

**The Strategic Debate: What to do next?**

Following the withdrawal of CDM, there was a two-stage debate on the future course of action. Many Congressmen including Gandhi believed that mass movement must be followed with a period of reprieve in order to regain strength after prolonged mass movement, give chance to government to respond. (STS' strategy). **In the first stage**, three proposals were put forward.

1. There should be **constructive work on Gandhian lines**.
2. There should be **constitutional struggle and participation in elections** to the central legislature due in 1934; M.A. Ansari, Asaf Ali, Bhulabhai Desai, S. Satyamurthy and B.C. Roy supported this.
3. A strong **leftist trend** within the Congress represented by Nehru was critical of both the above options. Nehru was against this STS' strategy as he argued that India's National Movement had reached such a stage where continuous confrontation and conflict with imperialism was required till it was overthrown.
4. He proposed for *continued non-constitutional mass struggle* to achieve purna swaraj, because the situation was still revolutionary owing to continued economic crisis and the readiness of mass to fight. (**SV strategy** = struggle-victory)
5. He suggested to have class organizations: peasants, workers, traders, businessmen to prepare them for the mass movement. He suggested that these class organizations be affiliated with Congress to influence its policies and activities. He believed that there cannot be genuine anti-imperialist struggle without masses organised into classes.

**Council Entry:**

- Though Gandhi was principally against the council work, he realized that he was out of tune due to the power equation in Congress.
  - The reason given was that there are Congressmen who cannot actively participate in the constructive work or Satyagraha should not be kept unoccupied, they could express their patriotic energies through council work if they are not sucked into constitutionalism or self-serving.
- Nehru and the socialists thought that the British must first be expelled before the struggle for socialism could be waged, and in an anti-imperialist struggle, unity around the Congress, was indispensable. Thus, it was better, they felt, to gradually radicalise the Congress than to get isolated from the masses.
- The right wing was no less accommodating. Seeing all this, Gandhi decided to resign from Congress and decided to show his conviction through work and deed.

**In the elections of Central Legislative assembly in Nov 1934**, Congress captured 45 out of 75 seats reserved for Indians. It emerged as the largest legislative party.

## The Act of 1935

*After all, we framed the constitution... of 1935 because we thought ... it was the best way... to hold India to the Empire.*

Lord Linlithgow

The Government of India Act of 1935 was the longest piece of legislation ever passed by the British Parliament. It was a comprehensive document consisting of 321 Sections and 10 Schedules. The Act provided a framework for the establishment of an All-India Federation at central level and a new system of government for the provinces on the basis of provincial autonomy.

The Act is of considerable significance. It did the groundwork for the negotiations that led to the final transfer of power into Indian hands. Though the Act was drawn up to perpetuate British rule, some of its provisions were so well thought out, that, they were incorporated into the constitution of independent India.

### **Features:**

The basic conception of the Act of 1935 was that the *Government of India was the Government of the Crown*, conducted by authorities deriving functions directly from the Crown, in so far as the Crown did not itself retain executive functions. This conception, familiar in dominion constitutions, was absent in earlier Acts passed for India.

#### **(A) Provincial level**

- **Provincial Autonomy:** the most significant change
  - **Abolition of dyarchy → responsible government.**
    - There was to be a provincial Governor and a cabinet of ministers.
    - The ministers would be appointed from among the members of the Legislative Assembly. Ministers were appointed by the Governor but were responsible to popularly elected legislative assemblies.
  - **Provincial autonomy**
    - Provinces were freed from "the superintendence, direction" of the Secretary of State and the Governor-general. The provinces would henceforth derive their legal authority directly from the British Crown.
    - In the provinces, local power was increased. The ministers exercised complete control over the subjects allotted to them. They were given independent financial powers and could borrow money on their own security. In every matter the Governor had to act on the advice of their ministers.
    - Provincial legislature could legislate on subjects in provincial and concurrent lists.
- **Hedged and marred by various discretionary and special powers to the governors. Governors were the pivot of the entire constitutional structure.**
  - **Special power** in respect of minority rights, safeguard of British business interest and privileges of civil servants. It was also the special responsibility of a provincial governor to ensure adequate representation of minorities in the cabinet.

- They could, **dismiss ministers** at their discretion. Besides, the governor could also **take over the provincial administration** under certain special circumstances.
- What made the position of the governor more formidable was the fact that **40 per cent of the provincial budget was beyond the purview of the provincial ministries**. The governor also enjoyed the **power to restore the budget** even if it had been rejected by the legislatures.

### (B) Central level

- A federal structure comprising *both British Indian provinces* as well as **Princely India**.
  - **Federal features**
    - Three lists, federal, provincial, and concurrent.
    - A federal court.
  - However
    - States were given full freedom whether or not to join the federation.
    - Federation was to come into being only if.
      - More than 50 per cent states decided to join it (52 seats out of 104)
      - Aggregate population of states in the above category should be 50% of the total population of all Indian states.
- **Bicameral legislature** at the centre

House	Composition	Election (communal electorate)	Duration
<b>Lower house (House of Assembly)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total 375 members: 250 members from the provinces and 125 members from the states. 250 = Hindus (104), Muslim (83), other minorities (26), industries and commerce (11), labour (10), landlords (7) and women (9).</li> </ul>	Elected by the members of the Provincial Assemblies by the system of proportional representation with a single transferable vote basis.	The duration of the assembly was to be 5 years.
<b>The upper house (Council of State)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total 260 member: 105 elected, 104 from Princely India and 6 to be nominated by the Governor General.</li> <li>• 150 = General category (75), Schedule castes (6), Sikhs (4), Muslims (49), Women (6) and Anglo Indian (10).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 members were to be elected directly by voters with high property qualifications.</li> <li>• 104 members were to be nominated by the rulers of Princely India. (Not elected)</li> <li>• 6 members were to be nominated by the Governor General.</li> </ul>	Council of States was to be a permanent body with one-third members retiring every third year.

Note 1: Election to the Council of States was direct and that to the Federal Assembly, indirect.

Note 2: Members of Federal Assembly could move a vote of no-confidence against ministers. Council of States could not move a vote of no-confidence.

- **Executive: Dyarchical system** of the government at the central level.
  - Two categories of the subject list: reserved and transferred.
    - **The reserved subjects** were administered exclusively by GG with the help of his executive councilors. It included defence, external affairs, tribal administration and ecclesiastical affairs. The Indian legislature had no control on these affairs. As to these subjects the Governor-General was held directly responsible to the British Parliament and not to the Central Legislature.
    - **The transferred subjects** were to be administered by the Governor-General with the help of the ministers, who appointed by the Governor General from among the persons enjoying the confidence of the Central Legislature. Here too, the Governor-General kept certain 'special responsibilities'. It is clear that under the new Act there would be no responsible government at the centre.
  - **Role of Governor General**
    - The Governor-General could act in his individual judgment in discharging his special responsibilities. The Governor-General had the power **to overrule the advice of the council** of ministers or to force his decision on the ministers. He could restore cuts in grants, certify bills rejected by the legislature, issue ordinances, exercise his veto.
    - The Governor-general had **residuary powers**.
    - Before enacting any legislation, the legislature had to take the prior approval of the Governor-General.
- Additional Features
  - 80 per cent of the budget was non-votable.
  - The Act contained a provision known as **Instrument of instructions**. It was a set of instructions for GG and Governors for the exercise of their authority. (*later on it influenced DPSP in the Constitution of India 1950*)

## Critical Analysis of the Act of 1935

The Act of 1935 was condemned and rejected unanimously by all sections of the Congress. The Congress demanded, instead, convening the constituent assembly elected based on adult franchise to frame constitution of free India.

- There was no sense of independence in the provisions of this Act. Even **Britain's earlier promise of the grant of the 'full dominion status'** was missing from its provisions.
- The Act provided a **rigid constitution** with no possibility of internal growth. The Right of amendment was reserved with the British Parliament.
- **Provincial Level:**
  - Provincial autonomy was hedged by the autocratic nature of the powers of the governor.
    - Provisions relating to safeguards and discretionary powers were made under the pretext of providing protection to minorities made the **provincial autonomy quite farcical**. The **real intention was to safeguard the British interests** and continuation of the British imperial rule.
  - Responsible government at the provincial level was a part of that larger strategy of the British.
- **Central Level:**
  - The system of **Dyarchy** introduced at center was strongly opposed because it had already failed at provincial level.
  - Indian nationalist wanted that **participation of native states** must be compulsory in proposed federation, but the act made it voluntary. The Congress wanted representatives of native states in parliament to be elected by people, but act provided their nomination by ruling princes.
  - The **federal part was never implemented**, primarily on account of the reluctance of Princely India.
- **Election**
  - Only 14-15% eligible to vote.
  - The system of religion-based and class-based electorates was further extended. It refurbished the idea of separatism by promoting separate electorates for the Muslims and other minorities. It helped the construction of communalism in a big way.

**Silver lining: It marked a new departure in India's constitutional history.**

- **Centre**
  - The ideas of federation **covered the entire country**.
- **Provinces**
  - Introduction of the **responsible government** at the provincial level.
  - The element of Indian representation made it certain that **Parliamentary institutions** would gradually become stronger.
  - **Administrative devolution to the point of no return:** provincial autonomy indicated that the next logical step was autonomy at center. In that situation India was to get dominion states.

- It provided for **greater association of Indians with the task of administration** because at provincial level all the subjects were to be handled by Indian ministers.
- System of provincial autonomy **allowed Indian leaders to gain crucial experience** in the working of government machinery. Because of this, Indians could manage efficiently when power was transferred to them.

- **More points**

- The **instrument of instructions** provided in the Act of 1935 imposed a moral obligation of Governor and GG to exercise their authority for the benefit of people. The British realized that aspirations of common masses cannot be neglected forever.

When the Constituent Assembly engaged itself in the task of constitution-making for independent India, the Act of 1935 came as a very handy and helpful document for the founding fathers of our constitution. It facilitated task of Indian constitution. This Act was adopted substantially by makers of Indian constitution. (Structurally, if not spiritually)

### Faizpur Session of Congress (Jalgaon, Dec 1936)

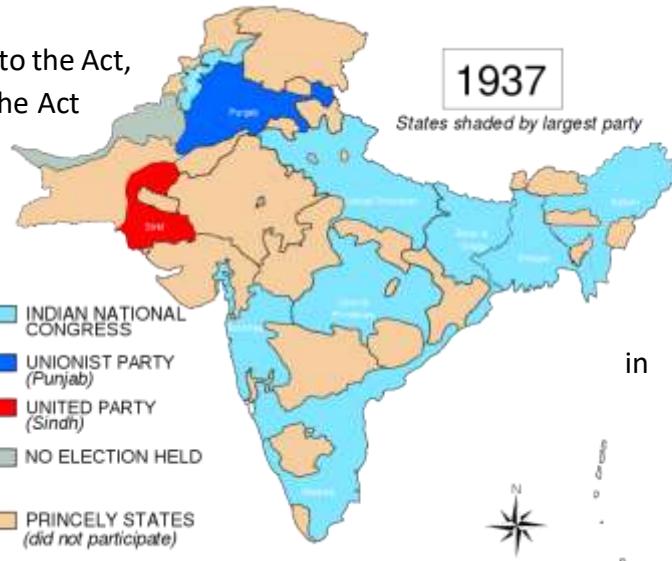
- President: Jawaharlal Nehru
- This was the **first Congress Session in a rural area**. Pandit Nehru said during his presidential address, 'A vaster and more pressing problem is that of the peasantry, for India is essentially a land of the peasants. In recognition of this fact, and to bring the Congress nearer to the peasant masses, we are meeting here today at the village of Faizpur and not, as of old, in some great city'.
- **Agrarian programme**
  - Its ratification demonstrated a change in ideological posture and generated expectations of socio-economic change.
  - Issues of 'freedom of organization of agricultural labourers and peasants', safeguarding of peasants' interests against intermediaries and 'just relief from agricultural indebtedness including arrears in rent and revenue'

## Elections of 1927 and Formation of the Congress Ministries

Though the Congress was bitterly opposed to the Act, it decided to contest the elections under the Act of 1935.

### • Council Entry debate

- Initially the Congress was hesitant as to whether the party would contest the elections. Jawaharlal Nehru, at the beginning, was not in favour of contesting the elections.
- Eventually even Nehru admitted that as many members of the Congress were in favour of taking office there was "no choice but to contest the elections". It was felt that by contesting the elections, the Congress would be able to demonstrate to the millions of the disenfranchised the ineffectiveness of the Act of 1935.
- The Congress and the Muslim League met separately in April 1936 and decided to contest the provincial elections, which were slated for January and February 1937.



### • The Election

- The election campaign took off towards the end of 1936.
- The Congress swept the polls in most of the provinces.
  - Out of the 1585 seats in the 11 provincial legislatures the Congress bagged 706 seats.
  - It won absolute majorities in Madras, UP, CP, Bihar and Orissa.
  - It was the largest single party in Bombay, Bengal, Assam and NWFP.

### • Office Entry debate

- This success, which was a surprise even to most Congressmen, gave a new turn to the office-acceptance question.
- **Nehru and Bose were opposed to forming government as it would mean responsibility without power and the constitutional work would sideline the revolutionary character of the movement.** The proponents of office acceptance argued that they were equally committed to combating the Act of 1935 but work in council was only short term as the availability of mass movement is a distant goal right now. They agreed that there was danger to be sucked in by wrong tendencies, but the right way is to combat them and not to abandon them. Despite limited powers, provincial ministers could be used to promote constructive work. **Gandhi** was against the office acceptance, but he agreed to the trial of Congress ministries.

- The hesitation of the Congress to form ministries even after such a landslide victory in the elections was because of the **special power of the Governor**, as laid down in the Act of 1935 to overrule legislation put through by the ministers.
- Finally, however, Congress ministries were formed in July 1937 **in seven out of eleven provinces**. Subsequently, the Congress formed **coalition governments in two others**. (Assam and NWFP)
- It was during the ministry formation that Jinnah wanted a coalition government, particularly in UP and Bombay. That was rejected by the Congress on ideological grounds. The spurned Muslim League went for rapid communalism,

- **Non-Congress Provinces**

- Unionist Party of Sikandar Hayat Khan – Punjab
- Krishak Praja Party of Fazlul Haq – Bengal
- Sindh Ittehad (Union) Party of Allah Baksh Soomro – Sindh

### In the Offices: 27 months of the Congress Ministries

The formation of congress ministers resulted in psychological revolution in India because for 1st time The British Indian officers were taking orders from khadi clad, men and women who were harassed by them till that time. These Indians who were repeatedly Lathi charged and pushed in jails became the boss of white officials. The common Indians felt liberated when the responsibilities of government moved into hands of Indian ministers. According to Pandit Nehru, there was a sense of immense relief among the masses as if the colonial oppression going on since ages was no more.

#### **Working with British**

- The Indian ministers **worked fairly well with the British** authorities.
  - The special powers given to Governors by the new Act which had almost caused Congress to refrain from forming ministries, were applied on only one occasion.
- On the whole, the relation between Indian and British officials were characterised **by mutual trust and respect**.
- Though they **failed to bring about any fundamental change in the exploitative character** of colonial rule, they sought to give some comfort to the people **within the framework of the British rule**.

#### **The disadvantages of the Congress ministries**

- The Congress ministries **could not work independently**.
  - There was the **inevitable paradox of a party committed to Poorna Swaraj and having to implement decisions through civil service and police** with which its relations had so long been hostile.
  - The Congress had to work within the framework of the 1935 constitution and could not bring about any fundamental breakthrough.
- The most serious problem was the **balancing of diverse interests of communities and classes**.

- As the Congress had a **multi-class character**, as a ruling party it found impossible to go on pleasing the landlords and peasants, or businessmen and workers, at the same time.
- The principal problem which the provincial governments experienced was **financial stringency**.
  - The bulk of the Indian revenues was **controlled by the Central Government**. It was difficult for the Congress governments to freely undertake welfare programmes which required a steady flow of funds.
- As Congress policy was now formulated by the Parliamentary Sub-committee, it was not possible for the ministries to embark on any project without the **prior approval of the High Command**.

Despite the various disadvantages experienced by the provincial governments their achievements were significant. The Congress ministries performed a **herculean task within a short period of 27 months** between July 1937 and November 1939. Their performance was remarkable compared to the non-Congress ruled provinces.

- **Promotion of Political and Civil rights**

- The British rulers passed quite a few repressive acts to contain the rising tide of nationalism. The Congress ministries of different **provinces repealed some of the repressive acts** and released many political prisoners. Emergency power acquired by provincial government in 1932 was done away with.
- **The ban imposed** earlier on some political organisations was **removed**.
- Political newspapers/journals were given freedom **of expression**. Securities confiscated were returned to the newspapers. Pending prosecution against them was withdrawn. Blacklisting for the government advertisement was given up.
- **The arms** confiscated from Indian were returned, revoked licenses were restored.
- **Power of police** were reduced. Practices like shadowing political leaders and meetings by CID were stopped.
- Many prisoners, including revolutionaries involved in Kakori and other conspiracies, were also released. The revolutionaries convicted for violet activities could not be released because they could only be released by consent of governor which was not given.

- **Peasants**

- Steps were taken to restore land of those farmers which were confiscated by the government by CDM.
- As promised in the election manifesto the ministries helped the peasants by passing anti-usury and tenancy legislation.
  - Congress ministries tried to give economic relief to peasants and workers as quickly as possible.
  - The UP government enacted tenancy act which gave full occupancy right to the peasants working on a land for a long time, the landlords could not remove them. The illegal taxes collected by landlords from peasants were stopped. Practices like begar (forced labour) and Nazrana (forced gifts) were abolished.
  - Bombay government released more than 40,000 serfs tied to land.

- Bombay and Madras government abolished growing fees in forests.
  - The activities of money leaders were also curbed.
- In his book India Wins Freedom, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad while narrating the achievements of Congress during this period, makes special mention of "legislation on Zamindari or proprietorship in land, of liquidating agricultural indebtedness and undertaking a vast programme of education both for children and adults."

- **Workers**

- The Congress worked for the benefit of the workers too.
- The number of trade unions rose and the trade union movement received a fresh impetus.
- The wages of the factory-workers rose and on the whole, the condition of the working class improved.

- **Social Welfare reforms:** These included following:

- Prohibition imposed in certain areas. There were campaigns to discourage alcoholism.
- Measures for welfare and upliftment of Harijans: temple entry, use of public facilities, scholarships, an increase in their numbers in government service and police.
- Attention given to primary, technical, and higher education and to public health and sanitation.
- Encouragement given to Khadi through subsidies.
- Prison reforms undertaken.
- Encouragement given to indigenous enterprises

- **Standards of behaviour: honesty and public service (led by example)**

- The ministers reduced their own salaries drastically from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 500 per month.
- Most of them travelled in ordinary classes on the train.
- They were easily accessible to the people and tried to address common grievances.
- Sumit Sarkar however differs on this point and says, "the sudden access to power and patronage bred the usual evils of opportunistic place-hunting and factional squabbles."

### **Extra-Parliamentary Mass Activity of Congress**

1. Launching of mass literacy campaign
2. Setting up of Congress police stations and panchayats
3. Congress grievances committees presenting mass petitions to Government
4. States Peoples' movements
5. Efforts taken to develop planning though **National Planning Committee** set up under Congress President Subhash Bose in 1938

## Criticism

While the Congress Ministries did commendable job in general but there were certain objections.

Despite creditable performance, Muslim League kept on accusing the Congress Ministries of pursuing an anti-Muslim policy. The left parties and their front organisations like trade union and the Kisan Sabha also went on expressing their dissatisfaction with the overall performance of these ministries.

- **Madras government did not behave liberally** sometimes.
  - In July 1931, **Yusuf Meherally**, a socialist leader, was prosecuted by Madras government for making an inflammatory speech.
  - In Oct 1937, the Madras government prosecuted **S.S. Batliwala**, another Congress leader for making a seditious speech and send in 6 months imprisonment.
  - These cases created a massive uproar. Serious conflicts developed between C Rajagopalachari (premier of Madras) and pandit Nehru but finally Batliwala was released.
- However, the Congress governments were immensely popular. The Congress ministries initially gave a **major stimulus to all sections of the anti-imperialist movement**. Congress membership shot up from half a million in 1936 to 3.1 million in 1937 and 4.5. million in 1938.

### **Haripura Session of Congress (Gujarat, Feb 1938)**

President: Subhash Chandra Bose was unanimously elected president of the session.

- He believed that the Congress ministries in the provinces had immense revolutionary potential.
- Bose supported economic development of the country through planning and was instrumental in setting up a **National Planning Committee** later (Oct 1938). Its main objective was to focus on *development of industries* in India.
- A resolution to give **moral support (not organizational help) to people's agitation in the princely states**. Individual leaders could participate, under the overall leadership of a special subcommittee of the Congress Working Committee.

### **Bose v/s Gandhi**

- In January 1939, Subhash Bose decided to stand again for the president's post in the Congress. Gandhi was not happy with Bose's candidature. He instead supported another candidate, **Pattabhi Sitaramayya**.
- Bose said he represented the new ideologies and programs to sharpen the anti-imperialist struggle. However, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kriplani (members of CWC) pointed out that various working committees develop the ideologies and program. The position of the Congress president was more of a representative and symbolic of the unity of the nation.
- Subhash Bose won the election by 1580 votes against 1377; he got the full support of the Congress Socialist Party and the communists.
  - Gandhi congratulated Bose on his victory but also declared that "Pattabhi's defeat is my defeat." Now it became a Gandhi versus Bose issue.

### **Tripuri Congress (near Jabalpur, March 1939)**

- With Bose's victory the polarization between the old guard and left in terms of ideology and method of future struggle was clear. **It led to a sharp internal crisis and showdown.**
  - 12/15 of the members resigned from the working committee.
  - In his presidential speech, Bose prophesized that an imperialist war was about to take place in Europe. He was in favour of giving a six-month ultimatum to Britain to grant the national demand of independence; if the ultimatum was rejected, he said, a mass civil disobedience movement should be launched. Gandhi believed that it was not the time for such ultimatums as neither the Congress nor the masses were yet ready for struggle.
  - Gandhi asked him to constitute his own Working Committee and refused all cooperation. Bose tried to patch up a compromise but failed, and ultimately at the AICC meeting in Calcutta in April 1939 he resigned and was quickly replaced by Rajendra Prasad.

- In May, Bose and his followers formed the **Forward Bloc**, as a new Leftist party within the Congress. But it didn't gain much support outside Bengal.
- When he staged a protest against the AICC decision to ban Congressmen from participating in civil disobedience without the prior permission of provincial Congress committees, the Working Committee at Gandhi's insistence **punished him for indiscipline**; in August 1939 he was removed from all Congress positions, notably the presidency of the Bengal PCC, and was banned from holding any executive office for three years. Later in January 1940, Gandhi wrote to CF. Andrews describing Subhas as "my son" - but a "spoilt child of the family" who needed to be taught a lesson for his own good.

- **Resolutions**

- In February 1939, Nehru accepted the presidency of the AISPC and the Tripuri Congress endorsed the scheme of joint action with respect to state people.
- As a result of this evolving situation, in late 1938 and early 1939 many of the princely states witnessed an unprecedented escalation of popular agitation, spearheaded by the local praja mandals, clandestine Congress branches and outside political leaders from British India. Significant agitation took place in Mysore, Jaipur, Rajkot, Travancore, Kashmir and Hyderabad – **Gandhi himself taking a leading role in Rajkot.**

## **Beginning of World War 2: Resignation of Congress Ministries**

In 1939, the Congress ministries resigned in protest of the Viceroy's unilateral decision to declare India in war against Germany during the Second World War. The Congress was stunned and demanded a concrete assurance in respect of Indian independence, which the government refused to give. As a protest, the Congress ministries resigned in October 1939. Thus, the popular rule in the Congress-ruled provinces came to an end and the government once again resumed its autocratic rule. That once again set the stage of another mass movement which was to engulf the country in the form of the Quit India Movement in 1942.

### **Evaluation:**

Though by 1939 internal strife, opportunism, and hunger for power had started surfacing in the Congress, yet they were able to utilize Council work to their advantage to a great extent. The 28-month rule was significant also due to following reasons:

1. Contention that Indian self-government was necessary for radical social transformation got confirmed.
2. Congressmen demonstrated that a movement could use state power to further its ends without being compromised.
3. Ministries were able to control communal riots.
4. The morale of bureaucracy came down.
5. Council work helped neutralize many erstwhile elements (landlords etc)
6. People were able to perceive the shape of things to come if independence was won.
7. Administrative work by Indians further weakened the myth that Indians were not fit to rule.

## Muslim Separatism and Lahore Resolution (1940)

### **Miserable electoral performance of AIML:**

- In the elections of 1937, the Congress swept the polls in most of the provinces. The Muslim League, on the other hand could not do well in the elections.
- The only provinces remaining outside the Congress-orbit were Punjab, Sind and Bengal. None of these provinces, all of which had a Muslim majority, went to the Muslim League.
- The League won only 109 of the 482 seats reserved for the Muslims. Even Congress, which offered candidates in only 58 of these seats, won 26 of them.

### **Attempts at coalition:**

- Despite the failure of his party, Jinnah, the President of the League, hoped that Congress-League coalition should be formed in several provinces.
- Some efforts were made to arrive at an agreement, but eventually the negotiations fell through. The Congress, after its landslide victory, had no need to rally the League on its side.

### **Jinnah now became hostile:**

- The League now turned to bitter opposition to the Congress. From this point onwards Jinnah's attitude to Congress became hostile.
- He began to spread the cry that the Muslim minority was in danger of being engulfed by the Hindu majority. Jinnah now sought to consolidate the Muslim League by using a **communal strategy**.
  - He accused Gandhiji of "turning the Congress into an instrument for the revival of Hinduism" and of wishing to "**establish Hindu-raj in the country.**"
  - The League began to spread the idea that the **Muslim minority in India was in danger** of being engulfed by the Hindu majority.
- In October **1937** the Muslim League at its **Lucknow session** sought to create a broad-front by building up a populist image.
  - Jinnah-Sikandar Pact (1937): Sikandar Hayat Khan merged his Unionist party in AIML.
  - Jinnah propagated the ahistorical and unscientific theory that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations which could, therefore, never live together. Down through the ages, he said, the country was 'always divided into Hindu India and Muslim India.' In his Presidential address, at the Lucknow session he said that the Congress governments were nothing but Hindu governments out to oppress members of the Muslim nation. (**Two-Nation Theory**)
- Jinnah continued to spread separatism by **concocted accounts of Congress-repression** on the Muslim minority. The **1938 Pirpur Report** brought out by the League listed cruelties suffered by Muslims in the Congress-ruled provinces.
- In 1939, the Congress ministries in all the provinces resigned in protest of the Viceroy's decision to declare war against Germany during the Second World War. To celebrate the occasion he called for the observance of a '**Day of Deliverance and thanksgiving.**'

## 1940 Lahore Session and “Pakistan Resolution”

- At the Lahore session of the League, a resolution drafted by Sikandar Hayat Khan was passed calling for the grouping of '*geographically contiguous units in areas where Muslims pre-dominated, such as north-western and eastern India, which would form Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.*'
- The resolution was vague and ambiguous.
  - Neither Pakistan nor Partition were explicitly mentioned.
  - The idea of 'Independent States' implied separation but could possibly mean no more than full autonomy within a loose federation.
  - The resolution later came to be known as the 'Pakistan Resolution' though officially the word 'Pakistan' did not feature anywhere in the text of this document.
  - Still, the Resolution certainly widened the gulf between the two communities and paved the way for the birth of Pakistan. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's "two nation theory" was refurbished, and Muslim separatism was now in full blast.
  - It also provided fuel to the advocates of Hindu nationalism.
- Subsequent to the Lahore Resolution Jinnah frequently referred to the **notion of a separate Muslim state as the only solution** to India's political problems.

### Congress Response was adequate

- INC rejected any form and shape of communalism. It disregarded the '2 nation theory' propagated by Jinnah and the Muslim league. The Congress leadership, Gandhi and the nationalist press **condemned** the Lahore Resolution in harsh language.
- Old policy of **projecting a few nationalist Muslims** to silence the League. They repeated their old **argument that the League was not the sole representative of the Muslims** of India.
- The Congress leaders helped to organize the **All-India independent Muslim Conference** in Delhi shortly after the Lahore Session of the League. The voice of the nationalist minded Muslims like Abul Kalam Azad was too feeble to match the voice of the separatist Muslims.
- Congress had **steadfastly refused to ally itself with Hindu Communalist groups**, but, on the other hand, it was unable to purge communalists from its ranks altogether.

# ANTHROPOLOGY

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