

## *Notes*

# **The Crucial Years 1927-1934**

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With the announcement of the Simon Commission's visit to India in 1927 hectic political activities were afoot in India for the consensual report of the Indian parties on the desired constitutional advance. The major parties of India formed a committee under the chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru in All Political Parties Conference at Calcutta in 1928 to prepare a report. As the Muslim members boycotted the Nehru Committee it could not become a consensual report. The members of the committee were Sir Taj Bahadur Sapro, G.R. Pradhan, Sir Ali Imam Shoaib Qureshi, Sardar Mangal Singh to Subhash Chandra Bose. The committee was not representative of the hard core of Indian Muslims. Its two Muslim members only signed it after abstaining from its proceedings. Even the AICC also rejected it when it presented and passed the complete independence resolution in its annual session at Lahore in 1929. The happenings of Congress's rejection of Nehru Report in 1929 are quite interesting and revealing and hence the need to go through the consequences.

Hindu-Muslim amity in the early 1920s had eroded due to the Shudhi and Sangtan frenzy in the wake of Hindu revivalism generated by the Arya Samaj movement. It was feared that the Simon Commission could take an anti-Indian nationalism stance under the conservative administration. The Simon Commission's arrival at a time when the Hindu-Muslim cleavage was at its nadir may be considered as a supportive argument to prove the point.

The years 1927-1934 are a crucial period for the rise of Muslim estrangement from the Congress' point of view. Mr. M.A. Jinnah was in favour of the Nehru Report because he was a supporter of the joint electorate. Another section of the Muslim League led by Sir Muhammad Shafi was vehemently opposed to the Nehru Report. But a time came

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when the progressive section of the Muslim League, led by the Quaid-i-Azam, felt that it could not continue to support All Parties Conference. It had become clear from the Delhi proposals (1927) and, only a year later, the All Parties Muslim Conference had adopted the demand of the separate electorates as its main rallying cry in opposition to the Nehru Report. From this time onward the Muslim Conference became the dominant platform of Muslim viewpoint.

The Muslim League central council formulated the following suggestions to negotiate with the Congress:

1. One third of the elected representatives of both the houses of the legislature should be Mussalmans;
2. In the Punjab and Bengal, in the event of adult suffrage not being established, there should be reservations of seats for the Mussalmans on the population for ten years subject to a re-examination after that period, but they shall have no right to contest additional seats,
3. Residuary powers should be left to the provinces and should not rest with the central legislature.

Jinnah put these proposals one by one in the open session of the All Parties convention, and in spite of his arguments and appeals they were rejected only in January 1929.<sup>1</sup> It confirms that the Nehru Report, apart from its stance on the unitary type of government and Hindi as state language, was in no mood to accept any Muslim demand. Jinnah, finding no space for him self in the hard core of the Muslim politics then presented his 14 points in March 1929 to achieve consensus of the two groups of his League as well as Shafi League. These points were endorsed by the Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind in its next session. All of these points were known as Jinnah's 14 points:<sup>2</sup>

1. Form of government should be federal with maximum powers resting with the provinces;
2. All provinces should be given equal autonomy;
3. Minorities should be given adequate representations. Majority of any community who so ever, should not be reduced into minority in any province;
4. Muslims should be given at least one third representation in the Federal Legislature;
5. Principle of separate electorates should be maintained;
6. Any territorial redistribution or change of the boundaries of the provinces, should not affect Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the NWFP;

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<sup>1</sup> Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslim*, Bombay, 1959, pp.213-15.

<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Noman, *Muslim India*, Allahabad, 1942, pp.283-87.

7. Minorities' rights and religious and cultural freedom should be safeguarded under the constitution;
8. A bill on resolution affecting a community should not be presented in any assembly if the concerned community opposes its introduction,
9. Sindh should be separated from Bombay presidency;
10. Like others provinces, reforms should also be introduced in the NWFP and Balochistan provinces;
11. The Muslims should be given their due share in the civil service;
12. The constitution should provide adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim culture and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion and civilization,
13. All ministries formed at provincial and central levels should include at least one third Muslim members,
14. The federation of India should not be entitled to amend the constitutional laws without the consent of the provincial units.<sup>3</sup>

Another feature of M.A. Jinnah and Maharaja of Mehmoodabad's recommendation was the dominion status for India whereas the Nehru Report was open to the demand of dominion status or complete independence.<sup>4</sup>

The 14 points were incorporated from the respective points of the two Muslim Leagues to be considered as the consensus points. They need not be taken as the reflection of Mr. Jinnah's personal viewpoint as revealed by the author of the book *Shaiq-o-Usman-o-Raghib Rooh Rawan-e- All India Muslim League*. M.A. Jinnah, as narrated by Syed Muhammad Usman, ex-Mayor of Municipal Corporation Calcutta (in an interview) was still hoping an All India Federation which was not in sight till the end of the RTC.<sup>5</sup> He was not in favour of separate electorate until 1932 or he was open to compromise on the issue when Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan, along with Syed Muhamad Osman, succeeded in getting M.A. Jinnah's endorsement of the principle of separate electorate at Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan's residence in Allahabad. It happened when the leaders like Sir Mohammad Shafi, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Hafiz Hidayat Husain, Allama Iqbal, Sir Ali Imam, Maulana Abdul Majid Badayuni, Khwaja Hasan Nizam, Maulana Azad Subhan & Hafiz Hidayat Husain were arraigned against the Quaid-i-Azam even after his compromising stand in 1929. The difference between Allama Iqbal who had been elected to the Punjab Assembly in

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan, *Pakistan Studies*, Islamabad, 2010, p.22.

<sup>4</sup> V.D. Mahajan, *Constitutional History of India*, 1960, p.4.

<sup>5</sup> Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, OUP, 1984, p.127.

1926 with the support of the Unionists, and the Quaid-i-Azam, grew so irreparable that Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlaw had to intervene to achieve a reconciliation between the two in 1930 but Allama Iqbal declined to reconcile with the Quaid-i-Azam on the Upper India Conference's stand on the North-West Indian state. The Upper India Conference, called by Allama Iqbal,<sup>6</sup> was for a separate North-West Muslim State. Allama Iqbal explained it in following words:

In view of the present circumstances it is necessary to hold a special conference of the Muslims of Upper India in which the representation from the NWFP, Baluchistan, Sindh, Punjab should participate with a view to organize and to achieve the Islamic rights.<sup>7</sup>

This idea was not Allama Iqbal's original idea. It was put forward by Wildfred Seawen Blunt (1840-1932), a noted British governor who visited India in the winter of 1883-1884. He had also pleaded the cause of Egyptian freedom well before Archi Pasha (1839-1911). Jamal uddin Afghani (1839-1897) rightly thought that Blunt's contribution to the idea of the North-West Muslim state, generally ascribed to Allama Iqbal Upper India Conference of 1930, has been ignored by the Pakistani writers on Allama Iqbal and Muslim League.<sup>8</sup>

Allama Iqbal's group came so close to the All India Muslim Conference (1929) that it passed the following resolution.

1. The only form of government suitable to Indian conditions was a federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the provinces.
2. Separate electorates were to continue.
3. Existing weightage for the Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces was to continue.
4. Muslims should be given 'their due share' in the central and provincial cabinets.
5. A due proportion should be given to Muslims in the public services and on all statutory self governing bodies.
6. There must be safeguards for the protection and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion, personal laws and Muslim charitable institutions.

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. Ajeet Jawed, *Jinnah, Secular and Nationalist* (New Delhi: Faiz Books, 2005), pp.150-51.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Shafiq Ahmed Khan, *Iqbal' Concepts of Separate North-West Muslim State* (Karachi: Markaz-e-Shaoor-o-Adab, 1987), pp.7-14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

7. No constitution by whom so ever proposed or devised will be acceptable to Indian Mussalmans unless it conforms with the principles embodied in this resolution.<sup>9</sup>

It was after the All India Muslim Conference at Delhi in 1929, presided over by Aga Khan III, that the differences between the Mian Mohammad Shafi and M.A. Jinnah group became so acute that the Muslim League split became apparent. Maulana Hasrat Mohani and Khwaja Hasan Nizami sided with the Shafi Group. However, during the Second Round Table Conference (RTC) some understanding had developed between the two on the dominion status for India.

In 1930 the Quaid, speaking at the All India Muslim League session, affirmed quite clearly that he could not accept Hindu domination in India because of Gandhi's stubborn stand on communal problem. It is worth noting that the Muslim Conference Group remained more dominant than Jinnah Muslim League and the composition of Muslim leaders nominated to participate in the RTC were overwhelmingly from the Muslim Conference and pro-Mian Sir Fazl Hussain. Even the content of the famous Allahabad Resolution (1930) could be termed as representing Iqbal's personal opinion though Allama Iqbal was requested by Mr. Jinnah to preside over the Allahabad in 1930. The vernacular newspapers' clippings of 1930 and thereafter make it evidently clear that Iqbal's *khutba* was heavily influenced by the pronouncements of the Upper India Conference as evidenced from the Urdu newspaper's clippings, mainly daily *Inquilab's* clippings.<sup>10</sup>

It is clear that Iqbal's Allahabad address was for a Muslim majority state compromising the NWFP, Punjab, Sindh & Baluchistan preferably within India and if not possible, outside India. The word 'state' was used for 'the province' and not for a sovereign country. Dr. Ali Ahmed Fatimi in his book *Iqbal Aur Allahabad* (2010) also provides an interesting account of the place of meeting (Dawazda Manzil) and the quality of audience assembled there showed more interests in Iqbal's poetry than in the revolutionary idea which Iqbal had presented.<sup>11</sup> Iqbal himself clarified after the RTC that he was not for a Muslim state outside India. He did not repeat the main theme of the Allahabad address afterwards until we come across in the Iqbal-Jinnah correspondence a letter in which Allama returns to the topic of the

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<sup>9</sup> Ishtiq Husain Qureshi, *The Struggle for Pakistan*, Karachi, 1969, p.54.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Ali Ahmed Fatimi, *Iqbal Aur Allahabad* (Allahabad: Idara-i-Naya Safar, 2010), p.162.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Shafiq Ahmed Khan, *op.cit.*, p.18.

Muslim homeland as the only solution to the political future of Indian Muslims.

The Quaid-i-Azam and Allama Iqbal came closer to each other with the clarification of Allama Iqbal, in respect of his Allahabad address, that his idea of the state envisaged a Muslim majority territory to provide a sense of security to the Indian Muslims. However, Mr. Jinnah did not return to India soon after the second RTC in 1931. He was a lonely person. He even thought of contesting election for the British Parliament. However, Liaquat Ali Khan and Abdul Matin Chaudhary convinced him to return to India in 1934 and much of what Mian Shafi and Iqbal were doing also became to be his creed in the next few years.

The second RTC saw that Mian Shafi and Mr. Jinnah agreed on the dominion status for India. Mian Shafi's earlier stand was for the status of self-government which the communal award had spelt out. Thus the two leagues came closer in 1932. The year 1933 saw a lot of dissension within the Muslim League group. On 19 January 1933 the Muslim League Council meeting under the Presidentship of Sir Raza Ali passed a no confidence resolution against Mian Abdul Aziz Sarhadi, the President of the Muslim League who had ousted Sir Muhammad Yaqub from the post of Hon. Secretary of the League. The Council named Hafiz Hidayatullah to preside over the next year's All India Muslim League session. Mian Abdul Aziz Sarhadi had revolted against Sir Raza Ali's decision and his supporters called the Muslim League Council session in Lahore.

Mr. Jinnah's return was hastened to stem this dissension and he was elected President of the AIML in 1934. Allama Iqbal underwent a change of attitude and he wrote two letters to Dr. M.A. Ansari on January 1935. One of these letters said 'I think the time has come for Hindus and Muslims to work together I have no doubt that you will do your best to bring about a national poet which will form a basis for future cooperation'.<sup>12</sup> This letter caused a list of jubilation in the political atmosphere for a while. One may ponder whether Iqbal's letter to Dr. M.A. Ansari was a u-turn from his Allahabad address because the word 'national' in his letters cover both Muslims and Hindus. It may also be termed as a mark of Iqbal's reconciliation with M.A. Jinnah.

This development goes a long way to prove that the years 1927-1934 have seen quite a few twists and turns before we move to Allama Iqbal's letter to the Quaid-i-Azam in 1937 that was the only time to press for a national home for the Muslims of India. This confluence of opinions paved the way for the further struggle for Pakistan.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*