress leaders had vehemently challenged it in pronouncements since their release.<sup>3</sup> During this time Jinnah paid attention to such issues as food and famine, trade, commerce, education and social reform, Muslim sufferings in Palestine and Kashmir, Indian National Army trials, the Naval mutiny and the possible use of Indian troops in Indonesia, gave interviews and met the British Parliamentary Delegation, enunciated Muslim League policy of non-interference

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1. At Lyari (Karachi), see its report in *Star of India*, 26 October 1945, as follows: "It has been suggested that the Muslim League is an organization of *Nawabs* and title-holders. It is a lie. It is true that there are a few *Nawabs* and *Khan Bahadurs* in the organization but the Muslim League is mainly and wholly the people's organization of the Musalmans. Its key is in the hands of the poor and worker of the Muslim nation". Mr. Jinnah defined Pakistan so as to include the provinces of Sind, its gateway, Baluchistan, the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Bengal and Assam. He said that as Hindus wanted *Swaraj* in Hindustan, Muslims desired to rule in Pakistan. ' "
  2. For the details of the Simla Conference proceedings see Waheed Ahmad, (ed.), *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 2000), Appendix XI.
  3. See Wavell's record of Nehru's views expressed at a Wavell-Nehru meeting on 3 November 1945 as follows: 'I had an hour with Nehru this morning. I told him that no Government could continue to tolerate indefinitely incitement to violence or threats to its officials, and that the future of India must depend on some compromise between Hindu and Muslim. He replied that Congress could make no terms whatever with the Muslim League under its present leadership and policy, that it was a reactionary body with entirely unacceptable ideas with which there could be no settlement. He practically admitted that he was preaching violence and said that he did not see how violence could be avoided if legitimate aims could not be attained otherwise.' Pender Moon, (ed.), *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 180.

in the affairs of the Princely States, of framing a constitution for Pakistan "by the *Millat* through its chosen representatives".<sup>4</sup> But, after the collapse of the Simla Conference on 14 July 1945, for him elections were to be first, everything else afterwards, articulated more particularly in his following press statement in the very city of Simla just two days after Wavell had announced the Conference breakdown:

I advise them [Muslims] to concentrate all their might and main in organizing our people and getting ready to face the elections which are bound to come sooner than many people think.

Every province and every district must be thoroughly and systematically organized and the result of the elections would be the acid test and the verdict given at the polling booths will be the main criterion by which the solidarity and unity of the Musalmans will be judged both in India and abroad all over the world.<sup>5</sup>

Elections formed the essential theme even of his *Eid* and birthday messages.<sup>6</sup>

For Jinnah and the Muslim League election campaigning was urgent and also extraordinarily hectic and brisk. He suffered bouts

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4. See Jinnah's following reply to M. Abdullah who had enclosed his leader, Allama Mashriqi's scheme of a constitution of the future state of Pakistan: "As regards the constitution for Pakistan, it is not for any individual or anybody, even for the matter of that, for the All India Muslim League, to frame a constitution for Pakistan, and therefore, the course adopted by the *Khaksar* organization is not a practical one, because the constitution can only be framed by the *Millat*, through its chosen representatives, which, in modern language, is called the constitution-making body and that body can only be formed when the boundaries of Pakistan have been defined. Once it has been done then the chosen representatives of the people would form the constitution-making body and they will, as a sovereign body, deal with the question of framing of the constitution". Letter, Jinnah to M. Abdullah (a *Khaksar* activist), 21 September 1945, National Archives of Pakistan, *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, F-1104/320.
  5. Dated 16 July 1945, *Star of India*, 17 July 1945, reproduced in *The Nation's Voice*, Vol. IV, pp. 188-90. See also his replies to correspondents, a typical example of which is his following letter written in the midst of his election tour at Peshawar on 25 November 1945 to Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, a Lahore publisher, about another publisher having violated the copyright and published his speeches: "I have no time as my whole mind is concentrated on these elections, and with regard to the subject matter of your letter of November 19th, I am afraid I cannot pay any attention to it at present, but after the elections I shall be glad to look into the matter". For details see *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, F-140/19.
  6. See *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, pp. 307-09 and 358-60 dated 15 November 25 December 1945 respectively for the two messages.

of serious illness at this time, his end was only three years away. However, he did not slacken his pace and in a mere 24 weeks between mid-July and end of December 1945 “addressed thousands and had talks with hundreds”, as he himself stated.<sup>7</sup> During this short period he spoke at more than twenty-six gatherings across the provinces of Bombay, Sindh, Baluchistan and the Frontier, gave out thirty-two press statements and interviews, met several delegations and received and answered a great deal of political correspondence. In this endeavour, Jinnah was helped by a team of highly committed deputies. He had formed the All India Muslim League Committee of Action in December 1943 and later the Central Parliamentary Board whose proceedings are also printed in this volume. These small bodies of dedicated office-holders selected Muslim League candidates, settled differences and appeals over the award of League tickets, disbursed funds, coordinated election work from their Delhi head office and travelled and supervised election activity all over India. In this they were supported admirably by the All India and Provincial Muslim Students Federations whose members, especially at Aligarh, set examples of selflessness, sacrifice and dedication.<sup>8</sup>

A significant development immediately following the Simla breakdown was the desertion from the Congress of important Muslim office-bearers, noteworthy among them being Mian Iftikharuddin and Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan. They joined the League; some, such as Feroz Khan Noon and Begum Shah Nawaz, once allies of government, followed suit. Jinnah welcomed them, he would allow “every Muslim”, even the Khaksars, “who believes in the creed, principles and programme of the League” to join the Muslim League.<sup>9</sup> It suited him to forget the past at this crucial

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7. See his parting message to Frontier Pathans, Peshawar 27 November 1945, *Dawn*, 28 November 1945, reproduced in *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, p. 339.

8. For details see Mukhtar Zaman, *Students' Role in Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1978); Sarfraz Hussain Mirza, *The Punjab Muslim Students Federation, 1937-1947* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1978) and Bedar Malik, *Faislahkun Ma'arkah* (Urdu) (Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, Punjab University, 1987). See also the numerous documents which form part of the Quaid-i-Azam and the Muslim League Papers deposited at the National Archives of Pakistan in Islamabad and in the contemporary newspaper reports.

9. Letter, Jinnah to M. Abdullah (a *Khaksar* activist), 21 September 1945, *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, F-1104/320.

junction and swell his ranks. His appeal for 'silver bullets' was very well responded to; donations came even from abroad, as far a field as South Africa.<sup>10</sup> He personally controlled receipts and sanctioned grants, election expenses were kept modest and to a minimum, campaign ethics remained high, votes were not to be purchased.<sup>11</sup> The Muslim League would not contest seats to which the system of joint electorate applied as in case of the two Muslim Central Assembly seats, one in the Frontier and the other at Delhi.<sup>12</sup> Muslim League Provincial Parliamentary Boards with a Central Parliamentary Board formed the League's election hierarchy, with Jinnah at the top as the last court of appeal. In the award of the Muslim League tickets, inevitably there were dissenters, appeals were also made to Jinnah. He invariably refused to intervene and instead asked the appellants to approach the Boards and accept their verdict.<sup>13</sup> In the midst of an all-India election exercise and with the vital issue of Pakistan at a crucial stage, to have been engaged in settling these ticket issues would have caused diversion and harmed the vital cause. Each ticket applicant was required to sign an undertaking that he would accept

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10. See *ibid.*, p. 286 for a donation of Rs.10,000 from Muslims of Pretoria.

11. Late Hakim Muhammad Ahson had, on a number of occasions in the years before his death in September 1994, publicly stated at gatherings at Karachi (also to this editor at private meetings) that he, as a student election worker in Sindh in 1945-46 had been provided by Jinnah genuine publicity expenses, but was strictly forbidden to purchase votes for money.

12. In the two constituencies in N.W.F.P. and Delhi which had one Muslim seat each the system of joint electorate had operated, the Muslim League offered no candidates. 'Here the Congress put up two Muslim candidates, Mr. Abdul Ghani Khan, son of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Mr. Asaf Ali. Although Mr. Abdul Ghani Khan won the contest against a *Khaksar* candidate, Mr. Asaf Ali had to face the united opposition of almost all the Muslims of the Delhi constituency.' M. S. Toosy, *The Muslim League and Pakistan Movement*, (Karachi: National Book Foundation, 1978), pp. 278-79.

13. For example, he wrote as follows to Nawab Muhammad Zaffar Khan of Bannu: "Peshawar, 25 November 1945. Dear Sir, I am in receipt of your letter of November 24th, and beg to inform you that I have repeatedly made it clear that I have no power to interfere with your Provincial Selection Board or with the Central Parliamentary Board, who will finally decide and nominate the official League candidates for your province, and I have given my reasons in the various speeches I have made recently publicly, that it will be improper on my part to interfere with these Boards or influence them directly or indirectly, because they are set up by our own Constitution and they are subject to our rules and regulations. Yours faithfully, M. A. Jinnah." *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, F-140/17.

his rejection, if that occurred, with good grace and would support wholeheartedly the candidate who was awarded the ticket by the Board against him. There were cases of violation of this undertaking in the provinces of Sindh, Frontier, Punjab, and also elsewhere, but League discipline was by and large enforced. Jinnah's reasoning was simple: "We are not fighting elections to form Ministries, we are fighting to get a verdict on the Pakistan issue",<sup>14</sup> "support the official League candidate even though he may be a lamp post; support and a vote for him does not mean approval of some or disapproval of others. . . we want to secure a thumping verdict at this moment and prove to the world that Musalmans have definitely decided to achieve Pakistan."<sup>15</sup>

Unlike the Congress leadership, Jinnah and his followers had not made British rule the main target of their attack in their election campaign: that rule was nearing its end anyway. They had complained about official interference in the conduct of elections to the detriment of the League candidates especially in the Punjab<sup>16</sup> and the Frontier<sup>17</sup> where administrations hostile to League had been in place; and had also asked the British government to accept in clear terms their principal demand of division and Pakistan. Beyond that they did not anywhere challenge the state machinery responsible for maintaining law and order, 'remaining neutral in the conflict between government and Congress' without being

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14. See his speech in Urdu at Peshawar on 24 November 1945, *Dawn*, 26 November 1945, reproduced in *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, p. 325.

15. See his message at Peshawar dated 25 November 1945, reproduced *ibid.*, p. 339.

16. "Shameless interference" by Governor Glancy and Premier Khizar Hayat. See Jinnah's address to Islamia College students, Lahore, 13 January 1946, *Star of India*, 14 January 1946, and the following telegram from one Salahuddin, Gujranwala, to Jinnah, 30 January 1946: 'Police officers in my constituency threatening, torturing and wrongfully detaining my supporters. They go about in Raja Abdullah Khan's cars openly canvassing for him. It seems they have no other work to do except electioneering. They are contravening Government Servants Conduct Rules and committing offences under Section 171 IPC. Kindly stop this scandalous state of affairs'. *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, F-140/24. Salahuddin, a Muslim League candidate, won securing 7872 votes against Raja Muhammad Abdullah, a Unionist candidate, who secured 6332 votes. See Abdul Wahid Qureshi (ed.), *Tarikhi Faishlah*, (with a Foreword by Liaquat Ali Khan) (Urdu), (Delhi: Maktaba-i Siasiah, 1946), p. 93.

17. See George Cunningham (N.W.F.P. Governor) to Wavell, 27 February, Appendix XIV/viii, *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, pp. 971-72 in which Cunningham makes reference to such complaints.

'pro-government or pro-British.'<sup>18</sup> "Deadlock", Jinnah asserted, was "not so much between India and the British", it was "between Hindu Congress and the Muslim League."<sup>19</sup> The main attention of Jinnah and the Muslim League had been focused on the Muslim voters whom they had wanted to remain united<sup>20</sup> and solidly committed to the League programme, to visit the polling stations in force and to vote overwhelmingly for the League candidates. This happened as desired.<sup>21</sup> The League won overwhelmingly everywhere except in the Frontier where the League performance was poor for reasons already explained. However, in no Muslim

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18. Wavell's 'Appreciation of Political Situation', enclosure of Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 27 December 1945. *Transfer of Power*, vol. VI, pp. 686-87.

19. See his interview to Reuter's correspondent at Bombay on 7 December 1945, reproduced in *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, pp. 346-48.

20. "Every Shia" was advised "to join the Muslim League unreservedly at this critical juncture." Telegram, Jinnah to Sajjad Ali Khan, 1 October 1945. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

21. See for example K.S. Shariff (Honorary Secretary, Primary Muslim League, Rajahmundry, East Godavari) to Jinnah, 12 February 1946 as follows: 'Beloved Quaid-i-Azam. The Primary Muslim League of Rajamundry, resolved at a public meeting held on 25. 12. 45 to celebrate your 70th birthday by presenting you with 70 silver bullets and holding 70 meetings all over the district to propagate the ideal of Pakistan. In pursuance of those resolutions I am respectfully sending you by insured parcel the 70 silver bullets. Meetings are being held in different places. During the last Central Assembly elections out of 107 votes polled in this town, only one was polled for the anti-League candidate. We shall try our best in the provincial elections to see that no votes are polled to our opponents. With respects, yours obediently, K. S. Shariff. *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, F-1105/74. Also see letter Raja Mohammad Ismail Khan to Jinnah, 5 March 1946, which reads as follows.' 'Brother Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah Quaid-i-Azam, in the first instance I consider it my sacred duty to congratulate you and your patrons on the splendid success achieved in the Punjab. This is all due to your untiring efforts and keen interest evinced by you towards the Muslim League. On 14. 2. 46 when I had to go to the Polling booth to cast my vote with 9 other voters under my way, my tiny and beloved daughter Amim Akhtar, expired at 11 a. m. It was a keenly contested situation, efforts were being made by the Unionist Party to get our votes and in view of this cutthroat competition I prepared the votes to be polled first to cremating my daughter. My wife said eye to eye in my action [*sic*] and said, "Do not care for your dead child, Islam first, temporal affairs afterward". Being encouraged by these words of my wife, I hastened to the polling booth with 9 other voters on foot for 9 miles and caste all votes to the Muslim League candidate Mian Nur Allah. It was dusk fall when I returned to my village and attended to my daughter's burial. The passing away of my daughter has at such a premature time caused me an irreparable loss, but it will afford me a good consolation if I received a letter under your signature in response to this act of mine. Yours obediently, Raja Muhammad Ismail Khan," *zamindar*, Chak No. 353 JB. *Quaid-i-Azam Papers*, F-988/41, reproduced in *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, pp. 980-81.

majority province did the Muslim League win a clear overall majority to form a government on its own despite its overwhelming success at the polls.

According to an historian of modern India, the 'impression that there was a low turn out in Muslim constituencies or poor franchise for Muslim population' as compared to that of the non-Muslims 'is not correct as regards the elections of 1945-46.'<sup>22</sup> In the Central Assembly election, at least 'in the three provinces, Bengal, U. P. and Bihar, the turn out in Muslim constituencies was in fact higher than in general constituencies.'<sup>23</sup> Here out of a total of 4,81,667 [non-Muslim] and 2,18,545 [Muslim] electorate, 1,30,559 (27. 1%) and 1,27,236 (58. 22%) votes respectively were cast.<sup>24</sup> Apparently, the stakes were higher in Muslim constituencies as compared to the non-Muslim constituencies. The Congress demand for independence was beyond dispute, but there was still a question mark over Muslim League's Pakistan; hence greater enthusiasm among Muslim voters to cast vote and strengthen the Muslim League. However, irrespective of who was or was not enfranchised, election euphoria gripped the entire Indian population, rural and urban, and party alignment had become firm pre-determining the voters' choice of candidates. The election results provided a real popular verdict indeed. For the Muslim League to have won all thirty Muslim seats of the Central Assembly was a monumental achievement. Even though provincial elections had yet to take place, 11 February 1946 was declared all over India 'as a day of celebration of our glorious victory in the first round'.<sup>25</sup> The pattern had been set and although the League lost some seats in the provincial elections, its success there was also overwhelming.<sup>26</sup> It won 423 seats out of a total of 491 Muslim seats. It lost 61 seats, of these 21 were in N.W.F.P. none in Orrisa, Bombay and Madras, one in C.P., 3 in Assam, 7 in Sindh, 6 in Bihar and 11 in U. P. The League candidates lost deposits nowhere

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22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. See Jinnah's direction to District, Provincial and Primary Muslim Leagues, *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, p. 368.

26. For details constituency and province-wise, see *Tarikhi Faislah*, pp. 28-160.

and their failure wherever they lost was marginal; Congress fielded a total of 94 candidates in these Muslim constituencies all over India, 38 of them lost deposits, 23 won<sup>27</sup> — three in U. P.,<sup>28</sup> one in Bihar<sup>29</sup> and 19 in the N. -W. F. P. — the rest of them were simply defeated. Congress secured 4.4% of total Muslim votes, as against 86.45% going to the Muslim League.<sup>30</sup> For Jinnah, this was a moment of glory: the argument both from the government and the Congress sides about the representative character of the Muslim League had been conclusively settled. It provided Jinnah a real springboard to his Pakistan. These elections marked a decisive phase second only to the remarkable event of 14 August 1947.

The climax of the League election victory was the Legislators' Convention held in Delhi on 7-9 April 1946. Almost all of the 453 Legislators elected on the Muslim League ticket in the newly-concluded elections to central and provincial Assemblies assembled in the spacious enclosed forecourt of the Anglo-Arabic College, Delhi. Present there were also a large contingent of pressmen both from local and abroad, members of the Muslim League National Guards and the general public, even Hindus and Sikhs, at the inauguration ceremony. One had to purchase entry tickets costing Rs.50, 25 and 10 each to witness the official proceedings. Guests had been accommodated in the recently modernized government quarters on Lodhi Road and in various hotels in the metropolis, some outside visitors stayed with friends. The capital was aglow with buntings and scenes of festivity. The magnificence of the occasion, described rhetorically soon after the event in a published monograph to which the Muslim League Honorary General Secretary, Liaquat Ali Khan, himself wrote a

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27. See *ibid.*, pp. 124-33.

28. They were Bashir Ahmad and Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, both from Muslim constituencies in Bijnour district, and Nisar Ahmad Sherwani, won unopposed from Minpuri and Etah district constituency. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

29. Dr. Syed Mahmud from Champaran North defeated his League rival by 207 votes, the two securing 1374 and 1167 votes respectively. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Foreword,<sup>31</sup> is still remembered by the surviving eye-witnesses as profoundly impressive.<sup>32</sup>

The Convention, presided over by Jinnah lasted for three days. Its sessions continued till late at night. Speeches delivered and resolutions presented and adopted were widely reported in the press. "There can be no compromise on the issue of Pakistan, God is with us," declared Jinnah in his opening address and further added: "Muslim India would never agree to a single constitution-making body nor accept the constitution of an interim government before the principle of Pakistan was accepted."<sup>33</sup> The resolution adopted Jinnah's above affirmation and demanded 'that the zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the north-east and the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the north-west of India, namely Pakistan zones, where the Muslims are in dominant majority, be constituted into a sovereign independent state and that an unequivocal undertaking is given to implement the establishment of Pakistan without delay.'<sup>34</sup> At the end of the proceedings, each member read and signed the pledge for Pakistan, to carry out the 'directions and instructions' of the Muslim League 'for the attainment of the cherished national goal of Pakistan' and 'to undergo any danger, trial or sacrifice which may be demanded' of him.<sup>35</sup> These ominous expressions by the oath-takers, who had the legitimacy of the recent election mandate, could not now be taken lightly. Three days later, Jinnah reportedly declared that he did not regard himself as an Indian.<sup>36</sup> All this happened under the watchful eye of the high-powered British Cabinet Mission<sup>37</sup> present in Delhi at this time.

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31. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-292. For live reports by correspondents and proceedings at the Convention, see *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, pp. 594-620 and 653-72.

32. Mr. Moinuddin Khan, a retired Professor of Urdu, and Mirza Hasan Akhtar, a *Dawn* correspondent. Both had studied at the Anglo-Arabic College and had worked as student volunteers at the Convention.

33. See *ibid.*, pp. 594-95.

34. See *ibid.*, pp. 656-57.

35. See *ibid.*, p. 672.

36. Interview dated 12 April 1946 given to the foreign editor of the *London News Chronicle*, reproduced in *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, p. 624.

37. Comprising Lord Pethick-Lawrence (Secretary of State for India), Sir Stafford Cripps (President of Board of Trade) and Lord A. V. Alexander (First Lord of the Admiralty).

The election successes established firmly the authority of the Muslim League to speak on behalf of the Indian Muslims. This is reflected in Jinnah's assertions reproduced in the succeeding pages in favour of Pakistan. It was perhaps for the first time in his political career that he used phrases like "bloodshed" and "civil war" in his public utterances. The results strengthened his negotiating position enormously vis-à-vis the Viceroy, the Congress and the two British visiting teams in 1946 — the Parliamentary Delegation and the Cabinet Mission. The Viceroy had already refrained from reforming his Council without the Muslim League in it and had 'conceded' in his Breakdown Plan of 27 December 1945 'self-determination in genuinely Muslim areas.'<sup>38</sup> The final business was to be settled by the Cabinet Mission with which the Viceroy had also to collaborate. The British Parliamentary Delegation called on Jinnah at his Delhi residence on 10 January 1946.<sup>39</sup> A leading member of the Delegation, with his known sympathies for the Congress, recorded later his impression of this meeting as follows:

I confess I had underestimated the emotional intensity of the Muslim League demand for "Pakistan", a term invented by a Muslim Cambridge undergraduate acquaintance who united the initials of the names of predominately Muslim Indian states. I came to realize the implacable resolve of Mr. Jinnah to achieve partition and Pakistan, and I vividly remember the long conversation I had with him ending as he rose to bid me farewell, his sister, Fatima, standing sternly motionless a few feet away, "Well, Mr. Sorensen, it's up to you," said he, by which I fully understood he meant I must change my judgement on the undesirability of Pakistan.<sup>40</sup>

On return to London, Sorensen reported to the Secretary of State as follows:

Mr. Jinnah, although implacably identified with Pakistan and unwilling to define the term, is accepted not only as a leader of integrity but also as the accredited spokesman of the grievances and aspirations of millions of Musalmans' and recommended: 'After such

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38. See Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 27 December 1945, *Transfer of Power*, vol. VI, pp.699-700.

39. See press reports reproduced in *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, pp. 372-73.

40. Sorensen's unpublished memoirs entitled 'A Backbencher's Pilgrimage' deposited at House of Lords Record Office, London, SOR/230, p. 275. For more details of this meeting, see *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, pp. 1012-15.

preliminary consultation as is possible an offer should be made to Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League that it would embody the contents of Pakistan. The area should consist of territory in Sind and the Punjab, possibly the North West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Kashmir, and contiguous areas' subject to the certain conditions chief among them being 'a plebiscite of all the electorate' likely to be affected.<sup>41</sup>

As for the Cabinet Mission, it held two meetings with Jinnah on 4 and 16 April 1946<sup>42</sup> before proceeding to Simla for further sessions beginning on 5 May 1946<sup>43</sup> with all parties and interests. The intricacies of discussions of the Cabinet Mission, its Plan, the acceptance and then rejection of the Plan by the Congress and the League and later events are summarized in the following lines. The Mission had, at its very first meeting with Jinnah, offered to him a choice between a reduced but sovereign Pakistan and a larger Pakistan with a minimum union centre, something which the Viceroy had outlined in his 'Breakdown Plan' the previous December. So that, as the year 1946 opened, the issue of division and the authority of the Muslim League were no longer in question as far as governments were concerned, both in India and London. The problem however remained with the Congress leadership, who could not reconcile itself to the new identity of the League<sup>44</sup> and pursued a policy of preventing the League from forming governments in provinces where Muslims were in the majority. The setting up of the Congress government in the N.W.F.P. is understandable, but a coalition government of the Congress-Unionists-Akalis in the Punjab, where the Congress could secure not a single Muslim seat and its candidates lost miserably wherever they contested,<sup>45</sup> the performance of its other coalition partner, the

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41. See R. Sorensen to Pethick-Lawrence, 13 March 1946, reproduced, *ibid.*, pp. 1005 and 1008.

42. For proceedings of these two meetings, see *ibid.*, pp. 576-88 and 637-47.

43. At Simla, the Cabinet Mission held altogether seven meetings with the Indian leaders, two each on 5 and 6 May, one each on 9, 11 and 12 May 1946. At this last meeting on 12 May the breakdown of the Conference was announced. Mission's own Plan was broadcast by Pethick-Lawrence on 16 May 1946. See *Transfer of Power*, vol. VII, pp. 425-31, 436-38, 440-42, 489-90, 508-11, 525-26 and 592-94.

44. See footnotes, *The Nation's Voice*, Vol. IV, pp. 598-600, where reports of press interviews of Nehru and Patel 3-5 April 1946 are reproduced condemnatory of Jinnah and the Muslim League.

45. Congress had put up altogether eight candidates in Muslim constituencies in the Punjab, all eight were not only defeated but they also lost their security deposits.

Unionists, was only a shade better,<sup>46</sup> and the Congress meddling in the formation of governments in Sind and Bengal inevitably accentuated communal bitterness. The eventual collapse of the Cabinet Mission bid to keep India united in some form, much regretted by the Congress President Azad,<sup>47</sup> was inevitable.

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Congress secured only 4577 votes out of a total of 10,39,249 Muslim votes in the Punjab, a mere 6%. One Muslim seat went to an independent candidate, Fateh Muhammad Sial, who later joined the Muslim League. The Muslim League secured the remaining 73 Muslim seats and in all 6,78,709 votes, 65.3% of the total. See *Tarikhi Faislah*, pp. 84-85 and 100-01 and Bedar Malik, *Faislahkun Ma'arkah* (Urdu), (Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, Punjab University, 1987), p. 107. According to information supplied to this writer by the office of the Election Commission in Pakistan, election rules vary from country to country and within a country from time to time. In Pakistan at present, the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1976, applies which provides that a candidate loses his security deposit if he fails to secure less than 1/8th of the total votes actually cast, the deposit being rupees four thousand and two thousand respectively for elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies.

46. Unionists had put up 75 candidates in Muslim constituencies, they won twelve Muslim seats (in each case only marginally against the Muslim League candidates) and were defeated in 63 Muslim constituencies losing deposits in eight of them, securing altogether 13.96% of Muslim votes. Unionist leader, Khizar Hayat won in the Muslim constituency of Khushab with 10,653 votes against his Muslim League rival, Mumtaz Ahmad Tiwana, who secured 8,182 votes. Khizar Hayat won in two Landholders' constituencies additionally. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-01 and *The Nation's Voice*, vol. IV, p. 979.
47. See Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1959), pp.152-62.

General elections were held in British India in December 1945 to elect members of the Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. The Indian National Congress emerged as the largest party, winning 59 of the 102 elected seats. The Muslim League won all Muslim constituencies, but failed to win any other seats. Of the 13 remaining seats, 8 went to Europeans, 3 to independents, and 2 to Akali candidates in the Sikh constituencies of Punjab. This election coupled with the provincial one in 1946