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Re-visiting the Final Phase of India's Freedom Struggle: 1940 -47

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Abstract: This essay aims to re-visit the political happenings from 1940- the Lahore Resolution – until 15th August 1947 when India achieved independence separating it into two: India and Pakistan. The elections conducted in 1937, on the basis of the Govt of India Act of 1935, the circumstances led to the straining of relations between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League; India's entry into Second World War, Cripps mission and its resolutions, its consequences in the light of are being discussed.

Keywords: Resolved in Lahore, the offer of Cripps, civil disobedience, the resolution to leave India and the introduction to the Cabinet Mission were all discussed.

Introduction

From the Lahore Resolution of 1940 through the independence of India on August 15, 1947, this essay aims to revisit the political happenings. Elections in 1937, based on the Government of India Act of 1935, caused tensions between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League. It is important to notice this. However, the Congress won six out of eleven provinces and emerged as the biggest party in three of those states' Muslim majority provinces, but the League did poorly in every province and could not form government in any of them. In these circumstances, Jinnah showed a readiness to work with any organisation or party as long as the fundamental concepts were agreed upon by all parties. Jinnah's appeal was ignored by Congress because of its belief that economic themes would win over the Muslim electorate. The Muslim Mass Contact Program

was developed by the Congress as part of an outreach effort aimed at converting Muslims. Jinnah saw this as an attempt to split, weaken, and shatter the Muslim community, and an attempt to remove people from their reputable leaders. Jinnah's opposition to the creation of a unified, independent India continued to grow after this point, and he constantly advocated for the partition of the subcontinent. Adolf Hitler's invasion on Poland on September 9, 1939, marked the beginning of the Second Globe War, a pivotal event in the history of both the world and India. The Viceroy's declaration of India's entrance into the war without consulting the people of India enraged the Indian National Congress. As a result, the British government was asked by the Congress to make it

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clear what its goals in the war were in relation to democracy, imperialism, and the new international order that was being envisioned, as well as how those goals applied to India. the Zetland Papers) In the interim, the All India Muslim League stated the following demands: (1) No promise of constitutional advancement would be given without the agreement and approval of the AIML. (2) the government and the League must create a strong relationship, and (3) the 1935 Act's federalism model must be postponed but not completely abandoned (Gwyer and Appadorai, pp484-488).

In its attempt to thwart an agreement between Linlithgow and Congress, this resolution was a resounding success. By rejecting Congress's demand for a guarantee of independence in exchange of its assistance in the war effort, it assisted the Viceroy. Then Linlithgow turned to Jinnah and the Muslim League as a counterpoint to the Congress party. On November 10, 1939, the Congress ministers resigned as a result of this. The Muslim League now needed a foundation on which to build a successful movement in India that would not be hindered by its status as a minority. As a result, on March 23, 1940, the Muslim League in Lahore passed the Pakistan Resolution. The British were relieved, since it allowed them to reject the proposal for independence from Great Britain made by the Congress. By proposing the League's backing for war in exchange for the British not succumbing to Congress pressure after the Lahore Resolution, Jinnah sought to win over the British public. When India gained her independence, the League's goal was to guarantee that an independent Pakistani conflict would be sparked as soon as possible. Three fundamental requests were made by Jinnah on this occasion and in all future discussions with the British administration and Congress. (1) The Muslim League should be considered Muslim India's exclusive spokesperson. Pakistan should be acknowledged as an independent state in principle, and the League should have equal participation with the Hindus in any interim administration that was constituted (Sir

Maurice Gwyer and others). An Appadorai (ed), volume I, page 112 (pg 112). It was Jinnah's plan that was effective in the Viceroy indicated that Britain would not transfer duties to any administration whose authority is not acknowledged by substantial and influential forces in India's national life (2) - Marquess Linlithgow, in *Speeches*, pp. 238-42. The Congress party held the view that the British administration was hell-bent on keeping India as a serf forever. They were right. On Oct. 17, 1940, Gandhi launched the individual civil disobedience campaign. Sir Stafford Cripps was despatched to India by the British government, under the pressure of the Allies, to try to persuade India to join the war effort in the wake of the assault on Pearl Harbor in December 1940. Cripps' ideas, known as the Cripps offer, sought for Indian independence after the war and granted self-determination rights to the provincial units of the United States of America. Congress opposed suggestions that hinted at partition and demanded Indian cooperation in exchange for British government promises to be delivered long later, after the war was finished. That's exactly how Gandhiji said it: a "post-dated check." Although Pakistan's potential was implicitly acknowledged, the Muslim League thought that its basic plans were not amenable to any adjustment and hence no other alternatives were invited. The Muslim League was wrong. Due to the rigidity of the mentality, the ideas were deemed unsuitable. Additionally, Pakistan was pushed into the distant future when a single constitution-making body was proposed with the main goal of building an unified Indian Union (Latif Ahmed Sherwani, pp58- 59). The plans were rejected by both Congress and the League of Nations. The Congress was forced to move quickly due to the British government's stubbornness and the Muslim League's willful obstructionism. The well-known "Quit India Resolution" was voted on August 8, 1942, and demanded an immediate, total, and unconditional withdrawal of the British from India, regardless of the cost. I'm quoting from Sir Francis Low (ed.), p. Exhorting the Muslim community to avoid participating in or

supporting the movement, the League said that it was anti-British and anti-Muslim. Viceroy facilitated the establishment of League administrations in Assam and Sindh as a result. As Rafiq Zakaria points out in his book, "The Prophet," Gandhiji, Azad, Nehru, Patel, and a slew of other Congressmen were detained as soon as the "Quit India Resolution" was announced. The Congress-League impasse was eventually broken via letters between Gandhiji and Jinnah, thanks to Rajagopalachari's efforts. There were two autonomous nations in India's North-West and East that Gandhiji agreed to set up, as long as they were Muslim-majority states that could be established by adult population votes or some other analogous means. Another need was to make sure that minorities' rights were protected, and to ensure that the treaty was able to handle issues such as Foreign Affairs and Defense as well as the like that were of mutual concern to the contracting parties. Finally, the parties could agree on a path of action that would lead to India's independence [The Hindustan Times Oct, 1944]. A independent Pakistan with no limitations on its power was impossible to achieve because of Jinnah's obstructionist stance on merging all of Bengal and Punjab, even though Muslims there had only a slender majority and were minorities in several regions. The American President urged the British government to take action to handle the Indian issue in light of the shift in circumstances on the battlefield in favour of Britain and her allies. As a result of the Gandhi-Jinnah discussions' failure, Wavell, the Viceroy of India, decided to take action on his own. On June 25, 1945, a meeting was held in Simla, India, to begin the process of political negotiations. But Jinnah insisted that "the Muslim members of the proposed Executive Council should be chosen from the Muslim League, subject to a confidential discussion between Your Excellency and the President of the Muslim League, before they are finally recommended by you to the Crown for appointment" [S.S Pirzada, p-502]. Consequently, the conference was a failure. In a letter to Jinnah, the Viceroy admitted that he couldn't guarantee that the planned

council would include only Muslim members who were also members of the league. The League's claim that it was the only representative of Muslims scuppered the summit. The British staged elections to provincial and central legislatures in order to test the representational nature of each party in the context of the situation.

Jinnah's assertion that he was the only representative of his community was supported by the League's overwhelming victory in the reserved districts in the election. It was a major step forward in Muslim community political cohesion and consolidation. It did not, however, imply that the League had the authority to establish governments in Muslim majority provinces or that it was a mandate from the people of Pakistan for independent rule.

Following the election of Clement Attlee as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the British government's approach to the Indian issue changed significantly. Indians were invited to join the Commonwealth as equal partners in the British Commonwealth of Nations by him. With the goal of passing control to Indian delegates by June 1948, he sent a Cabinet mission to the country. An agreement may be reached between the Congress and Muslim League after the mission presented a proposal to the two groups. It was a result of negotiations between proponents of Pakistani and pro-Indian unity. Separate committees were to be formed by provinces with a majority of Hindus or Muslims to draught constitutions for their own regions. Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Communications were to be handled by a single Indian government agency. There would be three groups of provinces under the union: group A, which includes provinces that are not claimed by Pakistan, group B, which includes the Punjab, NWFP, and Baluchistan, and group C, which includes the provinces of Bengal and Assam. Gwyer (Maurice Gwyer and Appadorai, pp. 580-81).

In order to capture the spirit of Pakistan, this concept was devised. There will be no division of India, though. This was a long-term plan that had been in place. One of the key

components of this plan was the creation of an interim government.

As for the Congress, it desired an effective national government and was unwilling to devolve authority to the states. Jinnah argued that the Congress and the League should be equal, and that the Muslim League should be the only one allowed to propose Muslim members. He was certain that Congress would reject his demands, so he could place the whole burden on them and seek an independent Pakistan right now. Nehru on the other hand indicated that he would only participate in the Constituent Assembly if he succeeded Azad as Congress President. Taking advantage of this predicament, Jinnah called for Muslims to use Direct Action in order to gain control of Pakistan [Ibid, p621].

In various parts of India, communist riots and killings took place on Direct Action Day. He hoped that bringing both parties together in an interim administration would solve the situation, but Jinnah refused to participate unless two of his earlier demands were met. Since Jinnah knew the Congress would not agree to his demands, he insisted on them in order to prevent any chance of a compromise between the two parties. Even though the Muslim League eventually joined the interim administration out of concern that the Congress would cement its control, it became evident that the two parties could not function together.

Conclusion

To ensure that the transfer of power was completed by the end of June 1948, the British government sent Mountbatten to India. Pp 142-43 of [The Indian Annual Register, 1947] Mountbatten did all he could to make Jinnah accept the Mission Plan. Jinnah's desire for Pakistan to receive Bengal and Punjab as one unit was rejected by him because, as he pointed out, it conflicts with the League's call for partition. Muslim communities in both Pakistan's northern and southern provinces would benefit from the plan's unification if it were approved by the British government, as opposed to simply receiving a sliver of Pakistan if it was rejected. It was anticipated that Jinnah would agree to the Mission Plan if confronted with

the threat of a divided Pakistan. A compromise could not be reached because of the deterioration in the community's relationship. The Congress, which had first advocated for an unified India, was forced to accept division in the end. As a result, India was split in two, with Pakistan becoming one of the two parts.

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