# *The Direct Action Day (1946): Myth and Reality*

**Syed Umar Hayat***

The results of the general elections (1945-46) greatly strengthened the position of Quaid-i Azam as the undisputed leader of entire Muslim India[1] and gave urgency to the need of a solution of Muslim-Hindu conflict. The Viceroy's failure to settle the political and constitutional issues through Simla Conference in 1945 paved the way for the British Government's announcement, in February 1946, of its decision to despatch a group of three cabinet ministers to seek, with the help of Indian leaders, an agreement on constitutional issues. The Cabinet Mission offered its own solution by proposing a three tier constitutional plan:

> Union of India, embracing both British India and the states, which should deal with the subjects of foreign affairs, defence, and communications and have the power to raise the necessary finances.
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> Three groups of provinces:
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> Section A, comprising the six Hindu majority provinces;
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> Section B, the provinces of the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Baluchistan, and
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> Section C, the provinces of Bengal and Assam.

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1. The Muslim League that had won 453 out of 524 Central and Provincial seats (86.6 per cent votes) in the 1945-46 elections, had become fully justified in its claim to speak on behalf of Muslim India. Sharif al-Mujahid, *Quaid-i Azam Jinnah: Studies in Interpretation* (Karachi: Quaid-i Azam Academy, 1981), 208; I. H. Qureshi, *The Struggle for Pakistan* (Karachi: University of Karachi, 1988), 202-203.

> The Provinces and the states would be the basic units. All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers would be vested in the provinces.[2]

The All India Muslim League Council accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan despite a strong protest against the "unwarranted, unjustified and unconvincing" remarks on Pakistan. The Quaid was convinced that despite certain doubts the basis and foundation of Pakistan were inherent in the Plan by virtue of the compulsory grouping of the six Muslim Provinces in Sections B and C. The Congress leadership considered the League's acceptance of the Plan as Jinnah's sacrifice of the Pakistan demand and the victory of the Congress. Therefore, on July 6th, Abul Kalam Azad stated that:

> The Cabinet Mission's Plan had accepted in all essentials the Congress point of view. It guaranteed the unity of India, while at the same time it held out the necessary assurances to the minorities.[3]

> This, in his view, once for all time cleared all doubts about the question of the division of India. These proposals had made it clear beyond a shadow of doubt that India shall remain an undivided single unit with a strong Central Government composed of the federating units.[4]

H.V. Hodson observed:

> The fatal blow was struck by Jawaharlal Nehru (who had replaced Abul Kalam Azad as the Congress President) in the speech in which he made clear that the Congress would accept the Plan only to destroy it, by seeking to demolish the system of grouping of provinces that was its essence.[5]

Addressing a press conference on July 10, just over a week after the Mission had left India, Jawaharlal Nehru rejected the grouping clause by stating that "there will be no grouping" and that the Union Government would be much stronger than it was

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2. For details see Qureshi, 216-19.

3. A. K. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Karachi: Vanguard Books, 1989), 164; *The Indian Annual Registe,r* Vol.II (Calcutta: N. N. Mitra, 1946), 132.

4. V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Calcutta: Sangam Books, 1957), 269.

5. H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan* (Karachi: Hutchinson, 1969), 527.

thought to be in the Cabinet Mission Plan.[6] He further stated that "What we do there [ in the Constituent Assembly] we are entirely and absolutely free to determine. We have committed ourselves on no single matter to anybody."[7] This statement came as a big surprise even for a nationalist like Abul Kalam Azad. He characterised this statement as "one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history".[8] The "most fiery and provocative statements in his forty years of public life"[9] appeared to be a curse that had been laid on Nehru and his colleagues making them "to act in such a way as to bring about exactly the opposite result to that which they intended. They passionately desired to preserve the unity of India; they consistently acted so as to make its partition certain."[10] Leonard Mosley, much intrigued by Nehru's statement, writes:

> Did Nehru realise what he was saying? He was telling the world that once in power, Congress would use its strength to alter the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought fit. But the Muslim League had accepted the Plan (as had Congress) as a cut and dried scheme to meet objections from both sides. It was a compromise plan, which obviously could not afterwards be altered in favour of one side or another. In the circumstances, Nehru's remarks were a direct act of sabotage.[11]

The British Government's reaction to these interpretations of the Cabinet Mission Plan further confused the situation. Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps called the statements to be not "fair" and "a clear breach of the basic understanding of the scheme."[12]

All these developments made it quite clear that the Cabinet Mission Plan had collapsed and did not leave any fall back position

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6. *Ibid.*, 145-47.
7. Penderel Moon, The British Conquest and Dominion of India (London, 1989), 1153.
8. Azad, 154-55.
9. Michael Brecher, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Political Biography* (London: N.p., 1959), 316.
10. Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit* (London: N.p., 1962), 14.
11. Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj* (London: N.p., 1961), 28.
12. Panderel Moon, 281-82.

from which to negotiate the future of a united independent India. The Cabinet Mission Plan, as set forth in the May 16th statement, had proved itself to be at best a fragile agreement between the Muslims and Hindus. The two communities had been stitched together with overlapping compromises, and a vague hope that the parties to the agreement would agree to setting up a Constituent Assembly to devise a constitution of a "loose federal type". This assembly was also expected to find the ways and means to prevent a division of India. But in the poisoned atmosphere charged with increasing communal antipathy, the certainty of British departure from India as the Cabinet Mission made plain to both the Congress and the Muslim League, brought the perils of civil war closer. It was all due to varying interpretations by the Congress on the nature and powers of the Constituent Assembly, the grouping of the provinces, and the relation of constitutional authority between the Union centre and the provinces unravelled the compromises that had been devised by the Cabinet Mission. The Muslim League on its part felt no longer bound by the Mission's Plan, and withdrew its acceptance. Its response to the Congress's assertions came in the form of an appeal to Muslims throughout India to resort to direct action and demonstrate their support for Pakistan.

Thus, the Muslim League Council met at Bombay on 25 July and reviewed its stand on the Mission's Plan and passed two resolutions. The first resolution stated that the latest developments,

> ... leaves no doubt that in these circumstances the participation of the Muslims in the proposed constitution-making machinery is fraught with danger and the council, therefore, hereby withdraws its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals.

The second resolution stated that:

> ... now the time has come for the Muslim nation to resort to direct action to achieve Pakistan, to assert their just rights, to vindicate their honour and to get rid of the present British slavery and the contemplated future Caste-Hindu domination.[13]

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13. For complete text of the resolution see M. Gwyer and A. Appadorai (eds.) *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution*, 1921-1947, vol.II (Bombay: N. p.,1957), vol.II, 618-21; Sharif al-Mujahid, 502 507.

The Council of the Muslim League called upon the Muslim nation to "stand to a man behind their sole representative and authoritative organization, the All-India Muslim League, and to be ready for every sacrifice."[14]

Quaid-i Azam declared this resolution to mean "goodbye to constitutional methods." Explaining the reason why the Muslim League chose this path, he said that:

> Never before in the whole life history of the Muslim League did we do anything except by constitutional methods and constitutional talks. We are today forced into this position by a move in which both the Congress and Britain have participated. We have been attacked on two fronts — the British front and the Hindu front. Today we have said good-bye to constitutions and constitutional methods. Throughout the painful negotiations, the two parties with whom we bargained held a pistol at us; one with power and machine-guns behind it, and the other with non-co-operation and the threat to launch mass civil disobedience. This situation must be met. We also have a pistol.[15]

He concluded his speech with a couplet by Firdawsi, the Persian poet,

> If you seek peace we do not want war. But if you want war, we will accept it unhesitatingly.[16]

In a statement issued immediately after the Council session, Jinnah declared:

> what we have done today is the most historic act in our history. Never have we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional methods."[17]

The Muslim League Working Committee in its meeting held on 30 July 1946, directed by the Muslim League Council, outlined

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14. *Ibid.*, 500-507.

15. *Ibid.*, Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada ( ed.), *Foundation of Pakistan*, Vol.II (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1970), 560. According to another source, the last sentence of the quotation in was, "Today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it", see, *Indian Annual Register*, 78.

16. *The Dawn*, 30 August 1946.

17. Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, vol.II (Lahore: Mohammad Ashraf, 1964), 325.

a "programme of direct action" to carry out the policy embodied in the resolution, as follows:

> Muslim nation to observe Direct Action Day throughout India on 16 August; Muslims were to "suspend all business and hold public meetings and other demonstrations and reaffirm the two resolutions [rejection of the Cabinet Plan and resort to direct action] passed by the Muslim League Council on July 29,1946."[18]

The language of the program suggests that the League leadership had no negative designs against any community but merely a plan of demonstrations and agitation to reaffirm the political and constitutional decision of the League leadership. Jinnah dispelled all speculations regarding the nature of these public meetings during his press conference on July 31,1946, by stating that the direct action day,

> is not a declaration of war against anybody. This resolution is nothing but a statement concerning the steps that we propose to take for our self-preservation and self-defence.[19]

It is on record that the Quaid-i Azam had spearheaded the Pakistan Movement in a very peaceful and constitutional manner. But when the rights of the Muslim nation were denied to them by sheer use of force on the part of the non-Muslim majority, the Muslim League obviously had to make the other option open. Referring to these circumstances the Quaid-i Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah himself pointed out that during the visit of the Cabinet Mission "the Cabinet Mission and the viceroy were under terror and threats of the Congress."[20]

Therefore, this attitude of the British and the Congress did nothing but to compel the Muslim League to resort to direct action to meet the situation. Similarly, the resolution was not merely a tactical move rather it was a serious one. In the words of the Quaid, "We have taken this decision with full responsibility and all the deliberation possible for a human being, and we mean it."[21]

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18. Indian Annual Register, 2: 177.

19. *Ibid.* 67.

20. Pirzada, II: 312-15, 545.

21. *Ibid.* 561.

The events between 1946 and 1947 suggest that without resorting to direct action the birth of Pakistan would have been impossible. The Muslim League had been demanding a sovereign Muslim state of Pakistan, to be carved out of the Indian subcontinent, claiming the inclusion of Bengal and Punjab, the Muslim majority areas, in Pakistan. This was not acceptable to the Congress. It was in this context that the Muslim League resolved to resort to direct action to get its demand fulfilled.

This radical break in the League's policy not only gave a new and unique turn to its movement but also left an indelible mark on the map of South Asian region. Many scholars dealing with the modern history of the region have portrayed this policy of the League in negative colours.

Therefore this development requires to be analysed in its proper context. The present article is an effort in that direction. The Muslim League's decision to take Direct Action was in fact a response to the Congress' program to force the Muslims to give up their demand for a separate homeland. The Muslim League therefore, felt compelled to bid good-bye to constitutionalism.

These peaceful intentions of the President of the Muslim League have been questioned by most of the Hindu writers. For example Nrindra Nath Mitra, the Editor of the *Indian Annual Register*, has commented that, "But in face of what happened on the enthusiasts of the Muslim League on August 16, 1946, it is not possible to accept the *bonafide* of Mr. Jinnah's declaration.[22] Shila Sen. In has proclaimed similar doubts her view, "whether this meant that Jinnah ruled out bloodshed and civil war is doubtful; it perhaps meant that ... the only alternative was bloodshed and civil war".[23] It seems that while making opinion the historians did not take all aspects of the problem into consideration. As a matter of fact the observance of the Direct Action Day was not a goal of the Muslim League rather it was a means to achieve the goal, i.e., Pakistan, a genuine demand of the Muslims of the Subcontinent.

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22. Indian Annual Register, 67

23. Shila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal, 1937-1947* (New Delhi: Sita Ram Gopal, 1976), 211.

The Muslim League always fought their battle through the constitutional means. But when those peaceful means lost their effectiveness, only then the other option was opened. Besides, the Muslim League never closed the doors for discussions as is evident from the later developments. Generally speaking, there are three alternatives to get just demands accepted: through negotiations, threat of a direct action and direct action itself. In the present case, the Muslim League was using the second option, i.e., they had just proclaimed threat to direct action. Since this threat worked well in achieving their goal the third option seemed to be unnecessary. On the contrary the Indian National Congress, which was practically representing the Hindus, was in the third stage, i.e., direct action in opposing the creation of Pakistan. This has been proved by the events in Calcutta on the Direct Action Day and that will be discussed later in this article. Actually to eliminate responsibilities of the Hindus, their supporters have been trying to make the Muslims responsible for the carnage. To make the Muslim League's position more understandable, the views of Ian Stephen seems to be quite significant.[24] In his view:

> Except in one city (Calcutta) nothing of note except big meetings happened on 'Direct Action Day', 16 August; such evidence as can be found does not show that the League's central leadership planned anything much. Owing to lack of time, arrangements had not yet been thought out. The 'Day', it was explained, was simply to be one when the League Council's resolution would be publicly explained. 'It is nothing but a statement, said Mr. Jinnah, 'concerning the steps which we propose to take for our self-preservation and self-defence'. It was no 'declaration of war' on anybody. The meetings would not in themselves be 'direct action'; and those who came were asked to behave peacefully.[25]

On the other hand the Hindus and their representative organisations like the Indian National Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha continued their efforts to make the proposed direct action day a failure. Members of these organisations inspired the

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24. Ian Stephen has served as Editor and Director of the well-known British newspaper *The Statesman* of both Calcutta and Delhi between 1942 and 1951.

25. Ian Stephen, *Pakistan: Old Country New Nation* (Harmonds Worth: Penguin Books, 1964), 127.

Hindus as well as the Sikhs to prepare them to face any eventualities in making the Muslim campaign a total failure.

Their first target was to undo Bengal government's declaration of a holiday on 16 August. On the other hand the Muslims and the British authorities in support of the public-holiday on the day. These three parties had their own reasons behind their stand and that seems to be worth evaluating to have a clear view of the prevailing situation. The Muslim League leaders supported the declaration of holiday to make the proposed public meeting of the League at the famous Calcutta *Maidan* (ground). They expected a record gathering of two to three hundred thousand Muslims in the meeting.[26] On the other hand, the British authorities supported the public holiday — firstly to save European community and secondly to make it a head-on clashes between the Hindus and Muslims by preventing the exposure of the British nationals particularly the businessmen and the shopkeepers. Although the Hindus mainly criticised H. S. Suhrawardy for the declaration of the holiday but documents sufficiently prove that the British authorities particularly the Governor of Bengal was more anxious to declare a holiday on 16th August 1946. Sir F. Burrows, the Governor of Bengal, in secret report which was sent to the Viceroy Viscount Wavell on 22 August, 1946, said: "the decision [holiday on 16th August] was taken with my full knowledge and approval". He further mentioned in that sentence "you will recall that I mentioned the point to you at Delhi on August 8th".[27] It shows that the decision had the support of the Viceroy as well. It is also not impossible to assume that the Governor would have done so if the ministry were not willing to declare the holiday. The same secret report of the Governor revealed that their intention was to make it a Hindu-Muslim clash not a Muslim-British clash. The Governor mentioned that:

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26. M.A.H. Ispahani, *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah: As I Knew Him* (Karachi: Elite Publishers, 1976), 231.

27. "Governor of Bengal to the Viceroy, 22 August 1946", in Nicholas Mansergh and Penderel Moon, *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, vol. viii (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1979), 294.

> I believe that the action of the Europeans in closing their shops certainly saved them from destruction and helped to channelise the trouble into a straight Hindu-Muslim affair.[28]

The British authorities were successful in their planning to save the Europeans. The Europeans-owned shops remained closed on that day and as a result they received no damage at all.[29]

On the other hand, the Hindus and their representative bodies severely opposed the declaration of a public holiday on 16 August 1946. The Congress members in the Assembly walked out of the Bengal Legislative Assembly on 12 August 1946 in protest against the declaration of a public holiday. The matter was also taken to the upper chamber, i.e. the Bengal Legislative Council on 15 August 1946. On the same day the Council rejected an adjournment motion by 31 to 13 votes, which sought to discuss the declaration of a public holiday.[30] While assessing the reasons behind the Hindu opposition, Sir Francis Tuker has pointed out a very significant aspect:

> One of the causes of their resentment was that, up till now, the Congress had more or less possessed monopoly rights for imposing and enforcing *hartaals* (the closing of shops), paralysing the whole of Calcutta's transport, and for strikes: they thus strongly resented the prospect of any other competitor, especially so formidable a bidder as the Muslim League, entering this highly coveted field of political exploitation.[31]

Hence, the Hindus even held public meetings to oppose the move. As a matter of fact, they used the holiday issue as a means to show their resentment against the struggle for Pakistan. In a meeting which was presided over by the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee President on 14 August 1946 at Ballygunge in Calcutta, K. Roy, and leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Legislative Assembly severely criticised the holiday decision and was of the view that the Hindus will be forced to close their shops and that would lead to clash. He, however, advised the Hindus to

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28. *Ibid.* 294.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Indian Annual Register*, Vol. II, 1946, 15-16.

31. Sir Francis Tuker, *While Memory Serves* (London: Cassell, 1950), 154.

keep their shops open and to continue their business. Commenting on his advice, Sir Francis Tuker has rightly observed, "Mr. Roy himself was setting the stage for the very clash that he feared".[32] One of the local Sikh leader's public statements that in case of riots the Sikhs would back the Congress and would give the Muslims a good lesson suggests that the latter were in league with the Hindus to turn the peaceful Muslim demonstration into a bloody communal battle.[33] The Hindu Mahasabha was also much active in its efforts to sabotage the Muslim League's Direct Action Day. Among other things, the Mahasabha widely circulated a leaflet in which it emphasised that "to observe *hartaal* on August 16 would be helping the League and supporting their demand of Pakistan."[34] All these things sufficiently prove that the Hindus as well as the Sikhs got themselves much prepared to foil the Muslim League's programs to observe the Direct Action Day. It, however, seems to be important to mention once again that the Bengal Muslim League had planned only one program for that day and that was a public meeting at the Calcutta *Maidan* to demonstrate Muslim support to the All-India Muslim League's decision *vis a vis* the Cabinet Mission Plan. Lt. Gen. Sir Francis Tuker has recorded what actually happened on 16 August 1946. In his words:

> At 7:30 a.m. we heard that Hindus had erected barricades at the Tala and Belgachia bridges to prevent Muslims from entering the city and taking their processions to the middle of the town to the Ochterlony Monument where a mammoth Muslim Assembly was to be addressed at 3:00 p.m. by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, the Chief Minister of Bengal.[35]

Such actions on the part of the Hindus had definitely injured the feelings of the Muslims and that might have led to riots. Similarly, the Hindus deliberately kept their shops open as per decision of the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha leaders.[36] To have

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32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. H.S. Suhrawardy, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, read out translation of the leaflet during its debate on the Calcutta killing in the Bengal Legislative Assembly on 19 September 1946. *Indian Annual Register*, II: 192.

35. Francis Tuker, 157.

36. *Ibid.*

a clearer picture of the initial disturbances, citation of a portion of the report prepared by the Governor of Bengal seems to be significant:

> ... reports indicate that the Muslims were in an aggressive mood from early in the day and that their processions were well armed with *lathis*, iron rods and missiles. Their efforts to force Hindu shops to close as they passed through the streets were greeted with showers of brickbats from the roofs above - indication that the Hindus were also not unprepared for trouble and from this sort of exchange of missiles, matters soon degenerated into arson, looting and murder.[37]

Thus the Muslims wanted to make the day a success and the Hindus were well-prepared to make the day a failure and that led to a wide spread riot which lasted for three days. Sporadic casualties, however, continued for several days. According to H. V. Hodson, in first three days some twenty thousand people were killed or seriously injured in Calcutta.[38] Another source while accepting the aforementioned figure of casualties, has written the death toll to be five thousand.[39] According to the Governor of Bengal, by the evening of 19 August 1946, at least two thousand or "substantially more" had been killed.[40] In a written answer to a question in the House of Commons on 18 November 1946 the following casualty figures for Calcutta for the period 16-19 August were given: four thousand dead and ten thousand injured.[41] These figures naturally were based on the counting mostly in the hospitals. Many more casualties in the narrow streets of Calcutta, therefore, must have gone unnoticed by the Government officials.

In the Calcutta riots the Muslims were the worst sufferers. Firstly, their proportion in the population was less than twenty-five per cent and secondly they were not well prepared for the riots, as were the Hindus.[42] According to Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, a

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37. Nicholas Mansergh, 295-96.

38. H. V. Hodson, 166.

39. Altaf Gauhar, *Twenty Years of Pakistan 1947-1967*, (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, 1969), 67.

40. Mansergh, 302.

41. *Ibid.* 303.

42. Ispahani, 234.

prominent writer who was an eyewitness of the events, in the first day of rioting the wounded persons from among every eight persons, seven were Muslims.[43] Khawaja Nazimuddin had also confirmed the truthfulness of this assessment in course of his speech delivered in the Calcutta *Maidan* on 16 August 1946. He said that by "... 11:00 that morning all the injured persons were Muslims, and the Muslim community had only retaliated in self-defence."[44]

The communal riots soon spread to other parts of India particularly to Eastern Bengal, United Provinces and Bihar.[45] Thus communal riots continued in different parts of India for an indefinite period. H. V. Hodson has rightly concluded that:

> ... What is certain is that the Great Calcutta killing set in train a sequence of catastrophe which did not end until many more thousands had died of communal violence and revenge throughout India and Pakistan, indeed which might be said even now to be continuing in the Indo-Pakistan confrontation.[46]

The result of the Direct Action Day Hindu-Muslim communal riots, starting with the "Great killing" in Calcutta which later spread over to other parts of India, raised the spectre of total breakdown of law and order. It led to a civil war situation that could not be controlled should it break out. For the British it now became a matter of time, a race between the transfer of power and the collapse of the civil order. Whatever inhibition might have existed among the British rulers and the Hindus on the wisdom of the partition of India was removed by the orgy of killings in Calcutta. Therefore, the partition of India was decided upon as the quickest way to end the stalemate between the Muslims and the Hindus, and avert the tragedy of a countrywide civil war. Thus a

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43. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, *Otit Diner Sriti* (The Reminiscences of the Past), (Dhaka: N.p., 1968), 298.

44. Mansergh, 297.

45. Allahabad – 31 August, 1946; Bombay – I September 1946; Tripperrah – 9 September 1946; Dhaka – 14 September, 1946; Ahmedabad - 15 September 1946; Chandpur – 17 October 1946; Noakhali – 22 October 1946; Chapra (Bihar) – 27 October 1946; Patna and Bhagalpur – 31 October 1946. For details see the Chronicles of events in *Indian Annual Register*, Vol. II, 1946, 16-41.

46. H. V. Hodson, 167-68.

sharp change took place in the minds of the British Muslims, and the Hindus. They became convinced that the Hindus and the Muslims could not live together peacefully and the creation of a separate Muslim state namely Pakistan was unavoidable. As has been proved by the documents that the Hindus wanted to prevent the Muslims from showing their determination to create Pakistan even if they were adopting peaceful means. But their plan, of course, misfired and practically the events of Calcutta re-doubled the Muslim determination.[47]

Quaid-i Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah remained cool even after such massive killings of the Muslims. While giving an interview to a foreign press after the Calcutta killing he observed about the Muslim Leagues future plans that,

> I cannot give any indication of the programme to be adopted but we are fully alive to the fact that any programme that we may put into operation should be based on peaceful means.[48]

He, however, saw no other alternative except,

> The outright establishment of Pakistan which means freedom both for Hindus and Muslims and will enable them to live peacefully and as friendly neighbours without the help of British arms.[49]

The Quaid was convinced that the whole of India was on the brink of a civil war involving its four hundred million Hindus, Muslims and small minorities.[50] This does not mean that he was supporting such a civil war rather this was the conclusion that he drew from the communal riots in Calcutta and other places in India.[51] As far as his feelings are concerned that has rightly been pointed out by M. A. H. Ispahani, who observed:

> For months he could not get over what happened in Calcutta. He expressed his grief over the massacre of innocent Muslims and

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47. Ispahani, 233.

48. Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, II: 325.

49. *Ibid.*327.

50. A.M. Zaidi (ed.), *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought 1857-1947*, vol. VI, 1942-1947 Freedom At Lost (N.p: S. Chand & Co., N.d.), 464.

51. *Ibid.*

equally he was sorry over the death of those Hindus who had been killed though they had nothing to do with the political conflicts.[52]

The events of Calcutta fully convinced him that undivided India would mean continuous bloodshed. Commenting on the Calcutta killings, Jinnah once told M. A. H. Ispahani "This proves that the treatment the Muslims should expect from the Hindu majority if they exist as a minority in undivided India."[53] In such a situation the Quaid had visualised only two choices i.e., a civil war or a peaceful settlement through negotiations.[54]

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52. Ispahani, 234.

53. *Ibid.*

54. This observation he made during an interview with the Associated Press of America at Bombay on 10 September, 1946. He stated that the choice of a civil war "would ruin the Hindu and Muslim nations alike, and from which, I hope, we can be spared, although we are nearer to it than many persons seem to able to realise or willing to admit". See A.M. Zaidi, 464-65.

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