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## Introduction\*

India's independence in August 1947 was the culmination of a prolonged and sustained movement. The birth of neighbouring Pakistan, on the other hand, would seem to be an aberration, a historical accident caused by a configuration of forces at a particular historical juncture. Even at its most euphoric stage, the campaign for a 'Muslim' nation was hardly embedded in the 'historical logic' of the two-nation theory. In fact the theory on its own hardly reflected the consciousness of a community, for it was conceived by a small group, in a specific context, as an ideological counterweight to secular nationalism.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the themes relating to the genesis and growth of the Pakistan 'movement' were elaborated by contributors to a volume edited by C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright in 1970.<sup>2</sup> Today, 'specialists' and 'non-specialists' alike grapple with much the same issues that were once a historian's delight but are now a nightmare. A case in point was the lively debate sparked off by the release of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's 'thirty pages' in 1989. Newspapers splashed stories on the inept handling of the 'communal' tangle by the country's premier organization, the Indian National Congress, on Jinnah's 'motives' and his use of 'Pakistan' as a bargaining counter to extract concessions from an obdurate Congress leadership. Cryptic

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the expression secular nationalism in the context of India's nationalist struggle may be contested on the grounds that nationalism and its secular dimension was associated with an amalgam which ranged all the way from Gandhi to Savarkar. I have consciously used the expression because, in theory at least, the Congress and its allies in the left parties and groups subscribed to secular values and were committed to the building of a secular society—a legacy bequeathed to the makers of India's constitution. It is of course arguable that Jinnah tried to fashion a particular variant of secular nationalism for the Indian Muslims, in the perspective of 'modern' ideas of ethno-territorial nationhood and self-determination. I am inclined not to agree with this view for reasons made clear in this Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives, 1935–1937* (London, 1970).

comments were offered on the machinations of the colonial government, specially its last representative, Earl Mountbatten, who hastened India's partition into two sovereign nations. The baldly stated conclusions in much of the literature that has appeared since the publication of the 'Complete Version' of *India Wins Freedom* are that Partition could have been averted if the Gandhi–Nehru leadership in the Congress had been magnanimous towards the Muslim League demands, if Mountbatten's predecessors—Linlithgow and Wavell—had shown greater enterprise in devising political initiatives, and if Jinnah had been less intransigent during his dialogues with the representatives of the Crown and the Congress high command.

This debate, often conducted in a polemical and acrimonious spirit, goes on ceaselessly as more and more information comes to light and as individual and collective memories are revived time and time again through the medium of the vast Indian television network and its screening of popular 'serials' like *Buniyad* and *Tamas*. These are memories of broken homes and families, the wounds inflicted by Partition generally, the 'unequalled mistrust, acerbity and frenzied warfare',<sup>3</sup> and the 'general sense of gloom and despondency that pervaded the subcontinent'.<sup>4</sup>

It is tempting, even four decades after Independence and Partition, to reflect on the agony so many experienced, review part of the literature afresh, and explore themes for future research. The story told in the following pages is just a tentative reappraisal of an agonizing process. Many vital areas remain uncovered, not because their importance is not recognized, but because they are perceptively explored elsewhere. The colonial government's policies, so central to the evolution of 'separatist' politics, is more than adequately analysed and documented.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, a number of studies have dealt with

<sup>3</sup> G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A survey of the events leading up to and following the partition of India* (Delhi, 1989), p. vii.

<sup>4</sup> K.A. Abbas, *I Am Not an Island: An Experiment in Autobiography* (Delhi, 1987); A.K. Gupta (ed.), *Myth and Reality: The Struggle for Freedom in India, 1945–7* (Delhi, 1987), especially the contributions of Alok Rai, Tapati Chakravarty and S.S. Hans.

<sup>5</sup> Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims, 1880–1923* (Cambridge, 1974); Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India* (Delhi, 1984); Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi, 1990); Sandria Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (California, 1989).

ideological and social forces which aided 'separatist' politics and reinforced communitarian identities around shared values and symbols.<sup>6</sup> These are discussed in section IV below, to illustrate the different frameworks for the general study of communalism.

This Introduction neither purports to detail the history of Hindu–Muslim strife,<sup>7</sup> though some aspects of inter-community relations are analysed,<sup>8</sup> nor the tortuous course of Congress–League–British negotiations leading to Independence and Partition. The Simla Conference, the Cripps Mission, the Cabinet Mission and the Mountbatten Plan do not figure in the discussion. The emphasis is on the years 1937–40, which are only partially explored in much of the secondary literature. These years are seen as crucial to the legitimization of the Muslim League as a powerful political force and as the spokesman of an aggrieved and beleaguered 'community' which gradually distanced itself from secular nationalism—the rallying cry of the Congress—to create a separate Muslim/Islamic nation-state. Fears and apprehensions generated during these critical years offered Jinnah and the League a constituency which they had not managed to secure for so long. In the months following the resignation of the Congress Ministries they were able to press home the political advantage thus secured.

## I

The decade preceding Partition frequently escapes historical scrutiny. Part of the reason is that the genesis of Pakistan is traced, quite mistakenly, to the activities of Syed Ahmad Khan and his comrades at the M.A.O. College in Aligarh. They are identified as the only vocal group which raised the spectre of Hindu domination, the first to introduce the language and vocabulary of minorityism. They were

<sup>6</sup> Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1971); Robinson; Freitag; S. Gopal (ed.), *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhumi Issue* (Delhi, 1991); K.N. Panikkar (ed.), *Communalism in India: History, Politics and Culture* (Delhi, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> For example, Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905–1947* (Delhi, 1991), and Gyanendra Pandey, 'In Defence of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu–Muslim Riots in India Today', *Economic and Political Weekly*, annual Number, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> I have discussed this aspect in detail in 'Competing Symbols and Shared Codes: Inter-Community Relations in Modern India', in S. Gopal (ed.), *Anatomy of a Confrontation*.

backed by the Muslim 'elites' of Upper India who turned to 'separatist' politics to safeguard their 'interests', which were under threat from British educational policies, bureaucratic reforms and powerful Hindu revivalist campaigns. Muslim government servants and landowners, in particular, whose power was most obviously reduced by the pressure of change in the late nineteenth century, organized the Simla Deputation and founded the Muslim League.<sup>9</sup> Their insistence on separate electorates and reservations, coupled with the concern to defend deeply-cherished religio-cultural symbols, which were being gradually drawn into the public arena and contested by Arya Samajists and Hindu Mahasabhis, was designed to create the space for a distinct Muslim identity in politics. Colonial policies, which began to tilt in favour of the Muslims from the days of Mayo and Dufferin, legitimized such initiatives through an accommodation of sectional interests in the power structures created by legislative enactments in 1909 and thereafter.<sup>10</sup>

This is in some ways a familiar story told in several different ways—the story of the pressure placed on the 'Islamic gentry' by the rise of monied men and the resurgence of Hindu landholding communities;<sup>11</sup> the dreaded fear of elective, representative government and majority rule, vividly described by Syed Ahmad Khan in his 1883 speech of a local self-government bill for the Central provinces;<sup>12</sup> and the grave apprehensions caused by Hindu revivalism and its stridently anti-Muslim posture.<sup>13</sup> These factors, together with the theories and institutions for 'separatism' developed by the religious and political

<sup>9</sup> Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*.

<sup>10</sup> Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885–1930* (Delhi, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 456–7.

<sup>12</sup> For an extract of the speech, C.H. Phillips (ed.), *The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858–1947* (London, 1962), p. 185.

<sup>13</sup> A substantial monograph on Hindu revivalist movements is still awaited, though some of the aspects are adequately covered in: J.R. McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton, 1987) (for an excellent account of the cow-protection movement); Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab* (California, 1976) and J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati: His Life and Ideas* (Delhi, 1978), for the Arya Samaj movement; Robinson, pp. 66–82, for Hindu nationalism, in D.A. Low (ed.), *The Indian National Congress: Centenary Hindsight* (Delhi, 1985). And recently, Gyanendra Pandey, 'Hindus and Others: the Militant Hindu Construction', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 December 1991.

leadership in the last decade of the nineteenth century, point to the heightening of communitarian consciousness. But the process until the Muslim League burst on the political scene in the 1940s was a slow and tardy one. It was impeded by the differentiated structure of the 'community', its regional and local diversities, and by deep-rooted sectarian and doctrinal disputes. It was by no means easy to remove these constraints, without which there was no hope of even nursing the vision of a closely-knit and unified community of Islam. No amount of pious exhortation could bridge the wide gulf separating, say, a Muslim peasant in Mymensingh from a Muslim *taluqdar* in Awadh. Nor could religious leaders from Deoband or Nadwat al-alam, who began to play an important role in public affairs from the early decade of the twentieth century, settle their theological differences with other 'schools'. The Barelwis and the Deobandis had little in common. The Ahmadiyahs and the Ahl-i Hadith had a running battle over this or that doctrinal matter. And the Shias and the Sunnis were estranged, especially in Lucknow, with separate mosques, religious endowments and educational establishments.<sup>14</sup>

Inter-community relations too were not greatly strained until the post-Khilafat and Non-Cooperation days. If anything, the lines of cleavage in north India were more sharply drawn between the Sunnis and the Shias than between Hindus and Muslims.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the initiative towards the creation of a separate Muslim homeland, though spurred by political rumblings from the days of Syed Ahmad Khan, had its own contextual and ideological specificity. It was the outcome of a particular scenario on the eve of and during the Second World War which altered the tenor of political discourse in India and created, much to Jinnah's relief, the space for his manoeuvrings. A beleaguered war-time government, which had in the past refused to deal with Jinnah, now turned to him for political and moral support and, in the process, legitimized his critique of the Congress claim to represent all the communities of India. The inglorious breakdown of cross-community alliances and the accompanying, though expected, collapse of the coalition governments in Punjab and Bengal, which were the last bastions of resistance to the Muslim League,

<sup>14</sup> Mushirul Hasan, 'Sectarianism in Indian Islam: The Shia-Sunni Divide in the United Provinces', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 27, 2, 1990.

<sup>15</sup> The argument is elaborated in my *Nationalism and Communal Politics*, ch. 2.

helped turn Jinnah's dream into a reality.<sup>16</sup> That this would happen on the midnight of 14 August 1947 was unthinkable a decade before that date.

There was, after all, no blueprint of a future Pakistan in the 1930s, no Islamic flag, no visible symbol, no common platform, no shared goals and objectives. Rehmat Ali's scheme, nurtured in Cambridge, was an illustration of obscurantist political eccentricity. It caused much political embarrassment back home and was dismissed as 'chimerical' and 'impracticable.'<sup>17</sup> Mohammad Iqbal's blueprint, outlined three years earlier, did not envisage a *separate* Muslim state. He merely made out a case for provincial autonomy in Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan *within the body-politic of India* (emphasis added) for much the same reason that prompted the Motilal Nehru Committee of August 1928 to recommend the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency and to constitute the North-West Frontier Province into an 'independent' administrative unit.<sup>18</sup> In the same speech, Iqbal, whose vibrant patriotic poems continued to be sung in schools and colleges all over India, referred to autonomous states being formed, obviously not all-Muslim, based on the unity of

<sup>16</sup> It is a comment on fluctuating loyalties that Fazlul Haq, who was so virulent in denouncing the Congress ministries, had this to say after his fallout with Jinnah. He wrote that the Muslim League had roused Muslim passions against the Congress and the Hindus through ceaseless propaganda and 'clever distortion of facts'. Muslims were 'naturally drawn towards the Muslim League as the only organized political body among the Muslims and their only heaven (*sic*) of refuge against Hindu oppression'. British imperialist policy favoured such a development as it 'expected to be able to set off the Muslim League against the political ascendancy of the Congress'. The result 'is that the Muslim League has now got a foothold in the land which is not justified by the extent to which it can truly claim to be representative of Muslim interests'. A.K. Fazlul Haq, *Bengal Today* (Calcutta, Dec. 1944), p. 46.

It is equally significant that Fazlul Haq, the champion of 'Muslim interests', was quite prepared to forego this role and fill the vacancy in the Viceroy's Council created by the death of Sir Akbar Hydari. He wanted the Viceroy to give him a chance 'to serve my king and my country in a position of much greater responsibility than that I have yet occupied in my activities in the provincial sphere'. To Linlithgow, 12 January 1942, Linlithgow Papers (125/124), India Office Library and Records (IOLR), London.

<sup>17</sup> Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1964* (London, 1967), p. 169.

<sup>18</sup> *All Parties Conference, 1928: Report of the Committee Appointed by the Conference to Determine the Principles of the Constitution for India* (Allahabad, 1928).

languages, race, history, religion and identity of common interests. He did so in the context of '*India where we are destined to live*' (emphasis added).<sup>19</sup> This was surely not the swan-song of the Pakistan movement.

If Pakistan was still a pipe-dream, the Muslim League was little more than a paper organization.<sup>20</sup> Having been in the wilderness during the agitation over the Khilafat, its membership had plummeted to 1,330 in 1927. The branch in Bombay, the homeground of Jinnah, could only boast of 71 members.<sup>21</sup> The 1929 session was adjourned for lack of quorum. When Iqbal presented his address in Allahabad

<sup>19</sup> S. Pirzada, (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents 1906-1947* (Karachi, 1970), vol. 2, p. 159.

<sup>20</sup> A comprehensive history of the Muslim League is yet to be written. For the early history of the organization, see the highly readable works of S.R. Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement 1905 to 1910* (Cambridge, 1964); Matiur Rahman, *From Consultation to Confrontation: A Study of the Muslim League in British Indian Politics 1906-1912* (London, 1970); and M. Yusuf Abbasi, *London Muslim League (1908-1928): An Historical Study* (Islamabad, 1988). The works of Mohammad Noman (1942) and Lal Bahadur (1954) were superficially written and are of no intrinsic value to a historian. The post-1937 phase of the Muslim League, following its political eclipse during the Khilafat movement, is covered in a lucid way by K.B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase* (London, 2nd edn, 1948), and by Z.H. Zaidi, 'Aspects of the Development of Muslim League Policy 1937-47', in Phillips and Wainwright (ed.), *The Partition of India*, pp. 245-75. Stanley Wolpert's *Jinnah of Pakistan* (New York, 1984) has a wealth of information on the League. So also Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, 1985). The post-1937 history of the Muslim League in Punjab is explored by Ian Talbot in his monographs and numerous articles. See, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India 1937-1947* (Delhi, 1988).

<sup>21</sup> The membership was 1093 in 1922, 1097 in 1923 and 1184 in 1924. *Annual Report of the All-India Muslim League* (Lucknow, n.d.). Choudhry Khaliqzaman recalled how the League merely lived on paper during the Khilafat days and how afterwards a 'new set of Nawabs' wrested control of the body. They merely attended the annual sessions and received praise from their equally honourable hosts for having undertaken the journey in a first-class compartment at great inconvenience to themselves, and their staying as guests in good, well-decorated buildings with the most delicious dishes to devour and plenty of pans (betels) and cigarettes to chew and smoke'. The proceedings, after the session, were duly sent to the Press, though long before the British officials received from their own inner sources news of every word spoken at the meeting. 'The end of the session was the end of the organization for the year and no one took notice of what had been said except in the critical record of the Government of India'. *Pathway to Partition* (Lahore, 1961), pp. 137-8.

in 1930, the meeting failed to muster the required quorum of 75 members.<sup>22</sup> It was a pathetic sight for an organization that made such tall claims on behalf of the Muslims. The organizers of the 1933 session in Delhi had a busy time filling up the hall with students of the Anglo-Arabic College. The League's income that year was Rs 1,318, with 92 out of the 300 Council members under notice to pay their arrears of membership.<sup>23</sup> A visiting Turkish author commented, in 1935, that no one talked of the League as an arbiter of Muslim destiny.<sup>24</sup>

The League leadership was fragmented, battered and bruised by frequent splits caused by factional feuds. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, credited with having persuaded Jinnah to return to India in 1934, set his eyes on securing the High Commissionership in London.<sup>25</sup> Khaliqzaman was placed uneasily because of his loyalty to the Nehru household in Allahabad and his ambition to carve out his own sphere of influence in UP politics.<sup>26</sup> Nawab Mohammad Yusuf Khan solicited Malcolm Hailey's help in securing a knighthood or a place in the Viceroy's Executive Council. His credentials, in his own words, were: 'I have neither spared money nor energy in creating a mentality among the landholders, the Muslims and other stable elements that their only salvation did lay in throwing their lot with the Government.'<sup>27</sup> The Aga Khan, mellowed after his hectic lobbying at the Round Table Conferences in London, was busy promoting the idea of a Vatican city in the territory of a protected ruler either in India or in the Persian Gulf.<sup>28</sup> And Jinnah, crestfallen after the rebuff he received at the National Convention in December 1928, nursed his

<sup>22</sup> An eyewitness account of the session is cited in Mushirul Hasan, 'Congress Muslims and Indian Nationalism, Dilemma and Decline 1928-34', Jim Mas-selos (ed.), *Struggling and Empire: Indian National Congress 1885-1985* (Delhi, 1987), p. 117, f.n. 22.

<sup>23</sup> Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase*, p. 176.

<sup>24</sup> Halide Edib, *Inside India* (London, 1937), p. 348.

<sup>25</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan to Willingdon, 14 September 1934, Samuel Hoare Papers (4), IOLR.

<sup>26</sup> Harry Haig took special note of the factional struggles in the UP Muslim League and keenly followed the moves of Khaliqzaman, 'an extremely astute and ambitious man'. Haig to Linlithgow, 2 December 1936, Harry Haig Papers, microfilm, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML).

<sup>27</sup> Malcolm Hailey to Melville, 14 April 1934, Hailey Papers (E 220/27B), IOLR.

<sup>28</sup> Hoare to Willingdon, 8 March 1935, Samuel Hoare Papers (4).

political wounds at his Hampstead home.<sup>29</sup> In 1934, the year of his return to India, Hailey commented that Muslims had 'too many third-class leaders. There was no solidarity in the community, more so after the Communal Award which removed the sense of danger and prevents reunion under a strong leadership'.<sup>30</sup>

There were some signs of revival following Jinnah's return to Bombay, some endeavours to refurbish the League's image and rescue it from the political wilderness. Yet, there was no evidence to suggest that the League was beginning to emerge as a political adversary or a force counterpoised against the Congress. When the Raja of Mahmudabad, a close friend of Sarojini Naidu, Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Nehrus, joined the Muslim League in 1936, he believed that the Congress and the League 'were like two parts of the same army fighting a common enemy on two fronts'.<sup>31</sup>

The Raja's belief was grounded in hard facts. The Congress and the League had berated the Act of 1935. Both shared, despite the *perceived* clash of ideologies, a perspective on political and agrarian issues. The League manifesto, minus its rhetoric designed to create a Muslim constituency, reflected a fair measure of agreement with Congress policies: the manifesto showed as much awareness of the people's needs as that of the Congress. In UP the League and the Congress even came to an arrangement in the matter of putting up Muslim candidates for the elections. Jinnah hoped that the Congress and the League, together in partnership, could give new life and inspiration to their followers by demonstrating that even the most intractable problem could be solved through dialogue and understanding.<sup>32</sup> So, when the Congress accepted office in March, 1937, Jinnah talked of a 'united front'. 'There is no difference', he proclaimed on 18 September 1937, 'between the ideals of the Muslim League and of the Congress'.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Jinnah's stay in London from 1930 to 1934 is covered in Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, pp. 119-33.

<sup>30</sup> To the Nawab of Chattari, 15 February 1934, Hailey Papers (27-A), and Haig to Linlithgow, 29 October and 2 December 1936, January 1937, Haig Papers.

<sup>31</sup> Raja of Mahmudabad, 'Some Memories', in Philips and Wainwright (ed.), *The Partition of India*, p. 387.

<sup>32</sup> For details, see Sharif al-Mujahid, 'Jinnah and the Congress Party', in Low (ed.), *The Indian National Congress: Centenary Hindsight*.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Mujahid, pp. 230-1 and Zaidi, 'Aspects of Muslim League Policy', pp. 290-1. Some writers do not, however, share such a view. Notice the observation that in 1936-7 a clash between Congress and the Muslim League, spear-

Jinnah's own political conduct was above reproach. He was liberal, eclectic and secular to the core in private and public life. As a legislator, a role suited to his style and temperament, he generally acted in unison with the Congress. As leader of the League, which was still gasping for breath, he initiated and backed proposals to break the communal impasse. 'If out of 80 million Muslims', he observed on 20 October 1936, 'I can produce a patriotic and liberal-minded nationalist block, who will be able to march hand in hand with the progressive elements in other communities, I will have rendered great service to my community'.<sup>34</sup> What India required, he stated a year later, was a united front. 'And then by whatever name you call your government is a matter of no consequence so long as it is a government of the people, by the people, for the people'.<sup>35</sup> This was not the language of a religious bigot but a reaffirmation of Congress' political creed. That should explain why the Viceroy thought of Jinnah as 'more Congress than the Congress' and why others regarded him as an 'arch enemy' of colonialism and a rallying symbol of secular forces.<sup>36</sup> Nobody expected him to create fissures in the liberation movement or foist the flag of Islam on an area supposedly defined by Iqbal and Rehmat Ali. India's unity was an ideal he still cherished.

In the face of such evidence, it is hard to make sense of Jinnah's subsequent crusade against the Congress and his repudiation of the principles he himself espoused with much eloquence and tenacity for nearly three decades. It is much less easy to explain why, in the mid-1930s, the League was seen in some quarters as a political adversary out on a mission to destroy India's liberation struggle. It was right to expose, as Nehru did, the League's predominantly feudal character, its links with government and with obscurantist and reactionary social classes. But it was equally important to marry this

headed by Nehru and Jinnah, lay in the logic of history'. Bimal Prasad, 'Congress versus the Muslim League 1935-1937', in Richard Sisson and Stanley Wolpert (eds.), *Congress and Indian Nationalism: The Pre-Independence Phase* (California, 1988), p. 309.

<sup>34</sup> *Civil and Military Gazette, March 1936*, quoted in Zaidi, p. 230.

<sup>35</sup> Pirzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan*, vol. 2, p. 267.

<sup>36</sup> See Raja of Mahmudabad, 'Some Memories' in Philips and Wainwright (ed.), *Partition of India*, p. 384, and the impressions of some prominent individuals associated with Jinnah. For example, M.R.A. Baig, *In Different Saddles* (Bombay, 1967) and M.C. Chagla, *Roses in December: An Autobiography* (Bombay, 1977); Kanji Dwarkadas, *India's Fight for Freedom, 1913-1937* (Bombay, 1966) and his *Ten Years to Freedom* (Bombay, 1968).

perspective with the fact that not everybody in the League was cast in the same mould. People like Liaquat Ali Khan, the Raja of Mahmudabad and Khaliqzaman, for whom Nehru had a 'warm corner' in his heart,<sup>37</sup> were constantly 'torn between two loyalties'<sup>38</sup> but not necessarily imbued with an anti-Congress spirit or swayed by the League's communal claptrap.<sup>39</sup>

Was it not possible to draw such estranged comrades back into the Congress fold and assuage their feelings? Nehru would have said 'no' at the time. Rajendra Prasad, on the other hand, thought otherwise. Referring to the large number of 'Congress sympathizers' among the successful Muslim candidates in the 1937 elections who were willing to arrive at some settlement with Abul Kalam Azad, he argued that 'if the proposed agreement between the Independent Muslims and the Congress had materialized, the communal animosity which the Muslim League whipped up later might never have been brought about'.<sup>40</sup>

Rajendra Prasad was reflecting on such events a decade after Independence and Partition. Jinnah was not. He had pleaded with Nehru and with Rajendra Prasad, even at the risk of being rebuffed yet again, that there was no serious difference between the Congress and the League, except that the latter stood for the safeguard of 'Muslim rights'. Nehru concurred. He told Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan of Meerut in November 1937: 'I do not quite know what our

<sup>37</sup> Nehru hoped that Khaliq would some day break from 'the reactionaries who surround him'. To Abdul Wali, 30 March 1937, All India Congress Committee (AICC) Papers (G-5, K.W. i, 1937), NMML.

<sup>38</sup> Khaliqzaman to Nehru, 29 June 1937, AICC Papers (G-61, 1937).

<sup>39</sup> In 1936, Haig was of the view that the 'great majority of UP Muslims' had serious reservations about the Muslim League and were opposed to the policy of 'running a communal party'. That is why they were keen to wrest control of the provincial League, 'so as to render the All India Muslim League nugatory'. To Linlithgow, 21 May 1936, Linlithgow Papers (11/B). Three years later, Haig commented, despite the crucial changes in the political scenario during the intervening years, that, except for the Muslim landlords in UP, all others in the Muslim League were 'in general outlook much nearer the Congress'. 'For these reasons', he pointed out, 'if the right wing in the Congress found it necessary to strengthen themselves in this Province, they might do so by a coalition with the Muslim League rather than with landlords as such'. To Linlithgow, 10 June 1939, Haig Papers. Read in the proper sequence of events, these observations reflect on a powerful strand in UP 'Muslim politics'—a strand overlooked by other political commentators. It has also not figured in the recent historical discourse on partition and 'communalism'.

<sup>40</sup> Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography* (Delhi, 1957), p. 446.

differences are in politics. I had imagined that they were not great'.<sup>41</sup> If this was so it was an error of judgement to treat the League as a counter-force and an adversary. Instead of making clear its own terms of secular and composite nationhood,<sup>42</sup> the Congress leaders, including the secular-minded amongst them, settled for a soft option—one that Jinnah was implicitly hinting at in his March 1940 speech at Lahore.

The Congress truculence over a coalition ministry with the League was, in its historical sequence, a political miscalculation. This is an oft-repeated argument, perhaps a bit worn out. Yet, its validity is yet to be questioned with any degree of conviction. Hence its mention is not out of place in tracing the broad sequence of events.

To carry the story forward, it needs to be stressed that as champion of national unity and as a mediator between rival groups and warring factions, a role performed by the Congress with such adroitness since its inception in 1885, its leaders had two clear-cut options. These were to reach out to the Muslim masses who, in Nehru's reckoning, had rallied round the Congress flag in large numbers, and weaning away that section of the League which was both desperate and dispirited after the party's poor showing in the elections. But nothing of this kind happened. The Muslim Mass Contact Campaign, launched amid much fanfare, petered out thanks to the opposition of the Congress right-wing, which feared an influx of Muslim activists and their critical and unacceptable influence on party policy.<sup>43</sup> The prospect of a Congress-League coalition was, on the other hand, dimmed for reasons which had very little to do with principles, more so because the Congress had not just concluded pacts and agreements with the Muslim League, as in December 1916, but also with other sectional groups such as the Akalis in Punjab.

Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajendra Prasad explained the 'breach

<sup>41</sup> Cited in Zaidi, 'Aspects of Muslim League Policy', p. 256.

<sup>42</sup> The 'terms' were, of course, never made explicitly clear, for they ranged from Gandhi's 'Ram-Rahim' approach to the Malaviya-Lajpat Rai vision of 'Hindu India'. 'Indian' nationalism was so often seen as a manifestation of a more 'genuine' expression—'Hindu' nationalism'. In 1939, K.M. Ashraf, who headed the Muslim Mass Contact Campaign, lamented that 'the Congress position regarding communal organisations and the communal activities of the Congress members has been dangerously vague until now'. To Mohanlal Saxena, 5 September 1939, AICC Papers (Miscellaneous: 30, 1937).

<sup>43</sup> See Mushirul Hasan, 'The Muslim Mass Contacts Campaign: Analysis of a Strategy of Political Mobilization', in Sisson and Wolpert (eds), *Congress and Indian Nationalism*.

of faith' in terms of the unexpectedly large Congress majority secured in the elections, which made all talk of a coalition indefensible. In addition, Nehru referred to the feeling in Congress circles that without the League they would be freer to quarrel with Harry Haig, UP's governor, and break with him on their own terms.<sup>44</sup>

Nehru should have added that the Congress strategy was moulded by two conflicting forces, though each aimed to achieve a common goal—jettisoning all hopes of a Congress-League entente. There was, first of all, the stranglehold of the Hindu Mahasabha and other Hindu militant bodies who were consistent, from the days of the Lucknow Pact, in opposing a Congress-League rapprochement. They acted purposefully and effectively. Still, their effectiveness was, in large measure, due to their Congress patrons who were themselves firmly anchored in the Hindu revivalist traditions and were deeply suspicious of the coming together of the Congress and the League. According to B.S. Moonje, the architect of the Hindu Mahasabha, Vallabhbhai Patel and other right-wing Congressmen constantly urged him to 'stand firm on a variety of points in the interest of Hinduism'.<sup>45</sup> The message, given out in specific context, was loud and clear.

The Congress strategy was guided by the perceptions of Congress Muslims as well. Wary of losing their secure and privileged position in the Congress hierarchy, they opposed, despite Azad's assertion to the contrary,<sup>46</sup> the idea of a coalition government in UP. Their instinct of political survival may have prompted them to do so. K.M. Ashraf, a relatively new arrival on the political stage, disapproved of 'the old methods of coalition, of pacts with Jinnah and others'.<sup>47</sup> The more experienced politician-journalist, Syed Abdullah Brelvi, felt Congressmen should 'wash our hands' of pacts, alliances and negotiations.<sup>48</sup> Noble thought, yes, but quite out of tune with the realities of power politics. More importantly, not quite consistent with Congress' own track record. While it was fair to berate elite forms of com-

<sup>44</sup> Linlithgow to Zetland, 29 March 1940, L/PJ/8/50-B, IOLR; Rajendra Prasad put forth the same reasons in his *Autobiography*, pp. 446-7.

<sup>45</sup> B.S. Moonje, quoted in Linlithgow to Zetland, 17 Sept. 1940, L/PJ/8/507.

<sup>46</sup> A.K. Azad, *India Wins Freedom: The Complete Version* (Delhi, 1988), p. 170. For a different version, S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Volume One: 1889-1947* (Delhi, 1975), p. 222.

<sup>47</sup> To Syed Abdullah Brelvi, 5 May 1937, AICC Papers (G-67/1937).

<sup>48</sup> To K.M. Ashraf, 5 May 1937, *ibid.* Also, Abdul Wali (of Barabanki in UP) to Nehru, 28 March 1937, AICC Papers (G-5, K.W. i, 1937).

promise-hatching, it was hard to justify Nehru's unwarranted rhetoric against the League which overwhelmed people like Ashraf. Besides, how could Congress Muslims advocate a 'principled' posture only in relation to the League when so many of their party stalwarts were unabashedly loyal to the Mahasabha and the RSS creed? This thought weighed heavily on their secular-nationalist conscience. Yet they were unable to articulate it in the way M.A. Ansari had done in his indignant note of protest against Gandhi's decision to launch civil disobedience in 1930.<sup>49</sup> Without bothering to make their own independent assessment, they accepted Nehru's verdict on the Muslim League. They offered no sober judgement, no balanced appraisal.

The ill-advised Congress decision in the summer of 1937 created the space for the revival of the Muslim League and offered Jinnah the chance to establish his hold in UP, a province where his initial overtures were repeatedly spurned. With Khaliqzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan losing face and the National Agriculturist Party in a state of disarray, Jinnah had his first taste of victory in Lucknow. It was his finest hour. Appearing belligerent and impatient with his numerous detractors in the North-West Frontier Province, Punjab, Sind and Bengal, he lost no time in imposing his terms on the recalcitrant elements. A mass contact campaign, launched under the aegis of the League, was his antidote to the Congress-sponsored programme. The person who consistently opposed the mixing of religion with politics and, for that reason, remained on the fringes of Indian politics during the massive pan-Islamic upsurge in the early 1920s, was now prepared to press the *ulama* into service, cultivate two of Deoband's renowned theologians—Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and Ashraf Ali Thanwi—and create fissures in the ranks of the *ulama*. His prized trophy was no doubt the university at Aligarh. What was once a politically benign campus turned into the 'arsenal of Muslim India'. An atmosphere of 'mystic frenzy' prevailed as students and teachers<sup>50</sup> 'poured their idealistic zeal into the emotionalism of Pakistan'. An American student at the university recalled how his fellow students in 1939–40 perceived Pakistan 'as a bright dream, a passionate goal, the vision of

<sup>49</sup> See Mushirul Hasan, *A Nationalist Conscience: M.A. Ansari, the Congress and the Raj* (Delhi, 1989).

<sup>50</sup> Mushirul Hasan, 'Nationalist and Separatist Trends in Aligarh, 1915–1947', in A.K. Gupta (ed.), *Myth and Reality*, pp. 123–6; W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India* (Lahore, 1943), pp. 181–2.

a Muslim paradise on earth'. A great many—though not all—shared their fancy.<sup>51</sup>

Unwittingly, the Congress bolstered Jinnah's claim to be Muslim India's sole spokesman and improved the League's image as a beleaguered organization, a victim of Congress machinations. Rajendra Prasad's view has been referred to earlier. Equally revealing is the observation of UP's governor. Writing to the viceroy on 3 June 1939, he commented that 'Muslim solidarity would soon have been undermined' had the Congress agreed to a coalition with the League. He added:

There are bound to be differences between Muslims on the main agrarian and economic issues. The Muslims in office would have to make themselves responsible for definite policies in regard to these matters; they would have received the support of some Muslims and aroused the opposition of others. Nothing seems to be so effective in disintegrating a party as the taking of office.<sup>52</sup>

Harry Haig was implicitly stating an old axiom of British policy in India, which lay at the heart of the principle of dyarchy detailed in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. The reckless course adopted by the Congress would have been averted had the party learnt from its own experiences with dyarchy. Bringing the League into government may well have given rise to inter-party feuds. At the same time, rejecting its representatives had the effect of creating a far broader unity among the League factions and greatly hardening their stance thereafter.

## II

The coalition issue cast an ugly shadow over the Congress ministry in UP and elsewhere. There was talk of overt manifestations of aggressive Hindu nationalism, of the tyranny of a Hindu brute 'majority' over the Muslim 'minority' and a reiteration of the fear—expressed

<sup>51</sup> Phillips Talbot, 'I am a Pakistani', 28 November 1956, Ian Stephens Papers, Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge. Talbot went to India in 1939 and studied at the Aligarh Muslim University before joining the US Naval Liaison Office at Bombay in 1941. He joined the American Universities Field Staff in 1951.

<sup>52</sup> Draft letter in enclosure: Haig to Linlithgow, 3 June 1939, Haig Papers.

by Syed Ahmad Khan in the 1880s, by the Simla Deputationists of 1906 and by Mohamed Ali at the Round Table Conference in 1930—that a non-Muslim majority would use its powers under democratic institutions to undermine 'Muslim interests' and offend cultural sensitivities and religious susceptibilities.

Complaints ranged from the general to the specific. There were pointed references to Hindu Mahasabhites 'in the garb of Congressites' and to 'Hindu Congress Cabinets' which paid only lip service to nationalism and religious impartiality: 'The elephant tusks are only for display but it uses its real teeth for chewing its food'.<sup>53</sup> Reports from certain districts spoke of the 'arrogance and oppression of Hindu officials' and the coming of 'Hindu raj'.<sup>54</sup> In UP Haig noticed an unduly large number of cases against Muslim police officers being sent to the Anti-Corruption department. He intervened to 'protect Muslim officials from unjust treatment'.<sup>55</sup> In Bombay Roger Lumley was impatient with the arrogance of the Congress leadership in general and with the rank and file in the districts. What, in his view, angered the Muslim leadership were the tales of woe that came up to them from Muslims in villages and towns 'where the local Congress boss has made it apparent that in his eyes Congress Rule meant that he now wielded local power and that he had every intention of making things uncomfortable for the Muslim minority'.<sup>56</sup> Finally, the scale of Hindu-Muslim rioting led Muslim publicists to conclude: 'Never before in India's history did riots take a heavier toll of life and property within such a short space of time than during the two and a half years of Congress administration in some of the Provinces of India'.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *Haqiqat* (Lucknow), *Hamdam* (Lucknow), United Provinces Native Newspaper Reports (UPNNR), week ending 4 September 1939.

<sup>54</sup> *Hamdam*, UPNNR, week ending 18 December 1937.

<sup>55</sup> Haig to Linlithgow, 6 December 1939, L/PJ/8/645.

<sup>56</sup> F.V. Wylie to Linlithgow, 14 December 1939, L/PJ/8/645.

<sup>57</sup> There was a marked deterioration in communal relations, affecting large parts of the north and centre of India. There was rioting in CP on the occasion of Dussehra (October 1937) and at Jabalpur on Holi (March 1938). This was followed by a whole series of riots spreading from the south-west corner of Berar, right across the Jabalpur district in the extreme north-east of CP. In UP there were riots at the Dadri fair in Ballia (20 November 1937), Banaras (15 March 1938), Tanda (25 August 1939), Allahabad (17 March 1938) and at Kanpur (7–15 February 1939). The casualties in the Banaras and Kanpur riots were high. See *It Shall Never Happen Again* (Department of Publicity & Information, All-India Muslim League, Delhi, 1946). This is a collection of articles published in *Dawn*,

There were added grievances, most of which were either localized or specific to a region—for example, the anti-Muslim bias of a welfare officer in the Delhi Cloth Mills or the declining strength of Muslim wholesale foodgrain dealers in Delhi.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, contentious issues of a general nature, such as the form of electorates, representation in services and professions, and the future of Urdu, did not bother Muslims everywhere. What irked them in Meerut was the ill-advised policy of the Food Control authorities which caused hardship to Muslim traders in rice,<sup>59</sup> the punitive police tax in Budaun,<sup>60</sup> and the Congress alliance with textile-owners and the Mazdoor Sabha in Kanpur, an alliance forged to weaken the large Muslim working force.<sup>61</sup> Again, in Kanpur, their prime concern was with the working of the municipal board which fanned the fires of Hindu-Muslim violence and, to add insult to injury, doled out services, contracts and scholarships to its Hindu benefactors.<sup>62</sup> Here and elsewhere Muslims were clearly aggrieved at being left out of the patronage network. Finally, ill-will was sometimes engendered by happenings which could have taken place anywhere and in any other period of history—from offering prayers within the school compound, or Muslim boarders at the Etah Government High School being prevented from cooking beef and being told to participate in games during the holy month of fasting and prayer.<sup>63</sup>

In Bihar and the Central Provinces, the Wardha and Vidya Mandir schemes of education, the singing of the *Bande Mataram* song and the hoisting of the Congress flag were serious issues of communal

with a foreword by Qazi Mohammad Isa, President of the Baluchistan Muslim League. Riots in UP and Bihar are described in Ashiq Husain Butalwi, *Hamari Qaumi Jaddo-Jahed (Our National Struggle): January 1939 se December 1939 Tak* (Lahore, 1968); Maulana Basituqqal Ghori, *Meri Sarguzasht ya Congress ka Raaz* (Unnao, 1938). Publications like *Uriyaan-e Muraqqa* (Budaun, 1939) described the riots in Bareilly and Budaun districts.

<sup>58</sup> All-India Muslim League Papers (hereafter AIML Papers) (12), History of the Freedom Movement Archives, University of Karachi.

<sup>59</sup> The lead in the matter was taken by the district Muslim League in Saharanpur, one of the largest centres of rice industry in UP. Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> L/P&J/8/86.

<sup>61</sup> *Al-Bashir* (Etawah), UPNNR, week ending 4 December 1939.

<sup>62</sup> *Hamari Awaaz*, UPNNR, week ending 20 November 1937; *Sarguzasht and Asia*, UPNNR, week ending 4 December 1937; *Haq*, UPNNR, week ending 11 December 1937.

<sup>63</sup> *Hamdam*, UPNNR, week ending 18 December 1939.

mobilization. Added to these were local grievances: inadequate Muslim representation in certain branches of administration,<sup>64</sup> dissatisfaction with the housing schemes of the Improvement Trust,<sup>65</sup> discrimination in disbursing loans and educational grants, and minor but incredibly trivial issues such as withdrawal of the Jabalpur riot cases of 1938, the arrest of 15 Muslims in the Chandur-Biswa murder case, and the release of a convicted Hindu in the Hoshangabad *paan* (betel) poisoning case.<sup>66</sup> Such incidents, even when unrelated to the policies or actions of the Congress governments, were cited to highlight their 'tyranny'.

The Bombay ministry was held responsible for the discharge of Muslim employees in some Ahmedabad mills. But the fact of the case was that the millowners, some of whom were decidedly not free of communal prejudices and hostility towards the Muslim working force, dismissed 7,000 to 10,000 Muslim workers so as to avoid the risk of having communal trouble inside the mills.<sup>67</sup> They did so despite loud protests from the ministry. Likewise, the UP administration was placed in the dock for fomenting Hindu-Muslim riots in, say, Kanpur or Marehra, a small town in Etah district. As for Kanpur, aggressive action by a rowdy Muslim crowd started the chain of events leading to a bloody feud. In Marehra, as listed in Dr Ziauddin's memorandum against the Congress administration, ill-feeling was caused through a Congress flagpole having been bent by a *tazia* procession, perhaps accidentally. This led to brick throwing on the *tazia* procession. And then all hell broke loose. An enraged mob went on the rampage. Several Hindus were killed, their shops looted, and a temple desecrated. Whatever the provocation, the Muslims were undoubtedly the aggressors.<sup>68</sup>

This is not all. So many of the grievances catalogued in the Pirpur and Shareef Reports and in Ziauddin's tale of woes were of a long-standing nature and were by no means specific to the years of Congress rule. For example, riots occurred from 1893 onwards, though their frequency and intensity increased only in the aftermath of the Khilafat movement. Nor was there any novelty in issues connected with the

<sup>64</sup> F.V. Wylie to Linlithgow, 24 December 1939, L/P&J/8/645; Syed Iftikhar Ali, *Working of the C.P. Congress Ministry* (Nagpur, n.d).

<sup>65</sup> Hallet to Brabourne, 6 September 1938, Linlithgow Papers (126/1010).

<sup>66</sup> Wylie to Linlithgow, 2 December 1939, L/P&J/8/645.

<sup>67</sup> Roger Lumley to Linlithgow, 23 Jan. 1940, L/P&J/8/686.

<sup>68</sup> Haig to Linlithgow, 10 May 1939, Haig Papers.

representation and form of electorates. These were advanced time and time again in Punjab, UP and Bengal, and were contested with equal vehemence. Notice the hue and cry following the Lucknow Pact, or the indictment of the Swarajist party in Bengal, the relentless crusade against Fazl-i Husain's ministry in Punjab, and the denunciation of the Nehru Committee Report by the Ali Brothers and their newly-found allies in the so-called 'All-India' Muslim Conference.<sup>69</sup>

In the mid-1930s, however, many of the old fears gained an altogether new kind of intensity because of a significant, though less visible, shift in the structural situation. What lent a sharp edge to the debate then was how power and authority, which flowed directly out of the Act of 1935, was going to heighten competition and enlarge arenas of conflict, and how social classes and communities, whose interests were delicately safeguarded by the colonial authority in the constitutional arrangement embodied in the Act of 1935, were pitted against each other in an uneasy and sometimes antagonistic relationship. Increasingly, local bodies were embroiled in this unlovely struggle. In areas like UP, where the number of municipalities had increased steadily along with the representation of non-official Indians, there were unmistakable signs of a bitter contest to command resources in order to reinforce patronage networks. Thus a report on municipal administration for the year 1937-8 noted:

The year's working was disfigured by the same unhealthy party action and intrigue, the same interminable wrangles about motions of no confidence, the same jobbery and injustice in connexion with appointments, the same reckless irresponsibility in the financial sphere.<sup>70</sup>

The same report pointed to how 'communal dissensions in many places exerted a sinister influence on account of appointments, transfers and postings'. A year later the administration of over 30 municipalities was tarnished by communal dissensions, party strife, and intrigue. Boards of Farrukhabad, Fatehpur, Soron, Mainpuri, Mussoorie, Barant, Chandausi and Moradabad were the worst offenders.<sup>71</sup>

At the same time, such dissensions were not always between Hindus and Muslims *per se*. Haig commented on how the 'general political criticisms are the stock in trade of opposition, voiced by

<sup>69</sup> See Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics*, ch. 5.

<sup>70</sup> *Report on the Municipal Administration and Finances in the UP of the Year 1937-38* (Allahabad, 1940), p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 1938-9, p. 9.

non-Congress Hindus just as much as by Muslims'. Thus vocal Muslim groups of his province indicted the G.B. Pant cabinet only for the reason that they did not have the same degree of pull and influence enjoyed by the supporters of the ministry. In essence, therefore, their grievance was not a religious one, though it assumed an intensely communal form.<sup>72</sup>

The conduct of some Muslim zamindars illustrates how class issues could so easily degenerate into religious squabbles, how particularistic concerns were so conveniently drawn into the public arena and identified with the fortunes of an entire 'community'. Both the taluqdars of Awadh and the zamindars of eastern and western UP raised the bogey of Islam to denounce the Congress agrarian programme, including the UP Tenancy Bill, even though they knew full well that the party in power was committed to land reforms well before the ministry was formed, and that the Bill, piloted by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, was directed against an exploiting class and not specially against the Muslim zamindars. Muslim landlords were a target of attack not *qua* Muslims but *qua* opponents of the Congress and its land reforms.<sup>73</sup>

Similarly, when the Bombay ministry levied property tax to pay for prohibition on *all* urban property owners in the city, it was held by Muslims to be designed as an anti-Islamic measure on the grounds that they invested savings in property rather than in stocks and shares and that they possessed a large number of religious endowments. In reality, however, the main grouse was against Brabourne, Governor of Bombay, who had not insisted on a Muslim League minister being included in the cabinet. From that moment, the League publicists put the worst possible construction on everything the ministry did.<sup>74</sup>

What about the perception of those Muslims who regarded the ministry, say in UP, as a 'Hindu' administration, the ministers as 'renegades' and the Congress as a 'Hindu' party? It is true that the Congress record was not without blemish. The Wardha and Vidya Mandir schemes of education were ill-conceived.<sup>75</sup> The neglect of Urdu in UP and Bihar, notwithstanding the pro-Urdu sentiments of

<sup>72</sup> To Linlithgow, 10 May 1939, Haig Papers.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Lumley to Linlithgow, 14 December 1939, Linlithgow Papers (107).

<sup>75</sup> Ashraf to Syed Mahmud, 14 June 1938 and Ashraf to Abul Kalam Azad, 3 September 1938, AICC Papers (Misc: 30/1937).

Gandhi and Nehru, was deliberate.<sup>76</sup> So was the systematic exclusion of Muslims from district and provincial Congress committees. The presence of Hindu militants in the ranks of the Congress was not unusual, but their overbearing attitude was a major irritant, a source of considerable discord. Ramgopal Gupta, secretary of the district Congress committee in Mahoba, Hamipur, reported:

The other day the Education Committee of the District Board elected a Hindu Chairman as a result of coalition among the Hindu members on the cry of danger to Hinduism. The defeat of the Muslim candidate through Hindu communalism has angered the Muslim public who cannot distinguish between a Mahasabhite Hindu and a Congressite Hindu.<sup>77</sup>

There were other irritants as well. Ashraf highlighted some of them in his correspondence with Congress office-bearers. In July 1938 he pointed out how the Congress had ignored 'the Muslim sentiment in matters of detail and permitted a number of things to happen which gave the [Congress] annual session a distinctly Hindu appearance'. The Muslim League papers emphasized that there were no Urdu posters or Urdu signposts to guide the delegates, no gates and arches named after Muslim leaders, and finally, that propaganda for cow-protection and Hindi was carried on in the Congress Nagar. Ashraf

<sup>76</sup> Aftab Ahmad (from Calcutta) to Abul Kalam Azad, n.d, *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Ramgopal Gupta to Ashraf, 3 July 1937, AICC Papers (38/1938). Such unholy alliances were quite common. This meant that it was becoming increasingly difficult for Muslim Congressmen to secure a position in the Congress hierarchy at the provincial and district levels. Cases from Nagpur, the stronghold of the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha, were reported by Manzar Rizvi to the Secretary, Nagpur PCC, 24 June 1938, *ibid.* K.M. Ashraf was greatly upset with the outcome of a by-election in a Muslim constituency in Amritsar. The Congress candidate was defeated owing to an alliance between the party bosses and the Hindu Mahasabha. 'I could go on multiplying instances', wrote Ashraf, 'to prove that the Congress machinery is fast disintegrating and our provincial and district Congress committees are more or less confident that no direction will come from the Centre and in any case they will be left free to do what they please in a given situation'. To Narsinh, 4 June 1938, *ibid.* Fida Husain Sherwani, cousin of the Congress stalwart, T.A.K. Sherwani, commenting on the lack of preparedness on the eve of the election, shared his anguish with Nehru: 'I have all the time been feeling that my enthusiasm for the Congress is second to none including yourself and Mahatma Gandhi but this heartless neglect of us by the so-called socialist party in power has made me believe for the last three days that a Mussalman has no place in the Congress and that a good and true Mussalman like myself has no alternative but to commit suicide'. To Nehru, 30 June 1937, AICC Papers (G-61/1937).

regarded these as 'trifles' but grudgingly conceded the need to allay such apprehensions and to make the right gestures. 'Considering its psychological effect on the Muslim visitors', he observed, 'and particularly in view of the fact that a number of Muslim papers have made it a point to exaggerate to a willing audience, we must take every precaution that the Congress session in Mahakoshal meets all possible susceptibilities.'<sup>78</sup>

In the light of the League's charges, it is an awesome task to prepare a balance sheet of the ministries' performance. Yet it is worth the effort so as to place the League's Congress-baiting in perspective and uncover the motives behind such a well-orchestrated campaign.

It is an undeniable fact, often ignored in secondary literature, that the Congress and its allied partners embarked upon an ambitious programme of legislation especially to protect the interests of the cultivating class.<sup>79</sup> In the North-West Frontier Province, *naubat chauhkidari* was done away with. The Agricultural Debtors' Relief Act limited the rate of interest realized by moneylenders and cancelled interest due to creditors on 1 October 1937.<sup>80</sup> In UP, the Tenancy Bill was a significant piece of legislation and a forerunner of the abolition of zamindari in 1952. In CP and Berar, the Relief of Indebtedness Act, the CP Revision of Land Revenue of Estates Act, and the CP Tenancy (Amendment) Act were examples of radical legislation. The governor of the Province admitted that 'there was much of value in

<sup>78</sup> Ashraf to the Secretary, Reception Committee, Mahakoshal session, Jabalpur, 25 July 1938, AICC Papers (Misc: 30/1937).

<sup>79</sup> This is not to deny the inadequacy of some legislative enactments or implementation. Many of the Congress supporters were, in general, quite dissatisfied with the performance of the ministries in certain spheres and there was widespread criticism from public platforms and in newspaper articles. There are many reasons why this was so. But at least in the case of one UP minister, Sampurnanand, the predicament was succinctly expressed. 'We have to work', he wrote in *Congress Socialist*, 'within the four walls of the Government of India Act, against which we revolt with every fibre of our being. It is not easy. We feel like kicking over the traces. Believe me, not one of the ministers I know does not, immersed in his files, pine for the old days. We live in an atmosphere of unreality. There are many of us who would like to get out of it. But there we are. To my knowledge, there is no historical parallel to the circumstances in which we accepted office. A people struggling for national independence, meaning to continue to fight for it, stop half-way to accept administrative responsibility! This is a contradiction in our position which creates difficulties'. Quoted in J.C. Donaldson to Puckle, 16 September 1938, Linlithgow Papers (101).

<sup>80</sup> George Cunningham to Linlithgow, 19 November 1941, *ibid.* (109).

the Congress programme and undoubtedly the Congress as a body was striving towards the objective of a better India'.<sup>81</sup> In Orissa serious efforts were made to place the tenant in a position of independence, free him from his contract with the landlord, and provide credit and relief from debt.<sup>82</sup> And finally, in Bombay the governor recognized the importance of the Agricultural Debtor's Relief Act—the 'most important legacy left by the legislatures'. His general impression was that the ministry was 'inspired by a real ideal of service to the public' and that its performance 'was certainly not bad. And when one takes into account the strange circumstance of . . . the fact that the Ministers, and most legislators, had practically no previous experience of their tasks . . . it was remarkably good and held out promise for the future'.<sup>83</sup>

UP's governor believed—and there is little reason to doubt his opinion—that the provincial ministry had performed admirably in communal matters and that some of its policies, such as the Rural Development Scheme, benefited the Muslims.<sup>84</sup> They fared well in public services, occupying 39.6 per cent of the posts in the Provincial Executive Service, 25 per cent in the Judicial Service and 24.4 per cent of Class I positions in the UP Agricultural Service (Table 1). Not surprisingly, there was hardly a case where the governor used his special powers to protect the 'beleaguered' Muslims. The story was no different in CP, Bihar and Bombay. The CP Muslims 'have hitherto suffered little, if any, serious injustice at the hands of the Congress Ministry'. The governors of Bihar and Bombay sent out similar reports.<sup>85</sup> They took note of the fact that ministers here and elsewhere were susceptible to criticisms and were usually anxious to err on the

<sup>81</sup> Henry Twynam to Linlithgow, 10 March 1941, *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Hawthorne to Linlithgow, 6 January 1942, *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Roger Lumley to Linlithgow, 11 April 1942, *ibid.* See Rani Dhavan Shankardass, *The First Congress Raj* (Delhi, 1982), for an assessment of the Bombay ministry.

<sup>84</sup> In Sitapur, for example, the Rural Development movement was of help to Muslim weavers as well as the Hindu cultivators. Besides, out of the 789 rural development organizers 20 per cent were Muslims recruited from rural areas. This was by no means a low percentage considering that the Muslim population in UP was largely concentrated in the towns. Haig to Linlithgow, 10 May 1939, Harry Haig Papers; Hallet to Linlithgow, 1 January 1940, Linlithgow Papers (125/103).

<sup>85</sup> Wylie to Linlithgow, 18 April 1939, Hallet to Linlithgow, 8 May 1939, LP&J/8/686. See also *The Central Provinces and Berar Government at Work* (Nagpur, 1939).

side of generosity wherever 'Muslim interests' were affected. The Bombay Ministry withdrew the textbooks prescribed by the Jamia Millia Islamia and its Vice-Chancellor Zakir Husain. It also refused to ban cow-slaughter. The CP government allowed Muslim donors to finance Urdu schools for Muslim boys on lines similar to those of Vidya Mandirs and agreed to extend official support to such schools (*Bait al-Islam*).<sup>86</sup>

TABLE 1

## HINDU AND MUSLIM REPRESENTATION IN UP PUBLIC SERVICES

Services	Hindus		Muslims	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<i>Civil</i>				
Executive Service	175	52.5	132	39.6
Tahsildars	106	54.99	84	43.6
Naib Tahsildars	117	55.9	87	44.1
<i>Agricultural Service</i>				
Class I	9	64.2	3	24.4
Class II	32	76.0	5	12.0
Subordinate	401	73.3	137	25.0
<i>Police</i>				
DSP	28	56.0	14	28.0
Inspectors	105	46.4	68	30.0
Sub-Inspectors	1029	54.2	832	43.8
Head Constables	898	35.2	1638	64.4
Naiks	884	51.5	883	47.9
Constables	14,063	53.00	12,289	46.4
<i>Educational Service</i>				
Class I	11	73.3	4	26.7
Class II	78	73.6	14	13.2
Subordinate Service:				
Teaching branch	1062	69.0	372	24.2

<sup>86</sup> Wylie to Linlithgow, 24 December 1939, L/P&J/8/645.

Services	Hindus		Muslims	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Inspecting branch	169	64.0	85	32.2
Judicial Service	159	72.0	55	25.0
<i>Medical Service</i>				
Civil Surgeons	25	83.3	4	13.3
Medical Officers	78	75.0	21	20.1
Assistants	271	80.4	61	18.1
<i>Service of Engineers</i>				
Class I	3	60.00	1	20.0
Class II	21	72.4	3	10.4
Subordinate	104	91.0	8	7.0
<i>Income Tax Department</i>				
Class I and II	24	61.5	12	30.7
<i>Forest Service</i>				
Rangers	12	57.0	4	19.0
Deputy-Rangers	87	80.5	20	18.5
Deputy-Rangers	175	74.4	59	25.1
<i>Co-operative Societies</i>				
Gazetted Officers	5	62.5	3	37.5
Subordinate	120	77.0	36	22.9

NOTE: Grants made to Muslim institutions by the Education Department (excluding grants made by local boards) for 1938-9 amounted to Rs 3,83,201. This included a special grant Rs 48,396 made out to the Arabic *madrasas*

SOURCE: Address by G.B. Pant to members of the UP Press Consultative Committee, 11 January 1939, L/P&J/8/686, India Office Library & Records (ILOR)

In the end, however, we have to reckon with the fact that Muslim grievances existed, and that it was exceedingly difficult to dissipate these by any process of reasoning. After two and a half years of Congress rule, Muslims were profoundly embittered by instances (very difficult for the most part to prove, but nevertheless symptomatic of the atmosphere that prevailed) of the continued oppression of Muslim minorities in the Congress provinces. Side by side was the

growing realization of the importance, from their point of view, of the Congress claim to be the sole mouthpiece of Indian opinion and the sole party to negotiate with the Raj, and an anxiety to secure their own position before their bargaining capacity with Pax Britannica deteriorated further. The result was, of course, seen in the consolidation of the Muslim League, the crystallization of Muslim demands, and the pitching of those demands on a very much higher level. The demands were that future constitutional arrangements should be made not on the basis of population but on the basis of communities, that the Muslims be treated on complete equality with the Hindus, and that no constitutional change be made without the consent and approval of the two communities. In basing demands on communities rather than parties, the Muslim League hoped to take advantage of the fact that the Hindu Mahasabha contested the Congress claims, while the Scheduled Castes still demanded to be treated separately. This was the first tangible step towards delineating the contours of the Pakistan demand. It was very much the outcome of the Congress ministries. The League's success was in making this perception look *real*.

### III

Jinnah raised the war cry at Lahore, the city with a glorious history of cultural synthesis and integration. The mild, moderate statesman, tutored in the liberal traditions of Dadabhai Naorji, spoke angrily and defiantly, sending out alarm signals all around. Much to the consternation of the Congress Muslims, including Abul Kalam Azad who had only just set out the political agenda for his co-religionists at Ramgarh, Jinnah talked of 'two nations', of Muslims having 'their homelands, their territory and their state'. Refuting the theory of a plural, composite nationhood, which was advocated with such tenacity by Ajmal Khan, Ansari and Azad, Jinnah argued that it was a 'dream' for Hindus and Muslims to evolve a common nationality. They belonged to 'two different civilizations which are based on conflicting ideas and competition'. To yoke together two such 'nations' under a single State 'would lead to growing discontent, and the final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a State'.

\* These were ominous remarks; yet they did not lower the final curtain on the prospect for a united India. The crusade against 'Hindu

India' had been launched amid cries of 'Allah-o-Akbar', but the syntax and import of the phrases used in the 'Pakistan Resolution' were obscure. The silver lining was that Jinnah had, albeit consciously, refused to define his 'nation' and had thereby left his 'scheme' open to diverse interpretations. The viceroy regarded it as 'very largely in the nature of a bargaining. . . . 'Half the strength of his [Jinnah's] position is that he has refused to define it and I am quite certain that he would refuse to define it now if asked to. . . .'<sup>87</sup> E. J. Benthall, president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and an astute political observer, commented in March 1940 that Jinnah did not want to be dragged into the details of the Pakistan 'scheme' in order to avoid being tangled up in interminable discussions, possibly to the disadvantage of his own case. After an hour-long conversation, Jinnah consistently refused to be pinned down to future constitutional proposals. 'His main interest was to keep Congress out while he builds up power and influence'.<sup>88</sup> Resignation of the Congress ministries, combined with the domestic and global compulsions of the British government during the World War, enabled the future Quaid to play his 'Pakistan' card to outmanoeuvre his opponents and detractors. Having been rebuffed and rejected by the Congress leadership for well over a decade, he had at long last earned, so to speak, his moral right and established his political claim to be heard as the chief, if not the sole, spokesman of 'Muslim India'.

Yet, initial reactions to the 'Pakistan Resolution' may not have brought much comfort to the League diehards. Sikander Hyat Khan, averse to Jinnah's intrusion into his political territory, was 'disturbed' as the resolution drafted by him at Lahore provided for definite links with the Centre so as to preserve India's national unity.<sup>89</sup> Muslim

<sup>87</sup> Linlithgow to Amery, 2 May 1943, L/P7J/8/512 (part 2).

<sup>88</sup> E.J. Benthall Papers, file nos. 12 & 19, Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge.

<sup>89</sup> Malcolm Darling to Linlithgow, 25 April 1940, L/P&J/8/506 (part B). Also, the anguish of Khizar Hyat Khan who felt that Pakistan, deeply tinged as it was with religious prejudice, was getting at a point at which it could not be resisted. He wanted the British government to define 'Pakistan' and to reject the idea if found unreasonable. But Linlithgow did not agree. The government's response, in his view, would convey to the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha the mistaken impression of its bias in favour of either position. He told the secretary of state for India: 'I fear Khizar and his friends will have trouble with the Muslim League, and Khizar may be . . . much less qualified to deal with it than Sikander'. Linlithgow to Amery, 2/4 May 1943, L/P&J/8/512 (part 2).

leaders elsewhere were dismayed. In Bombay, they saw little in Jinnah's scheme to bolster their self-confidence: 'the best that any Muslim has said . . . is that Jinnah is using it [Pakistan] as a bargaining weapon',<sup>90</sup> an impression not easy to dispel in other quarters as well. As late as the spring of 1946 when Mirza Ismail, the knighted Dewan of Mysore, was asked if Jinnah was serious about Pakistan, he said: 'no, it was a move in the political game'.<sup>91</sup> In UP, too, the Pakistan idea was long held to be a bargaining move, 'a counter demand to that of the Congress'.<sup>92</sup> People like the Nawab of Chattari, architect of the UP National Agriculturist Party, were unsure how the Lahore resolution would protect Muslims in 'Hindu-majority provinces'.<sup>93</sup> Muslims in such areas were decidedly 'unhappy' at the prospect of Partition.<sup>94</sup> Their fears were confirmed in August 1947 when Jinnah's Pakistan simply provided a homeland for those living in majority areas but not elsewhere.<sup>95</sup>

There were still others—the socialists, the Congress Muslims of Azad's generation, the *ulama* in the Jamiyat al-*ulama*, the Ahrars, the Shias, the Khudai Khidmatgars and the Momins—who repudiated, though not always for the same reasons, the two-nation theory and

<sup>90</sup> Governor of Bombay to Linlithgow, 30 March 1940, *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> 'Punjab Memories 1910–1941' (typescript, 1971), James Penney Papers, Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge.

<sup>92</sup> Enclosure 2 in: Governor of UP to Governor-General (Telegram), 31 March 1940, Linlithgow Papers (125/108). The Viceroy referred to the 'uncertainty of the Muslims and the leaders as to where they stand and what policy they are to pursue'. Linlithgow to Haig, 17 April 1939, Linlithgow Papers (125/102).

<sup>93</sup> To Jinnah, n.d. (probably written in early January 1940), L/P&J/8/507. The role of the Nawab of Chattari illustrates how personal or class interests rather than ideology dictated political preferences. In August 1934 he was averse to the Muslim League and suggested the revival of the defunct All-India Muslim Conference. In April 1936 he broke away from the Muslim League Parliamentary Board to revive a 'mixed Party in preference to a Muslim communal organisation'. But his subsequent experiences compelled him to re-think his position *vis-a-vis* the National Agriculturist Party and the Muslim League. Chhatari to Linlithgow, 4 August 1936, Linlithgow Papers (125/11B); Chattari to Hailey, 28 Oct. 1936, Hailey Papers (220/28C).

<sup>94</sup> Linlithgow to Amery, 6 April 1940, L/P&J/B/506 (B).

<sup>95</sup> In an anonymous letter to *Dawn* dated 19 January 1948, a correspondent who styled himself 'A Musulman' enquired from the newspaper's readers whether or not refugees from India such as himself had been cleverly duped by the creation of Pakistan: the country was surely meant not for them but rather for the people of Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and Bengal alone. Quoted in Sarah Ansari, *Modern Asian Studies*, 24, 4, 1990, p. 819.

doggedly adhered to their vision of a united India.<sup>96</sup> The All-India Ahrar Conferences, held in 1943 and 1945 and attended by Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari and Mazhar Ali Azhar, denounced Jinnah's plan to divide the country. The Momin Conference, convened in September 1945 by its charismatic leader, Abdul Qayyum Ansari, took a similar stand. The slogan of Pakistan, stated Ansari, was 'invented' by well-to-do Muslims to grind down their impoverished co-religionists. The nationalist concerns of the Jamiyat al-*ulama*, which had already declared complete independence as its goal in 1939,<sup>97</sup> was reflected in the activities of learned and distinguished men like Maulanas Husain Ahmad Madani, Ahmad Said, and Kifayatullah. While remaining true to their faith, they made large sacrifices for India's independence and unity. They were insulted, rebuffed and violently attacked,<sup>98</sup> but refused to capitulate to the forces of political reaction and religious fanaticism. Their role must not be written off or relegated to a historian's footnote. In the evolution of a composite, nationalist ideology, which no doubt suffered a jolt during the dark days of 1947–8, the turbaned men with flowing gowns had as much role to play as their counterparts among the western-educated intelligentsia.

Finally, some of Jinnah's own close associates, who were unable to tear themselves apart from their social milieu and cultural moor-

<sup>96</sup> The Haripura session of the Congress in February 1938 took special note of the growth in anti-imperialist feelings among the Muslims. In November 1939, Nehru listed a large number of Muslim organizations which had rallied round the Congress. 'So you will see', he informed Krishna Menon, 'that it is quite absurd to talk of the Congress facing the Muslims. I am quite sure that as matters develop, large numbers of Muslims will be with us'. Report of the Indian National Congress, Haripura, February 1938, p. 7; Nehru to Krishna Menon, 8 Nov. 1939, S. Gopal (ed.), *Selected Letters of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Delhi, 1977), vol. 10, pp. 230–2.

<sup>97</sup> Statement of the Working Committee of the Jamiyat al-*ulama*. Home Deptt. (Political), file no. 37/1939, National Archives of India (NAI).

<sup>98</sup> The Muslim League rowdies insulted and, in some cases, physically assaulted leaders of the Jamiyat al-*ulama* and the Central Muslim Parliamentary Board. Abul Kalam Azad was ill-treated in Delhi and Aligarh. His friend, Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi, editor of *Hind*, was attacked in Calcutta. Maulanas Mohammad Quddus and Mohammad Ismail escaped a murderous assault in Gaya. And in Saidpur (Bengal), the police and a handful of volunteers prevented Husain Ahmad Madani, president of the Jamiyat, from being lynched by an angry mob. See, *Shaikh al-Islam Hazrat Maulana Syed Husain Madani par Leagueon ka Sharmnaak Hamla* (Bijnor, 1945).

ings, quibbled and hesitated. That is why Ismail Khan and the Nawab of Chhatari, friends of the Nehrus, decided to stay put in India. People like Khaliqzaman and the Raja of Mahmudabad, brought up in the liberal and composite ethos of Lucknow and Allahabad, were caught in a dilemma. For long they dithered. But when the reality, so to speak, dawned on them, they journeyed to Pakistan with a sense of unease and remorse. Like so many in their generation, they were pained to bid adieu to the symbols of their faith—the great Imambaras of Lucknow and Matiya Burj, the sacred shrines at Ajmer and Delhi, and the *dargahs* at Bansa, Rudauli, Kakori and Dewa Sharif in Awadh. They were no less agonized to snap their ties with Lucknow and Delhi, the cities of Mir Anis and Ghalib, or the *qasbahs* in Awadh which served as centres of cultural and intellectual life. Perhaps, on their arrival in the land designated 'Pakistan', they echoed the sentiment of the nineteenth-century Urdu poet, Mir Taqi Mir:

Why do you mock at me and ask yourselves  
Where in the world I come from, easterners?  
There was a city, famed throughout the world,  
Where dwelt the chosen spirits of the age:  
Delhi its name, fairest among the fair.  
Fate looted it and laid it desolate,  
And to that ravaged city I belong.<sup>99</sup>

There were memories on both sides of the fence, memories of living side by side for generations with a shared heritage, memories of friends and of long-standing associations. The birth of Pakistan severed cultural ties and fragmented an intellectual tradition which was neither 'Hindu' nor 'Muslim' but, in its essence, Hindustani. Qurat-ul-ayan Hyder's Urdu novel *Mere Bhi Sanamkhane* ('My Temples Too'), published in 1947, was able to capture the anguish of a group in Lucknow whose dream of a united India was shattered by the grim and tragic happenings in 1946–7. What was there for them to celebrate at the fateful midnight hour or at the dawn of independence. In the words of Faiz Ahmad Faiz:

This is not that long-looked-for break of day  
Not that clear dawn in quest of which those comrades  
Set out, believing that in heaven's wide void  
Somewhere must be the star's last halting place,

<sup>99</sup> Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Three Mughal Poets: Mir, Sauda, Mir Hasan* (London, 1969), p. 260.

Somewhere the verge of night's slow-washing tide,  
Somewhere an anchorage for the ship of heartache.<sup>100</sup>

Which country did an author like Saadat Hasan Manto belong to? India or Pakistan? When he sat down to write he tried in vain to 'separate India from Pakistan and Pakistan from India'. He would repeatedly ask himself: 'to whom will now belong what had been written in undivided India? Will that be partitioned too?'<sup>101</sup> Other Urdu writers and poets, including Josh Malihabadi, Krishen Chander, Khadeeja Mastoor, Khalilur Rahman Azmi, Rajinder Singh Bedi and Ram Lal shared and described their agony and experiences in their own inimitable styles. Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, a key figure in the Progressive Writer's movement, bemoaned the 'death' of one's country. 'Who killed India?' he asked indignantly: '... that an imperialist power planned the dismemberment of our country is not surprising. The wonder and the tragedy is that India should have been killed by the children of India'.<sup>102</sup>

#### IV

So, why did a 'Pakistan' come about which served the interests of most Muslims so poorly? Why did the ill-defined and vague concept of 'Pakistan' sway the masses in such large numbers? What enabled Jinnah to create and popularize the symbol of a separate Muslim nation? Why did the Congress, having championed national unity with such gusto, capitulate without offering much resistance to the two-nation theory? Was it a case of 'betrayal', as Azad pointed out retrospectively, or an implied recognition of the failure of secular nationalism? Or should we search for clues in two of Nehru's statements?—one made in April 1940 when he told Malcolm Darling that he would accept Pakistan rather than not have freedom,<sup>103</sup> and the other in 1960 when he confessed to Leonard Mosley: 'The truth is that we were tired men and we were getting on in years . . . the plan for partition offered a way out and we took it. . .'.<sup>104</sup> Or, perhaps, in a highly

<sup>100</sup> V.G. Kiernan (ed.), *Poems by Faiz* (London, 1971), p. 123.

<sup>101</sup> Khalid Husain, *Scoreboard* (Lahore, 1984), p. 37.

<sup>102</sup> Abbas, *I Am Not an Island*, p. 280.

<sup>103</sup> Darling to Linlithgow, 25 April 1940, L/P&J/8506 (B).

<sup>104</sup> Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj* (London, 1961), p. 77.

suggestive post-facto justification of Congress acquiescence to the country's vivisection: in an appeal to the Indian electorate on the eve of the first general election in 1952 it was stated:

The price of freedom was Partition. The Congress and its leaders resisted the idea of Partition till the last moment and they yielded only when they realized that the alternative was indefinite perpetuation of foreign rule or civil war or both. The short experiment of coalition government with the Muslim League in 1946-7 demonstrated that no real co-operation was possible between the secular nationalism of the Congress and the narrow communalism and the two-nation theory of the Muslim League. *A strong and stable Central Government could be established by peaceful means only through Partition. . . . It should not be forgotten that without Partition there might have been no transfer of power at all, or the whole of India might have been involved in a civil war the consequences of which would have been infinitely more tragic than the sad events of the latter half of 1947.*<sup>105</sup> (emphasis added)

Some of the questions listed above, as indeed the clues offered by the election appeal of 1953, have been tackled from a wide range of perspectives. There are, first, the proponents of the two-nation theory, who see 'Muslim nationalism' as linked with the demand of a 'nationality' apprehensive of its future in a 'Hindu-dominated' federal structure, and who regard 'secular nationalism' as out of place in a society where the 'divisive forces have proved much more dynamic than the cohesive ones'.<sup>106</sup> Hindu-Muslim antagonism was thus 'embedded in the historical logic of India'.<sup>107</sup> Farzana Shaikh has pitched the debate at a more sophisticated level by arguing that the evolution of 'Muslim politics', and ultimately the call to Partition, were driven by a long history of ideas that saw the Muslims as an exclusive political entity separate from others, an 'awareness of the ideal of Muslim

<sup>105</sup> *Vote Congress—Congress and the Welfare State* (Published by the Central Publicity Board, New Delhi, n.d.).

<sup>106</sup> Aziz Ahmed, *Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), p. 74.

<sup>107</sup> This view is consistently reflected in the works of Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi who, after his *hijrat* from the University of Delhi to Karachi, turned into the chief ideologue of the two-nation theory. He is still remembered by his alma mater, where his former students have instituted a memorial lecture at St. Stephen's College. Qureshi's work, in general, has influenced the tenor of historiography in Pakistan. There are, of course, some more sophisticated versions, most notably by scholars based in western academic institutions. Prominent amongst them are Aziz Ahmad, Khalid bin Sayeed and Hafeez Malik. The late Aziz Ahmad was an outstanding scholar who did pioneering work in the history of Islam in India.

brotherhood, a belief in the superiority of Muslim culture, and a recognition of the belief that Muslims ought to live under Muslim governments'.<sup>108</sup>

Such refined interpretations, coupled with crude expositions of the two-nation idea, are grounded first of all in the mistaken belief that the ideologues of 'Muslim nationalism' had shared paradigms or a common 'Islamic' framework as a starting point for determining the place and status of Islam and of Muslims in the subcontinent. Did Mohamed Ali and Ansari share the same worldview? Did Muzaffar Ahmad and Fazlul Haq have a common discourse? Was there any compatibility between Azad's secular vision and Jinnah's adherence to the two-nation idea? Was there no difference in the perspectives of the *ulama* of Deoband, Nadwat al-*ulama*, and Firangi Mahal? Moreover, even if one were to recognize, for the sake of argument, a common theme across the political spectrum, what place does one assign to the Ahrars, the Khaksars, the Khudai Khidmatgars and the followers of the Momin Conference, the Shia Political Conference and the Jamiyat al-*ulama*?<sup>109</sup> The presence of such groups communicates forcefully the message that Indian Muslims had a strong secular and nationalist tradition as well which ought not to be forgotten, and that their perspective should not be submerged beneath the rationalizations of the 'victors', the founders of Pakistan.<sup>110</sup>

Furthermore, the two-nation theory is grounded in the mistaken belief that Hindus and Muslims constitute exclusive, autonomous entities, with no common points of contact and association, and that religious loyalty takes precedence over ties and bonds of relationship based on tangible inter-social connections, cross-cultural exchanges and shared material interests. A corrective to this approach, which asserts the primacy of religion, is required so that the movement towards Partition is understood in its specific context and not viewed as a 'logical' sequel to developments dating back to the pre-colonial era.

<sup>108</sup> Farzana Shaikh, *Community and Consensus in Islam: Muslim Representation in Colonial India, 1860-1947* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 230.

<sup>109</sup> For an elucidation of the role of some of these groups, see my *A Nationalist Conscience: M.A. Ansari, the Congress and the Raj*, and my introduction to Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *Islam and Indian Nationalism: Reflections on Abul Kalam Azad* (Delhi, 1992).

<sup>110</sup> See the reviews of *A Nationalist Conscience* by Francis Robinson in *Modern Asian Studies*, 1989, pp. 609-19, and by P.G. Robb in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1, 1991, pp. 104-25.

It needs to be reiterated that 'communalism' or 'separatism', both in their latent and overt forms, did not always embrace large segments of society: they only touched limited groups in certain areas. Their impact was transient as groups embroiled in inter-religious feuds at a given moment could be seen living harmoniously at other times. The governor of Bengal, where Hindu-Muslim conflicts were almost endemic, commented on how the rank and file of the two communities co-existed peacefully, and that it was 'only at rare intervals, when religious feelings became inflamed, that they treat each other as enemies and clashes occur'.<sup>111</sup> Recent studies reveal the fusion of Hindu and Muslim 'folk' worship, with the practices and teachings of the high or 'orthodox' Islamic tradition and the participation, as in the case of the Muslim weavers of Banaras, in public ceremonials relating to particular Hindu figures.<sup>112</sup> There are also instances—such as the one from Bahraich in eastern UP, where the outbreak of cholera in 1930 prompted Muslims to join in great force to worship the goddess Bhawani to induce her to remove the pestilence—which illustrate the extent to which religious barriers could be transcended and strict codes of behaviour transgressed.<sup>113</sup> Or the way Islamic ceremonies relating to birth, marriage and death were observed in many areas, though the 'outer labels' were sometimes discarded as a concession to the reformist movements to make the rituals and practices look 'Islamic'.<sup>114</sup> 'The rigidity of intolerance on view', remarked the author of the 1921 Census report, 'which is a marked feature of the religion of Islam in its purer form, does not extend to the masses, who are quite willing to recognize and assist the efforts of their neighbours to keep on peaceful terms with unknown powers'.<sup>115</sup>

Much work needs to be done on the historical development of Islam and of Muslim communities in various regions of the Indian

<sup>111</sup> Earl of Lytton, *Pundit and Elephants: Being the Experiences of Five Years as Governor of an Indian Province* (London, 1942).

<sup>112</sup> Judy F. Pugh, 'Divination and Ideology in the Banaras Muslim Community', in K.P. Ewing (ed.), *Shariat and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam* (Delhi, 1988); contributions to Sandria Freitag (ed.), *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance and Environment 1800–1980* (Delhi, 1989), and her *Collective Action and Community*.

<sup>113</sup> *Census of India*, 1931, p. 515.

<sup>114</sup> Rafiuddin Ahmad, 'Conflicts, and Contradictions in Bengali Islam', in Ewing (ed.), *Shariat and Ambiguity*, p. 134, and the excellent study of Asim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal* (Princeton, 1983).

<sup>115</sup> *Census of India*, 1921, p. 115.

subcontinent. On the basis of existing studies, we can safely trace the strength of composite and syncretistic tendencies, though their growth and progress were neither unilinear nor unimpeded. Islam in Kashmir developed a resilient tradition of its own, incorporating many social and cultural practices of pre-Islamic origin.<sup>116</sup> Islam in Punjab provided a repertoire of concepts and styles of authority which served to encompass potentially competing values, including the values of tribal kinship, within a common Islamic idiom.<sup>117</sup> The religion of Mohammed took many forms in Bengal and assimilated values and symbols not always in conformity with Quranic ideals and precepts. The cultural idioms, rooted in the Quran and the *hadith* (traditions), underwent a rapid transformation, giving birth to a set of popular beliefs and practices which, in essence, represented the popular culture of rural Bengal rooted in the pre-Islamic past.<sup>118</sup> Finally, Islam in South India evolved a tradition of worship which was marked by a striking capacity to accommodate itself to indigenous patterns of faith and worship. Islam gained a foothold because of its capacity to forge links with the religions and peoples of the wider society, to offer a form of access to the divine which could be grasped and built upon through means already present within these societies. This interpenetration was neither 'degenerate' nor a product of superficial accretions from Hinduism. The sharing of belief and practice was, in fact, built up into a dynamic and expansive religious system.<sup>119</sup>

Nationalist writers in the 1940s and thereafter were wedded to the concept of composite nationality, a quintessential feature of India's liberation struggle, and laid stress on cultural assimilation and social intermingling between Hindus and Muslims. Perhaps there was a tendency to portray, so we are told, an idyllic picture, to disregard elements of discord and disharmony. Still, the essential thrust of their

<sup>116</sup> M. Ishaq Khan, 'Islam in Kashmir: Historical Analysis of its Distinctive Features', in C.W. Troll (ed.), *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries* (Delhi, 1985), and his 'The Significance of the Dargah of Hazratbal in the Socio-religious and Political life of Kashmiri Muslims', in C.W. Troll (ed.), *Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character and Significance* (Delhi, 1989).

<sup>117</sup> David Gilmartin, 'Customary Law and Shariat in Punjab', in Ewing (ed.), *Shariat and Ambiguity*, p. 44.

<sup>118</sup> Rafiuddin Ahmad, 'Conflicts and Contradictions in Bengali Islam', in *ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>119</sup> Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700–1900* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 13–14.

argument—that the followers of different religious creeds had co-existed peacefully even in turbulent times—was profoundly valid. Nehru's reflections in Ahmednagar jail and Azad's introspection at Ramgarh, though lacking in scholarly rigour for present-day 'specialists', are as relevant today as they were in the 1940s. India's Partition did not make their perspective any less relevant.

In his book published in 1971, Anil Seal, the doyen of the 'Cambridge School', questioned the common assumption, which marred historical narratives of previous decades, that the Indian Muslim 'community' formed a bloc of peoples whose conditions were generally equal, whose interests were generally the same and whose solidarity was generally firm. Unevenness of socio-economic development, he argued, produced disparities between Muslims in different provinces and between Muslims in the same province, just as it was doing between Hindus. In 'so shapeless, so jumbled a bundle of societies, there were not two nations, there was not one nation, there was no nation at all, what was India?—a graveyard of nationalities and the mother of new nationalisms struggling to be born'.<sup>120</sup>

Following the same framework, Paul Brass argued, with greater conviction, that the ideology of Muslim separatism did not flow out of the objective differences between Hindus and Muslims but out of the use made of those differences through a conscious process of symbol selection. Nor was it the consequence of the objective circumstances of Muslims in UP, who were better placed than Hindus in urbanization, literacy, English education, social communications and government employment.<sup>121</sup> Francis Robinson arrived at similar conclusions; the threat of becoming backward, rather than backwardness itself, encouraged UP Muslims to organize themselves separately. Their influence in the province helped them to do so with much effect.<sup>122</sup> More recently though, Robinson has sought to establish a 'fundamental' connection between Islamic traditions and 'political separatism'. In a lively debate with Paul Brass, he rejects the 'instrumentalist' view to assert, in much the same way as Farzana occasions, a motivating role to play amongst the elites of UP.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 339.

<sup>121</sup> Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 178 and ff.

<sup>122</sup> Robinson, *Separatism*, ch. 1.

<sup>123</sup> Francis Robinson, 'Nation Formation: The Brass Thesis and Muslim

In much of the writings until the 1980s—the works of Seal, Brass, Robinson, Chris Bayly, Harold Gould, Gyanendra Pandey and Zoya Hasan included—UP was seen as the heartland of Hindu and Muslim revitalization movements, the chief arena where competing elites devised and followed their political trajectory within communitarian frameworks. Historians have since turned to regions outside the Indo-Gangetic belt to traverse the terrain of elite politics within formal imperial structures. Thus the works of David Page, Kenneth Jones, Imran Ali, Ian Talbot, Prem Choudhry and David Gilmartin on Punjab, and of Rafiuddin Ahmad, Asim Roy, Kenneth Mcpherson, Rajat Ray, Shila Sen and Suranjan Das on Bengal, have individually and collectively shifted the focus from UP to the 'Muslim-majority' provinces of British India.

David Page detailed the profoundly divisive effects of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in Bengal and Punjab. His story is about how Hindu-Muslim antagonism became a permanent feature of provincial politics, how 'communal' interests were consolidated around 'communal' issues, how 'Muslim attitudes' were formed towards the emergence of provincial autonomy and towards the eventual withdrawal of imperial control.<sup>124</sup> Talbot and Gilmartin carry the story further to trace the roots of Partition in Punjab. In Talbot's analysis, the 'decisive shift' took place as late in the day as the 1946 provincial elections, when landholders tilted the balance in favour of the League.<sup>125</sup> Gilmartin, on the other hand, examines the evolution of support for the Pakistan movement in terms of a search for ideological identity amid the severe contradictions established by colonial rule. The Pakistan movement remains essentially a paradox to Gilmartin: millenarian tendencies and Islamic revivalism on the one hand; political objectives shaped by the structures of the colonial state on the other. Yet many of the political pressures that produced Pakistan—and led to Punjab's Partition—originated outside the province. The events of 1947 in Punjab owed much to the broader currents that brought the decline of the British empire, the rise of the Congress and the rapid progress of the Muslim League in other parts of India. Indeed, Jinnah's

'Separatism', and reply by Paul Brass, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 15, 3, pp. 215–34.

<sup>124</sup> David Page, *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial State System of Control 1920–1932* (Delhi, 1982).

<sup>125</sup> Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj and Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement, 1849–1947* (Delhi, 1988).

political ascendancy, which in its beginnings owed little to Punjab, ultimately shaped events there deeply. But in the end the Punjabi Muslims decided their own future, for after the elections of 1946 the creation of Pakistan could not be denied.<sup>126</sup>

Studies of this nature have enriched the debate on India's 'Great Divide', for they lay bare the main contours of political 'separatism' in the critical regions of British India, establish the linkages between provincial and national leaders, and trace the strength of social/cultural interconnections as instruments of mobilization. The appeal of ideology—nationalist or otherwise—is best mirrored in the specific context of a region. So also its use by the political and religious leadership.

Regional studies on 'communalism' and the Pakistan movement do not, in any way, diminish the value of other works which explore the national scene, concentrate on all-India leaders and organizations, and try to unfold the happenings at the apex. For example, Anita Inder Singh is able to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge of the interplay of British, Congress and Muslim League strategies. She assesses, with much sensitivity, the attitudes and tactics of the three parties in the negotiations for the transfer of power and the factors that induced the Congress and the British to accept the idea of Pakistan.<sup>127</sup> It is not very often that the story of such negotiations is told with such clarity and objectivity.

R.J. Moore provides useful insights into the official mind in Delhi and Whitehall. *The Crisis of Indian Unity* deals with the problems of wresting freedom from the British and keeping the country united in the wake of the Pakistan demand. *Churchill, Cripps and India* and *Escape from Empire* trace the evolution of the Labour Party's policies to solve the many-sided Indian problem.<sup>128</sup> Read together with the earlier versions and interpretations of Leonard Mosley, Penderel Moon, V.P. Menon, H.V. Hodson and P.S. Gupta,<sup>129</sup> Moore's impres-

<sup>126</sup> David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (London, 1988) and its review by Sarah Ansari, *Modern Asian Studies*, 24, 4, 1990.

<sup>127</sup> *The Origins of the Partition of India 1936–1947* (Delhi, 1987).

<sup>128</sup> *The Crisis of Indian Unity 1917–1947* (Oxford, 1974); *Churchill, Cripps and India 1939–1945* (Oxford, 1979), *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem* (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>129</sup> For a useful bibliographical survey, see A.K. Majumdar, 'Writings on the Transfer of Power', in B.R. Nanda (ed.), *Essays in Modern Indian History* (Delhi, 1980).

sive researches cover important aspects of British policy and strategy towards Independence and Partition.

Many of the themes delineated in the writings of Talbot, Gilmartin, Anita Inder Singh and Moore figure in a work of outstanding merit—Ayesha Jalal's *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. It is by far the most refined, though by no means authoritative, statement on a cataclysmic and violent event in the subcontinent. Jalal has raised the standard of debate on Partition. More than any other historian, she underlines the importance of Jinnah's cleverly disguised manoeuvres and the significance of keeping the terms of the Lahore Resolution vague and amorphous. The critical importance of her work, according to Asim Roy, lies in presenting the Resolution as a tactical manoeuvre and in her success in elevating this interpretation basically from the realm of doubts and speculations and giving it academic authenticity and credibility.<sup>130</sup> Equally important is the way in which the provincial world of Bengal and Punjab is thrown wide open and the argument that behind the simple cry of Pakistan lay a host of complex and conflicting interests, some of which had very little to do with the shape Pakistan was coming to assume in Jinnah's guarded exposition at Lahore in March 1940 or thereafter. Finally, Jalal's summation of Mountbatten's role is a powerful indictment of a man who made such tall claims for so modest a 'feat'—conducted an administrative operation which left hundreds of thousands dead and rendered millions homeless. His 'great operation' was an ignominious scuttling enabling the British to extricate themselves from the awkward responsibility of presiding over India's 'communal madness'.

There are, however, notable gaps in an otherwise interesting exposition. Part of the reason why this is so is because Jalal's perspective is based on high politics and diplomacy. Jinnah occupies centrestage in her narrative, with provincial leaders rather than interest groups extracting their price for supporting the Quaid. That is why we get no sense of a growing movement drawing its constituents from different regions and social classes at various stages of its progress and development. Also missing is a perspective on the ideological content of the movement, an aspect Farzana Shaikh covers with finesse, on the social base of the Muslim League, its mobilization techniques after the

<sup>130</sup> Asim Roy, 'The High Politics of India's Partition: The Revisionist Perspective', p. 116 below.

adoption of the Lahore Resolution, and its ability to use Islam as a rallying symbol with such great effect. Other writers, who have used the Muslim League records at Karachi University with much profit, have been able to highlight these aspects. Both Talbot and Gilmartin have argued, on the strength of Muslim League documents, how the linking of Islamic appeals to social and economic grievances and their transmission through the all-important rural idiom of *biradari* and Sufi networks succeeded in transmitting the League's message from its strongholds in the towns to the countryside, where the bulk of the voters was to be found.

Jalal's version of the Congress' part in the making of Pakistan is unmistakably one-sided, because her book is almost solely based on official sources, on Muslim League records and on Jinnah's private collection. Several questions relating to the Congress role remain unanswered in her book, in particular, and in other works generally. While it is possible to argue, as Asim Roy does, that the Congress steadily and deliberately worked itself up to a position where Jinnah was forced to take his 'Pakistan' and leave the scene for good,<sup>131</sup> the nature of its political intervention awaits careful historical scrutiny. Perhaps Jalal will return to India to examine the vast collection of private papers and newspapers in Indian libraries and archives. Perhaps the exercise will change her perspective, or perhaps not.

While Jalal marshalls an array of facts to establish Jinnah's popularity and the League's acceptability, she fails to underline the fact that, even after the resistance in Bengal and Punjab had crumbled Pakistan was not everybody's dream and Jinnah not everybody's Quaid. It is a lesser known fact that in terms of the actual number of votes secured and against the background of the tremendous build up to Pakistan, 'nationalist Muslim' groups did not fare too poorly in the 1946 elections (Table 2). Their performance in some UP constituencies, such as Bahraich (south), Meerut (east), Gorakhpur (east) and Pilibhit was, in fact, comforting. Though Congress stalwarts like Rafi Ahmad Kidwai lost in Rae Bareilly, success came to Nisar Ahmad Khan Sherwani in Mainpuri and Etah, Bashir Ahmad in Bijnor south-east, and Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim in Garhwal and Bijnor north-west. Some additional gains were possible had the Congress put up Muslim candidates in the general urban and rural constituencies, and if its nominees in the Muslim urban constituencies were chosen with care

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

TABLE 2

## VOTES POLLED IN THE MUSLIM CONSTITUENCIES

<i>Parties</i>	<i>Seats contested</i>	<i>Votes polled</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Muslim League	64	515,229	64.7
Congress	29	107,877	13.54
Nationalist Muslims	32	114,686	14.39
Ahrars	2	10,154	1.27
Sunni Board	1	11,188	1.40
Shia Conference	2	5,847	0.73
Khaksars	3	176	0.02
Independents	30	31,491	3.95

SOURCES: L/PJ/8/478 and L/PJ/8/483, IOLR, London.

and not arbitrarily. It was a mistake, for example, to pit Abdul Aleem of the Aligarh Muslim University against Haji Mohammad Shakoor in the Jaunpur-Gorakhpur constituency. Similarly, Aftab Ali was too weak a candidate to be pitted against Jamshed Ali Khan, the Nawab of Baghat and a recent convert to the Muslim League creed. A more formidable rival could have performed better at the hustings.

In any case, asking people to sit on judgement on the Partition plan, which had already been thrashed out during the prolonged confabulations at the viceregal lodge, was an act of deception, a monumental fraud. The die was cast, more so after the 1946 elections which were held under a restricted franchise but were treated as the final verdict of the people. The predictable collapse of the interim government and the fire of violence in Bihar and Bengal, which nobody tried to extinguish,<sup>132</sup> offered to every party an opportunity and an excuse

<sup>132</sup> Commenting on the massacre of August 1946 in Calcutta, Leonard Mosley remarked: 'A few weeks later, however, you would have found it difficult to believe that anyone (with the possible exception of Mahatma Gandhi) had taken any notice of them at all. Not the Hindus. Not the Muslims. Not the British'. Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 40.

I believe one should attach some weight to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's judgement that 'the people of India had not accepted Partition. In fact their heart and soul rebelled against the very idea. I have said that the Muslim League enjoyed

to hammer out the modalities of transferring power to two separate nations. Never before in South Asian history did so few decide the fate of so many. And rarely did so few ignore the sentiments of so many in the subcontinent. A distraught eye witness to the trauma of 1946–7 recalled on the eve of her departure from Rajshahi:

Tears began to flow, I realized for the first time that the part of Bengal which had been my home was no longer my home. It was a foreign land. . . . The underlying feeling was that we were being driven from our own country. . . . We were angry with both Nehru and Jinnah for not handling the situation properly.<sup>133</sup>

Such impressions need to be reflected in our historical discourse. Only then will it become clear that, in the ultimate analysis, it does not matter whether, in the penultimate phase of the League crusade, Jinnah bargained for a separate nation or not. What mattered was his articulation of the two-nation idea and his successful mobilization of the community. The whims and personal idiosyncrasies of individuals do not give birth to new nations. The conjunction of forces and circumstances do. For many of us in the subcontinent, still confronted with and troubled by the bitter legacy of Pakistan, the critical and unresolved issue is how Jinnah and the League were able to secure the support of so many Muslims in so short a time.

Does the explanation lie in UP society and polity? In the evolution of ideas, reinforced by colonial policies, from the days of Syed Ahmad

the support of many Indian Muslims but there was a large section in the community which had always opposed the League. They were naturally deeply cut by the decision to divide the country. As for the Hindus and Sikhs, they were to a man opposed to partition. . . . *India Wins Freedom*, p. 224. At the same time, it must be said that the Maulana, like everybody else, readily agreed to the Partition Plan. In the crucial meeting of the Congress Working Committee held on 2 June 1947, the Maulana, according to Ram Manohar Lohia, a special invitee to the meeting, 'sat in a chair throughout the two days of the meeting in a corner of the very small room which packed us all, puffed away at his endless cigarettes and spoke not a word'. According to Lohia, barring four persons—himself, Jayaprakash Narayan, Ghaffar Khan and Gandhi—'none spoke a word in opposition of Partition'. And though the Mahatma 'turned to Mr Nehru and Sardar Patel in mild complaint that they had not informed him of the scheme of Partition before committing themselves to it', he stopped well short of obstructing 'a leadership united for acceptance'. Quoted in Rajmohan Gandhi, *Patel: A Life* (Ahmedabad, 1992), p. 402.

<sup>133</sup> H. Ghoshal, 'The Memsahib I could never be', Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge, p. 8.

Khan? In the unequal contest between Hindu and Muslim revitalization movements? In the conflict between the symbols of Kaaba and Kashi? In the self-perception of a minority community placed in a disadvantageous position in relation to the power structures? In the manipulation of religious and cultural symbols by competing elites? Jalal does not address herself to these possibilities. In any event, she does not think, though it is nowhere explicitly stated in her book, that in making Jinnah the 'sole spokesman' of 'Muslim India' the part played by the UP Muslims was of any consequence. She is inclined not to attach much importance to the role of Muslim landlords, the students and teachers of the university at Aligarh, described by Jinnah as the 'arsenal of Muslim India', a section of the Deobandi *ulama* and leading priests of the Barelwi school who had much following amongst the weavers, artisans, and other entrepreneurial groups in the qasbahs. Did Jinnah not have such groups in mind when he spoke of those . . .

Who spread the light when there was darkness in the majority provinces. It is they who . . . suffered for you in the majority provinces, for your sake, for your benefit and for your advantage.<sup>134</sup>

These were comforting remarks, though one cannot help concluding with a not-so-comforting thought—never before in South Asian history did so few divide so many, so needlessly.

Today, the people and governments of India and Pakistan, tormented by the legacy of Partition, are confronted with the daunting challenge of neutralizing the effects of that division. The ability of all concerned to do so may serve the cause of peace and progress in the subcontinent.

The fire of the liver, the tumult of the eye, burning of the heart,  
There is no effect on any of them of (this) cure for separation.  
Whence came that darling of a morning breeze, whither has it gone?  
The lamp beside the road has still no knowledge of it;  
In the heaviness of night there has still come no lessening.  
The hour of the deliverance of eye and heart has not arrived.  
Come, come on, for that goal has still not arrived.<sup>135</sup>

It is worth striving to achieve that elusive 'goal' defined by Faiz Ahmad Faiz and a generation of creative writers, poets and painters.

<sup>134</sup> Pirzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan*, p. 224.

<sup>135</sup> Kiernan (ed.), *Poems by Faiz*, vol. 2, p. 127.