

Presidents of The All-India Muslim League 1906-1947: An Assessment

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ABSTRACT: This research article provides an assessment of the permanent presidents of the All-India Muslim League (AIML) with special emphasis on their organizational leadership and political services during the period from 1906 to 1947. The main purpose of the study is to explore how various presidents of the League determined the direction of the party across diverse political contexts, fostered Muslim political consciousness, and played their role in advancing the Muslim political cause in pre-partition India. In this regard, the leadership and services of Sir Aga Khan, Raja Sahib Mahmudabad, A. K. Fazlul Haq, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi and others have been analyzed in detail. In order to highlight their educational, political, social and organizational capabilities, the study also encompasses brief biographies of these leaders. The research focuses on the political evolution of the AIML, its leadership challenges, intra-party differences and various phases of division and unity. Special attention has been given to the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who served as the League President twice for separate and extended periods. It examines his temporary separation from the League, his re-emergence on the Indian political scene, the strategies he adopted to foster Muslim unity, respond to the Congress and British policies, reorganize the AIML, and realize its political motives. It also explores Jinnah's significant role in the Pakistan Movement. It is qualitative research and relies on both primary and secondary sources. The relevant collected data were evaluated through the content analysis method.

KEYWORDS: All-India Muslim League, Presidents, Sir Aga Khan, Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi, Reorganization of the AIML

Introduction

The AIML, founded in December 1906, was a political party of the Indian Muslims. Following the example of other political parties, most notably the Indian National Congress (INC), it framed its constitution and established a comprehensive institutional structure. The party's composition consisted of annual sessions, the Council, the Working Committee and various provincial and local units. The governing body of the AIML was composed of a President, several Vice-Presidents, one Honorary Secretary and two Joint Honorary Secretaries (Article 25 of the ML's Rules). It had its headquarters and its own funds (Articles 36-38 of the ML's Rules). The organization required its members to fulfill various eligibility criteria for enrollment. During its formative years, the party comprised four hundred members who were elected from various Indian provinces by members of the different provincial branches

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of the AIML. Only Muslims who were British subjects aged 25 or above were eligible for its membership for a five-year term and were allowed to seek re-election. Payment of a registration fee and annual subscription was required for all members of the party (Articles 3-10 of ML's Rules).

Since every political organization operates under a leader, the AIML also had its own leader, who was known as the President. The party President may be termed as a permanent President in a relative sense to distinguish his position from the sessional President. The fundamental difference between these two positions lies in their duration and responsibilities; the permanent President functioned as the principal leader of the party, holding his position for a three-year term, after which he could be re-elected, while the sessional President was elected simply to preside over the annual meeting of the AIML, subsequent to which the office ceased to exist. Until 1930, the term of the office of the permanent President was fixed for a period of three years, whereas after 1930, it was fixed for only one year and was renewed annually during a meeting of the League's Council. Six persons were elected as vice-presidents. Afterward, their strength was raised to twenty, and in 1937 the position of the vice-president was completely abolished. The President of the party had the power to postpone the session of the AIML and to drive a member out of the party on account of violation of the party's decision and constitution. Although the League's initial constitutions provided for the office of the party President, the position was nominal. However, in 1943, a new section was formally inserted into the constitution, conferring well-defined constitutional powers upon the party President (League's Rules 1943, Section: 33).

After the establishment of the AIML in 1906, it had several Presidents from that time until 1947. The first President of the party was Sir Aga Khan. After him, Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad and Maulvi Fazlul Haq served as Presidents respectively. Later, Muhammad Ali Jinnah was elected as President, whose first tenure extended from 1919 to 1930. When a split occurred within the League in 1927, Sir Muhammad Shafi led the Shafi Group. Similarly, after Jinnah left for England in the 1930s, Sir Zafrullah Khan was elected as the Party President, but the condition of the AIML deteriorated and it once again split into the Aziz Group and the Hidayat Group. Each of these groups had its own separate President, namely Mian Abdul Aziz and Hafiz Hidayat Hussain. Later, these groups were reunited in 1934, and Jinnah was unanimously elected as the permanent President of the united body, a position he held until 1947. All these presidents will be discussed in detail in chronological order with their short life sketches.

Sir Aga Khan (1906-13)

Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan (1877-1957) of Persian descent, born in Karachi in 1877, at the house of Aly Shah (Aga Khan II), was the 48th spiritual head of his Shia Ismaili Muslim sect; a hereditary position which he held from August 1885 until his demise in July 1957 (Khan, 1954: 7-8). His life has been a bridge between different and completely distinct eras in many ways. He has witnessed both the colonial era and the modern era. He has seen the eras of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and George V (Khan, 1954: 1). In 1902 he was invited by Edward VII to attend his coronation. In November 1902, he was asked by the Viceroy Lord Curzon to join his Legislative Council. He accepted this offer and remained a member of the Council for two years (Khan, 1954: 72-73). The Indian nationalist leader, Gokhale (1866-1915), had a significant influence on Aga Khan's thoughts and outlook. During his two-year term in the Legislative Council, he realized that the Congress party failed to understand and represent Muslim aspirations, and all his efforts to create unity failed (Khan, 1954: 74-75).

Aga Khan was a strong supporter of higher education for the Muslims. He visited the MAO College, Aligarh in 1895-96 and met its founders Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98) and Nawab Muhsin-ul-Mulk (1837-1907). He made efforts to improve the financial condition of the college (Khan, 1954: 35). After Sir Syed, he played a substantial role in strengthening the political position of the Indian Muslims and made significant contributions to

the Muslim University Aligarh and the Pakistan movement (Ahmad, 2017). He presided over the Mohammadon Educational Conference (a forum founded by Sir Syed in 1886) held at Delhi and spoke on the Aligarh project to convert it into a central Muslim University. For this purpose, more than three million rupees, including his own contribution of 100,000 rupees, were collected by him (Khan, 1954:77& 115). On October 1, 1906, Aga Khan led the famous Simla Deputation and presented the demands of the Muslims, including separate electorates, before the Viceroy Lord Minto. These demands were incorporated in the Indian Council Act of 1909. In order to ensure the separate representation was effective, the Muslims needed a separate political party. Therefore, Aga Khan, along with his Muslim friends, including Syed Amir Ali (1849-1928), a jurist and author of several books on Islamic history, and Mohsin-ul-Mulk, felt the importance of a separate organization for the Indian Muslims and founded the AIML in December 1906 at Dhaka. After adopting the first constitution of the AIML in 1907, Sir Aga Khan was unanimously appointed the first permanent President of the League in March 1908. At that time, Sir Aga Khan was abroad (Khan, 1954: 85). He did not personally attend this session but was informed by wire (Pirzada, 1969: 23, 27). In his response, the Aga Khan stated that although he would have gladly preferred someone else to be appointed as President and himself remained only a member, he felt that such a decision might be misunderstood as a lack of patriotism. Therefore, he gladly accepted the office. Until January 1910, no meeting of the League was attended by Aga Khan (Rahman, 1970: 58). He served as the leader of the AIML until December 1913 (Pirzada, 1969: 282). When Muhammad Ali Jinnah joined the AIML in 1913 and convinced the Muslim leaders to amend the League's constitution by including the demand for self-government in its objectives, Aga Khan felt uncomfortable and resigned from the presidency of the AIML. He even discontinued his financial assistance for the League. In principle, he had nothing against constitutional advance, but he believed that India should first achieve social and educational progress and harmony among its communities. He warned against hastening towards self-government before the country was fully prepared (Noman, 1942: 63). He considered it a premature policy. However, Aga Khan was not fully dedicated to his position and did not give adequate time to the League as he undertook annual visits to Europe after 1907 (Khan, 1954: 104). He supported the Khilafat cause and participated as a member of the deputation that met Prime Minister Lloyd George to safeguard the integrity and sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire (Khan, 1954: 149, 154-55).

From 1924 to 1928, Aga Khan devoted almost entirely to his private life and took little part in public affairs (Khan, 1954: 168 & 206). On December 31, 1928 he was asked to preside over the meeting of the All Parties Muslim Conference (APMC) convened in Delhi which proposed a number of amendments to the Nehru Report, including a federal system of government, the continuation of separate electorates and weightage for the Muslims in the Hindu dominated provinces, and adequate Muslim representation in the central as well as provincial cabinets (Aziz, 1972: 53-56). While the constitutional and political struggle for Muslim rights continued in India, another platform for advancing the Indian cause was provided in London in the form of Round Table Conferences (1930-32). A number of Muslim delegates, including Aga Khan as the chairman of the British Indian delegation, participated in these conferences. In his speech in the First Conference, he appealed to the British government to design a federal constitutional framework for India acceptable to the Muslims, Hindus, princely states, and minorities, safeguard British commercial interests, and grant India full self-government at the earliest opportunity on the basis of such an agreed system (Indian RTC cmd. 3778: 180-81). Sir Aga Khan attended all three sessions of the RTC and played a significant role as a member of various important sub-committees, particularly the Joint Parliamentary Committee. He demanded, and the Communal Award was announced (Majumdar, 1963: 128). He represented India at several international forums like the World Peace Conference held at Geneva, and the Assembly of the League of Nations. He was the only Asian to be elected as President of the League of Nations Assembly in 1937 (Mujahid, 1981: 664). He died on July 11, 1957, and was buried in Egypt (Ikram, 1970: 196).

Raja Sahib Mahmudabad (1913-18)

Muhammad Ali Muhammad Raja Mahmudabad (1879-1931), a poet, well-wisher of Muslim education, and a great landowner, was the second President of the AIML. He was born in 1879 in the town of Mahmudabad in Sitapur, a district of the United Provinces. After the demise of his father, Raja Amir Hassan Khan Bahadur, he inherited the estate of Mahmudabad. He had shown interest in the administrative affairs of the state since the time he was the heir apparent. After succession, he actively participated in the works of public welfare (Shadani, 1986: 50). He rendered significant role in Indian politics and in the field of education for the Muslims. In recognition of these services, he was honoured with several distinguished titles. He served as a member of the UP legislative council from 1904 to 1909 and from 1907 to 1920 he remained a member of the Governor General's Council (Mujahid, 1981: 699). Due to his profound commitment to Muslim education he actively participated in the activities of Mohammadon Educational Conference (Shadani, 1986: 50). When in 1920, the Muslim University Aligarh was established through the efforts of Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk (183-1915) and Sir Aga Khan, Raja Mahmudabad, was appointed its first Vice-Chancellor while Begum Sahiba Waliya Bhopal was appointed as first Chancellor (Mangloori, 1945: 244-45). He spent a great deal of money on education. He granted a total of one *lakh* rupees in a single contribution, allocating fifty thousand rupees each to the Muslim University Aligarh and Lucknow Medical College (Shadani, 1986: 50). He actively participated in national movements like Cawnpore Mosque agitation (1913) and the boycott movement against the Simon Commission (1927) (Chaudhuri, 1946: 35). His Butler Palace, Lucknow, was a sort of parliament house for the leading figures of the AIML, Congress and Khilafat Movement. Raja Sahib provided all kinds of support to the League (Shadani, 1986: 53).

After the resignation of Sir Aga Khan, Raja Sahib Mahmudabad was chosen as the President of the AIML in December 1913. The League remained without a permanent President for the following two years (1913-15), as no annual session of the party was convened during this period. Under the League's rules (Article 26-28), the President could be elected only at an annual session. Accordingly, at the Bombay session convened on December 30, 1915, Raja Sahib was elected as the next President of the AIML (Pirzada, 1969: 324-27, 359). Raja Sahib assumed the office at a critical juncture in Indian politics. On the one hand, the First World War had already broken out, exerting a profound influence on Indian politics and British Imperial policies. On the other hand, the Congress and the AIML had embarked upon a policy of political rapprochement and collaboration, aimed at achieving self-government, in which M.A. Jinnah played a significant role. During his three-year tenure (1915-18) as the elected President, the historic Lucknow Pact was signed. During this period, Raja Sahib chaired only two meetings of the League, both of which were held jointly with the Congress at the same time and place. One of these sessions was held at Calcutta (December 30, 1917), where Raja Sahib delivered the presidential address on behalf of Muhammad Ali Jauhar. During the address, he urged the government to release the detained Muslim leaders and called for the protection of the integrity and sanctity of the Muslim holy places. Various resolutions condemning Hindu-Muslim riots and reaffirming separate electorates were passed (Pirzada, 1969: 425-34). As it was the time when the Montague Declaration had already been announced in August 1917, the declaration was welcomed, and the British government was urged to establish a progressive and responsible government in India. The declaration was followed by the publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report in June 1918. To consider the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Scheme, the League immediately called its special session at Bombay on August 31, 1918 (Pirzada, 1969: 444). The meeting thanked the British Parliament for recognizing the principle of responsible self-government for India (Pirzada, 1969: 447). It reaffirmed Muslim loyalty and rejected the Indian constitutional reforms report's claim that Indians were unfit for responsible government. It also denounced the Rowlatt Committee Report (Pirzada, 1969: 465-72).

At the expiration of his first term, Raja Sahib was re-elected as President of the AIML on December 30, 1918. However, two months later, on February 28, 1919, he tendered his resignation, along with Syed Wazir Hasan (Honorary Secretary) and Azhar Ali (Honorary Joint Secretary). However, with the end of the First World War in 1918, and the beginning of the Khilafat Movement, the League's political activities declined considerably. The Khilafat Conference and the party of the Ulema came into existence. Religious fervour over the Khilafat issue intensified, which further exacerbated Hindu-Muslim riots and inflamed religious sentiments. As a consequence, the League found it difficult to sustain its separate and independent political platform. Raja Sahib presided over the League session in December 1928. Resolutions regarding the issue of the Nehru Report and APMC were adopted (Ahmad, 2006: 36). He died in 1931.

Not only did Raja Sahib himself remain close to Jinnah and AIML, but his most well-known son, Muhammad Amir Ahmad Khan (1914-73), was also closely associated with the League and Jinnah. He founded the subsidiary body All-India Muslim Students Federation. He was a member of the League Working Committee and served as the League's Treasurer until 1947 (Mujahid, 1981: 700).

Abul Kasim Fazlul Haq (April-December 1919)

Abul Kasim Fazlul Haq (1873-1962), widely known as Sher-i-Bengal, was a lawyer by profession. Born in October 1873, in District Barisal of East Bengal (now Bangladesh), he devoted himself to the educational, political and social uplift of Muslim Bengal (Mujahid, 1981: 683). After the partition of Bengal in 1905, he was appointed as Deputy Collector of the newly created province of Eastern Bengal and Assam by the Lieutenant Governor Sir Bampfylde Fuller, but in 1912 he resigned and restarted his legal practice at Calcutta High Court (Ikram, 1970: 279). In 1913 he was elected as a member to the Bengal legislative council and held this position until 1954, when he assumed the office of Governor of East Pakistan. In 1913, he was also appointed as General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial League. Along with his political activities, Fazlul Haq also launched his peasant movement in 1915, which ultimately led to the establishment of Krishak Proja Party (Allana: 1985: 204-05). He was among the signatories of the historic Lucknow Pact (1916) under which the Muslims of Bengal were granted 40% of the elected seats. The rise from 10.4% representation, as provided under the 1909 Act, to 40%, marked a substantial improvement (Ikram, 1970: 179). In December 1918, the Delhi session of AIML was presided over by Fazlul Haq. During this time, he was also the General Secretary of the INC. In his presidential address, he spoke openly on the Khilafat cause. He urged unity between the Hindus and the Muslims for India's political progress and strongly denounced the Hindu-Muslim riots.

When in February 1919, Raja Sahib resigned from his position and the Aga Khan was unwilling to assume the presidency, the League's Council, on April 19, 1919, appointed Fazlul Haq as the acting and third President of the AIML (Report, 1919, Vol. 86). He held this office for merely eight months (April 1919 to December 1919). He sought to take an active part in party affairs but was restrained by the central office. He was informed that, as President, his principal responsibility was to supervise its general policy. However, it was made clear that his directions on particular matters would receive full compliance (FMA, Vol. 80).

Fazlul Haq was among the members of the Inquiry Committee established by the Congress to probe the April 1918 Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. As an active member in the Khilafat Movement, he chaired the Delhi Khilafat Conference in 1920. He left the Congress on account of its non-co-operation movement. The establishment of Islamia College Calcutta in July 1926 was the result of his short term as Education Minister in 1924 (Ikram, 1970: 280). Fazlul Haq also participated in all three sessions of the RTC (1930-32). He was installed as the Chief Minister of Bengal in 1937, heading a coalition government of AIML, Proja Party, independents and others. The most prominent contribution of Fazlul Haq to the Pakistan Movement was the famous Lahore resolution, which he moved

at the League's session in March 1940 (Pirzada, 1970: 341). However, he was removed from the League on December 10, 1941, for violating the League's constitution, refusing to resign from the National Defence Council and leveling false allegations against Jinnah (QAF, File No. 109: 80-81), but was allowed to rejoin in September 1946. After the creation of Pakistan, he served as the Chief Minister and Governor of East Pakistan (Mujahid, 1981: 683). He died on April 27, 1962, and was buried in Dhaka.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah: First Phase (1920-30)

Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), an outstanding scion of the Khoja family of Jinnah Poonja and Mithibai and a distinguished lawyer of Bombay who got a Bar-at-Law degree from Lincoln's Inn, England, was born in Karachi on December 25, 1876. Influenced by the liberal and constitutional political leadership of the INC, he commenced his political journey from its platform in 1904 (Ahmad 1996: 70-71). In 1909, he was elected as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council (Wolpert, 2004: 32). In October 1913, he joined the AIML and very soon emerged as a prominent political figure and played a significant role in promoting Hindu-Muslim unity for getting a remarkable political position for both communities in the British colonial administrative setup. From 1913 onwards, Jinnah was a member of both the AIML and INC, and he played a crucial role in initiating an era of political cooperation and unity between the two great communities. In this regard, the well-known Congress-League Pact of 1916, for which Jinnah was honored with the title of Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity, stood as a magnum opus of his efforts. Jinnah was elected the fourth President of the AIML in December 1919 (Pirzada, 1969: 502-40), and he held this office until 1930.

The decade 1920 to 1930 was a significant and challenging political and constitutional period in the political journey of Jinnah. This era marked Jinnah's first episode as President of the AIML (Khan, 2025: 419-32). After the culmination of the First World War in November 1918, the British Government did not fulfill its promises of self-government with India. Provincial autonomy was restricted under the new system of Dyarchy introduced in the Act of 1919. These reforms were not enough to satisfy the public, and they created a sense of political discontent. The Muslims, with the cooperation of the Congress under Gandhi, launched the Khilafat Movement for the protection of the Ottoman Empire. Jinnah, a staunch constitutionalist, was not in favour of such a movement. He resigned from the Congress in December 1920, when it decided to launch a non-cooperation Movement (Bolitho, 1966: 85). The Hindu-Muslim unity continued to some extent up to the Khilafat Movement; however, after that, communal riots increased, and mutual trust between the two communities faded away (Mangloori, 1945: 399-418). This became the greatest challenge for Jinnah: how to preserve Hindu-Muslim unity. During this period, the Ulema came forward in politics with Jamait-i-Ulema-i-Hind (JUH) and the Khilafat Committee, and religious sentiments were introduced in politics. The League lost political prestige and public support. It was reduced to merely holding annual sessions and passing resolutions with no visible practical action on the record. This was another critical challenge for Jinnah. He faced the challenges of separate versus joint electorates, the Simon Commission, the factional disputes in the AIML, federation, provincial autonomy, and the Nehru Report (1928). Like his predecessors, he showed little interest in party affairs during his time as permanent President (Afzal, 2013: 36). However, despite these challenges he adhered to the constitutional approach and adopted a clear stance for the rights of Muslims and kept intact the League's separate political identity preventing it from being merged into any provincial or other influential political organizations like the Congress and All-Parties Muslim Conference (AIMC) (Khan, 2025: 419-32).

Sir Muhammad Shafi and a Period of Factional Leadership (1927-30)

In 1927, the AIML divided into two factions. Why did the League divide and what factors led to the emergence of divided leadership within the party? All these questions will be answered while presenting the biography of Sir

Muhammad Shafi (1869-1932). In the same context, the study will also cover Jinnah's period of presidentship up to 1930.

Educated as a Bar-at-Law in England, champion of the Muslim separate electorates and one of the leading figures of Muslim Punjab, Sir Muhammad Shafi was born on March 10, 1869, in Lahore. He was the father of Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz (1896-1979), one of the women participants in the RTC (1930-32). He started his political career in 1898 and joined the Mohammedan Defense Association of Upper India (Shah, 2013: 31). He was one of the founding leaders of the AIML. After Sir Syed's demise in 1898, Sir Shafi refused to allow Muslims to join the Congress camp (Pirzada, 1969: xxx). Therefore, he proposed the establishment of a separate Muslim political organization to be known as AIML, in an article published in the *London Observer* (Mujahid, 1981: 718). He was one of the prominent participants of the Simla Deputation (1906) (Mujahid, 1990: 101-02). When the AIML was established in December 1906, Sir Shafi was appointed to its provisional committee to draft the party's constitution (FMA, Vol. 2).

Prior to the foundation of the AIML, there was a League in the Punjab, which was established by Fazl-i-Husain in February 1906. On December 4, 1907, Sir Shafi established another provincial branch of the League in the Punjab. However, the differences were settled in the AIML's first annual session in December 1907, and these two groups were merged into a single provincial league. The new body was headed by Mian Shah Din as President while Sir Shafi and Fazl-i-Husain were appointed General Secretary and Joint Secretary respectively (Pirzada, 1969: 21-22). However, this split re-emerged in the 1930s.

Sir Shafi expressed his reservations about the 1909 Act as it failed to provide adequate representation and separate electorates to the Punjab (Shah, 2013: 39). After a few years of its establishment, the League brought its constitution in line with that of the Congress and incorporated a section on achievement of self-government. This amendment was made in March 1913, during the League's annual session held at Lucknow, which was presided over by Sir Shafi (Afzal, 2013: 30). Sir Shafi was also a member of the sixty-member committee constituted by Jinnah at the Bombay League session (1915) to formulate a scheme of reforms (Pirzada, 1969: 354-62). He also served as a member of the Imperial and Punjab Legislative Councils from 1909 to 1919. Subsequently, he was included as a member in the Viceroy's Executive Council, where he served until 1924 (Mujahid, 1981: 718).

In March 1927, a meeting of Muslim leaders was called at Delhi by Jinnah in which Sir Shafi also participated, to discuss the issue of separate versus joint electorates. During the meeting, the widely known Delhi Proposals were passed (FMA, Vol. 163). However, these proposals made a compromise on the principles of separate electorates to which Sir Shafi was not prepared to accept, and this gave rise to a distinct faction within the League. Following the announcement of the arrival of the Simon Commission and the controversy over separate electorates, the AIML split into two factions. In December 1927, two sessions of the League were held. Jinnah Group, which boycotted the Simon Commission, gathered at Calcutta under Maulvi Muhammad Yaqub's presidency. It is pertinent to mention here that in 1919 an amendment was made in the League's constitution restricting the tenure of the permanent President to a maximum of two consecutive terms. Thus, according to the League's rules, when Jinnah completed his second term in 1927, he was ineligible for re-election, but the League's rules were amended during the meeting of the Jinnah Group and such limitation was lifted to enable Jinnah to seek a third term (Afzal, 2013: 36).

The other Group which co-operated with the Commission assembled under Sir Shafi at Lahore and it elected him as the President of the party, Allama Iqbal (1877-1938) as General Secretary and Hasrat Mohani (1875-1951) as Joint Secretary (Pirzada, 1970: 107-11& 136). Thus an era of factional leadership emerged within the AIML. Each faction regarded itself as a legitimate legal entity. The Shafi League was not ready to accept Jinnah as the League's President, as his term had expired from January 1927 (Pirzada, 1970: 137-38). In response to Birkenhead's challenge,

the Congress Committee produced the Nehru Report in August 1928. During the period when the Nehru Report was being prepared, Jinnah was in England (April 1928 to October 1928) (Mujahid, 1981: 555). To consider the Report, the Congress called an All-Parties National Convention (APNC) at Calcutta in December 1928. The Indian political parties were invited to participate in the convention. To participate in the APNC and to seek the opinions of the League on the Nehru Report, Jinnah convened a meeting of the League at Calcutta under Raja Mahmudabad. The meeting appointed a twenty-three-member delegation under Jinnah with three amendments to be made in the Report (Pirzada, 1970: 144-45). This was the first draft of Jinnah's Fourteen Points. However, these were totally rejected (Qureshi, 1969: 48).

The Shafi League called a conference known as APMC at Delhi on December 31, 1928 under Sir Aga Khan (Mangloori, 1945: 429). This conference proposed five amendments in the Nehru Report, including federal form of government and separate electorates (Aziz, 1972: 53-56). Both groups of the League attended the Muslim Conference. A hope for reunification of the two factions was expressed. On March 3, 1929, both the groups under Jinnah's chairmanship participated in the League's Council meeting held at Delhi (Riaz, 1967: 165). This meeting was followed by other combined meetings of the two groups. Jinnah's League took a U-turn from the Delhi Proposals and on March 28, 1929, in a combined meeting of the two groups, Jinnah presented his Fourteen Points which also included the demand for separate electorates. However, the Shafi League declined to join the open session. Nevertheless, some Muslim leaders passed a resolution in favour of the Nehru Report, when Jinnah was busy in negotiations with the leaders of the APMC at the house of Hakim Ajmal Khan.

These leaders, with Abul Kalam Azad among them, resolved to back the Congress in its civil disobedience movement (Mangloori, 1945: 431-32). However, Jinnah's scheme became an axis of unity between the two rival groups. With the failure of the Simon Commission and the Nehru Report to resolve India's political and constitutional deadlock, the Government of India decided to convene the Round Table Conferences in London. The aim was to reach a settlement that would be acceptable to all the people of India as well as the major political parties. When the Viceroy Lord Irwin announced on October 31, 1929, the convening of the Round Table Conference (RTC) in London, Sir Shafi, Jinnah and other Muslim delegates were invited to participate (Wolpert, 2004: 109). With the emergence of a group under Sir Fazl-i-Hussain (1877-1936), in Punjab, comprising Sir Zafrullah Khan (1893-1985) and Feroz Khan Noon (1893-1970) in early 1930, Sir Shafi found himself politically isolated and requested Jinnah to merge his group with the League (Hasan, 1976: 50). Thus on February 28, 1930, both the rival groups merged, and a single united League was re-established with Muhammad Ali Jinnah as the President (FMA, Vol. 186). However, prior to the expiration of his third term as President of the united League on December 31, 1930, Muhammad Ali Jinnah left for England in October 1930 (FMA, Vol. 194). Sir Shafi also went to London in 1930, where both of them participated in the first two sessions of the RTC (1930-31). In both the sessions, along with other Muslim leaders, Sir Shafi and Jinnah strongly supported the separate electorates and federal constitution for India with provincial autonomy (Shah, 2013: 50). Jinnah did not return to India and remained in England for four years while Sir Shafi was re-elected as President of the League in March 1931, till the appointment of regular election but due to Sir Shafi's presence abroad and in December 1931, his appointment as member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, he could not preside over the session (FMA Vol. 160). He did not live long and breathed his last on January 7, 1932.

The Period of Organizational Crisis (1930-34): Re-emergence of Jinnah and Revival of the AIML (Second Phase: 1934-1947)

The period from 1930 to 1934 was politically an unstable phase for the AIML. In 1930, Jinnah said goodbye to the Indian politics and opted to live in London. The League lost its leaders like Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar (1878-

1931) and Sir Muhammad Shafi in January 1931 and January 1932, respectively. The leadership of Aga Khan was not very effective as he sought power without responsibility and was unwilling to relinquish the health resources of France and Switzerland (Ikram, 1970: 357). The League found itself in a dormant state. Although its annual session continued to be held, its membership began to decline (Pirzada, 1969: lxvi). In 1927, the number of League members was 1330, and when Allama Iqbal was presiding over its Allahabad session in 1930, even the quorum for the meeting was not met. Annual sessions were often convened in private houses. The annual subscription fee was brought down from six rupees to one rupee, whereas the admission fee was abolished altogether (Sayeed, 1968: 176-77). The central League lost its control over its provincial branches. Several new political parties emerged at the provincial level (Sayeed, 1968: 296). Some leaders appealed to the Muslims to support the INC (Mangloori, 1945: 528-29 & 553-59). While some like Fazl-i-Husain attempted to merge the League with AIMC (Shahid, 1999: 262). A number of members refused to accept the League's authority, and proposed that all the Muslims should rally under the banner of AIMC. Some members asked to have their names removed from the League's membership list (FMA, Vol. 608). Such a situation caused once again a split in the League.

During this period, the League witnessed the leadership of three presidents, a period marked by growing organizational dissension. As Sir Shafi could not preside over the twenty-second annual session, the League's Council on December 6, 1931, elected Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan (1893-1985) as the President for the coming session (FMA, Vol. 160). Sir Zafrullah Khan was born in Sialkot in 1893 (Khan, 2004). He held prominent positions both before and after the creation of Pakistan. He served as the President of the League (1931-32) and one of the prominent Muslim delegates to the RTC 1930-32). In December 1939, he led the Indian delegation to the League of Nations. After the creation of Pakistan, he served as the country's first Foreign Minister (1947-54), Judge of the International Court of Justice (1954-61), represented Pakistan as its permanent representative at the United Nations (1961-64), and a President of the UN General Assembly (1962-63) (Mujahid, 1981: 696).

Sir Zafrullah presided over the 22nd open session of the AIML on December 26, 1931. This was the time when the British government was discussing the political future of India with the Indian leaders, giving them the opportunity to speak openly on the matter. In his presidential address, Sir Zafrullah Khan referred to the division of subjects between the central and provincial governments and the three-list system proposed in the RTC. He emphasized the Indianization of the army and also stressed that in provinces with a Muslim majority like Punjab and Bengal, the Muslims should be given representation proportional to their population. Later, during the session, various resolutions were passed regarding separate electorates, granting the NWFP political rights equal to other provinces of India, introducing constitutional reforms there, and unity of AIMC with the AIML. A resolution related to a series of proposed amendments to the League's constitution was also passed and ratified (Pirzada, 1970: 179-93). An amendment regarding the term of office of the party President was also extended to Sir Zafrullah, who was elected for a term of one year until the next annual session (FMA, Vol. 160). This was the first time that the term of office of the party President was reduced to one year. Following the appointment of Sir Zafrullah Khan to the Viceroy Executive Council in June 1932 (Abdullah, 1933, p. 7), Mian Abdul Aziz was elected acting President until the appointment of the permanent President. Abdul Aziz, a Bar-at-Law, belonged to Peshawar. He got his education in Peshawar and England and joined the London ML. He spent the rest of his life in Japan and died in 1946. After his appointment as the League's president, he violated the party's constitution and refused to leave the office. He declared the position of the Secretary vacant, although Muhammad Yaqub was holding the post at that time. He also postponed the League's session which had been scheduled for December 1933. Abdul Aziz wanted to preside over the upcoming session, but the exercise of unconstitutional powers removed him from office in May 1933, and Hafiz Hidayat Hussain (d. December, 1935), a barrister and a member of the UP legislative council, was appointed as the

President for the upcoming session. As a result, the League experienced another split, forming the Aziz group and the Hidayat Group. Thus, in 1933, the twenty-third annual session was held at two places: one at Howrah (West Bengal) under the presidentship of Abdul Aziz, which was declared unconstitutional and the other at Delhi under the chairmanship of Hidayat Hussain. This group made a firm determination to integrate both the rival groups. Consequently, both factions met at Delhi on March 4, 1934, leading to their unification and elected Jinnah as President of the united League, and he was requested to return to India. Jinnah returned to India in October 1935 and on December 30, 1935, was re-elected President of the AIML. From 1934 to 1947, the League remained under Jinnah's leadership and during this period he was elected as the party's President every year.

In 1936, Jinnah embarked on the re-organisation of the AIML. He appointed Liaquat Ali Khan (1895-1951) as the League's General Secretary (Pirzada, 1970: 263). Jinnah was authorized to make central and provincial elections boards for contesting the coming provincial elections under the 1935 Act. Jinnah not only launched a campaign to contest the elections, but also undertook the reorganization of the provincial branches of the AIML for which he conducted visits across various Indian provinces. On May 21, 1936, a 56-member Central Parliamentary Board was announced (Ahmad, 1992: 45-47). Various provincial and religious political parties were granted representation on this board (Afzal, 2013: 207-8). The board announced its agenda for the upcoming elections (Khaliquzzaman, 1961: 417). With the exception of Bombay, Jinnah faced challenges of some kind in establishing parliamentary boards in UP, Punjab, Bengal, Madras, Assam and CP. No boards were made in NWFP, Sind, Orissa and Bihar (Afzal, 2013: 210-17). Out of 1585 seats in the various provincial legislatures, the League got 108 seats out of 489 reserved Muslim seats, while it secured 12 seats in the upper chambers of Bengal, Madras and Bombay (Cmd. 5589). The INC won 704 seats in the lower chambers and 50 seats in the upper chambers of provincial legislatures and obtained a major victory in five provinces, namely CP, Madras, Bihar, UP and Orissa. However, its performance in Muslim-majority provinces was poor (Qureshi, 1969: 64-65).

As President of the League, Jinnah expressed his gratification with the party's performance. He extended congratulations to the Muslim community and kept their confidence and morale high (Ahmad, 1992: 128). He asserted that the League contested these elections with limited resources and got success beyond expectations (Ahmad, 1968: 42). The results of the elections and formation of the Congress governments in eight of the eleven provinces of India without forming any coalition with the League intensified Jinnah's efforts to reorganize or establish district and provincial branches of the AIML. Amendments were made in the League's constitution so that every member would pay their annual fee and other charges on time, failing which their names would be removed from the party membership list (FMA, Vol. 22). The age limit for membership of the League was reduced to 18 years. The number of its Council was increased to 465 (and to 475 in 1943) and its membership fee was reduced to six rupees (Hasan, 1976: 328). Participation of students and women in the League was encouraged. The fund of the League was raised. The Working Committee (Executive Council) was made in May 1938, and its powers were enhanced (Afzal, 2013: 47). The League's flag was introduced in 1937 (Siddiqui, 1996: 183), and it was declared by Jinnah as the flag of Islam (Ahmad, 1992: 227-28). *Fatwas* were got from the Ulema in support of joining the League (Ahmad, 1992: 615). Because of such altruistic services for the League, confidence in Jinnah's leadership increased, and he was honoured with the title of Quaid-i-Azam in December 1938 (Wolpert, 2004: 115 & Ahmad, 1966: 209). In March 1940, the AIML under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam passed the Lahore Resolution, in which the demand for a separate homeland was made. After 1940, a period of triumph began, during which Jinnah adopted a unique political strategy. In India, two major political forces dominated the politics: the British Empire and the INC. Jinnah, by effectively utilizing the resources and capabilities of the AIML, significantly strengthened its position. The last decade of the first half of the 20th century proved to be a fortunate period for both the AIML and the Muslims of India. In 1943, Jinnah was made the constitutional head of the party and his powers were increased (Khan, 1943). Lahore

Resolution was made part of the League's creed. Those members who did not obey the League's constitution were disqualified from the membership of the League (Ahmad, 1996: 295; Qureshi, 1969: 146). In April 1944 Khizar Hayat Tiwana (1900-75) was expelled from the League due to his violation of Jinnah's instruction (Pirzada, 1970: 498). Slogans in support of Qaid-i-Azam, AIML and Pakistan were raised as a mark of celebration and encouragement (Pirzada, 1970, 377-78). In the coming year, Jinnah strongly criticized the Cripps Offer of 1942, because his demand for Pakistan was not clear in the Mission Proposals.

In the general elections of 1945-46, the League won all thirty Muslim seats out of a total 102 elected seats in the Central Legislature. The 57 seats went to the Congress. Fifteen seats were got by the Europeans independents and Akali Sikhs. The glorious triumph of the AIML was enthusiastically celebrated by the Muslims of India as a 'Day of Victory'. The Muslims were congratulated by Jinnah, and he claimed that Hitler had got complete support in his referendum backed by military support and a spy system, whereas the League had achieved an overwhelming victory without military and government support (Riaz, 1967: 379-80).

The Congress secured 930 seats in all eleven provinces of India, while the AIML won 428 out of 492 Muslim seats. The League formed government in Sind and Bengal. The results of these elections clearly reflected the Muslim's mandate, which strengthened Jinnah's claim for an independent Pakistan. Immediately after the election results, a convention of the League legislators was convened at Delhi to modify the Lahore Resolution, and all of them pledged to achieve their goal and to abide by the League's constitution (Pirzada, 1970: 522-23). While negotiating with the Cabinet Mission, Quaid-i-Azam argued that the only practicable solution to the Indian constitutional and political deadlock was the division of India (Menon, 1957: 234). Throughout the subsequent developments, whether the matter of the formation of an interim government, constituent assembly, appointment of the Governor-General, or other political negotiations, he firmly adhered to his position. His unwavering determination and unswerving commitment eventually culminated in the emergence of Pakistan as an independent state on the map of the world. Thus, a significant target of the League was achieved.

In December 1947, the Council of the League divided the AIML into two separate units: one for Pakistan and the other for the Indian Union, with Liaquat Ali Khan and Muhammad Ismail as the Conveners of the meetings of these two units at Karachi and Madras respectively. The AIML was renamed the All-Pakistan Muslim League, and Choudhri Khalique-uz-Zaman was made its first President.

Conclusion

The AIML was the largest political party of the Muslims of British India. It was formed in December 1906 to protect their interest and advance their political demands and aspirations. At that time, it had neither an election manifesto nor a demand for self-government. From 1906 to 1913, when Sir Aga Khan was the President, the AIML followed a policy of consultation and loyalty to the British administration. It urged Muslim representation in all elected bodies, an appropriate share in government services, and implementation of constitutional reforms in India. Even the foremost demand of the Simla Deputation (1906) led by Aga Khan was that the Muslim separate electorates should be granted in the upcoming constitutional reforms. It was during Aga Khan's leadership that this long-awaited Muslim demand was ultimately accepted in the 1909 Act. The securing of separate electorates was Sir Aga Khan's most significant political contribution to the Muslims of India (Qureshi, 1969: 72). It was the first success of the League after its establishment. Sir Aga Khan was an influential figure and had friendly relations with some prominent and influential British officials. By remaining a permanent President of the League, he could have done much more for the party and the Muslim community. However, due to a lack of enduring interest in Indian politics and his preference for staying in Europe, the League and the Muslim community could not benefit from his political

influence to the fullest extent. Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad was a major landowner. He played a crucial role in promoting Muslim education and provided generous financial assistance to the League. Raja Sahib became the League's President at a time when Muhammad Ali Jinnah, an Indian nationalist, had already joined the party, championing the cause of self-government for India. Following the reversal of the Partition of Bengal in 1911, the League had abandoned its pro-British policy and espoused a policy of collaboration with the Congress. Raja Sahib supported Jinnah in his efforts for Hindu-Muslim Unity and the Lucknow Pact. However, he was not personally ready to continue as the leader of the AIML. In spite of being re-elected, he voluntarily resigned from the office. His successor, A. K. Fazlul Haq, remained a temporary President of the party for a very short period. He was succeeded by M.A. Jinnah, who witnessed the era of the Khilafat Movement, Gandhi-Khilafat alliance, non-cooperation and *Swadeshi* movement, and Hindu-Muslim riots. This period (1919-30) faced intra-party conflicts, stemming mainly from differences between Jinnah and Sir Muhammad Shafi over separate versus joint electorates and the League's policy towards the Simon Commission. Following Jinnah's absence from Indian politics for four years (1930-34), the leadership of the AIML passed into the hands of Sir Zafrullah Khan, Mian Abdul Aziz and Hidayat Hussain. Some of these leaders lacked political prudence, democratic attitude and unifying leadership qualities that were essential for an effective party leader. Consequently, the League suffered from organizational stalemate, lack of dynamic leadership and proper direction. Under these circumstances, the League needed an inspiring and dynamic leader who could navigate the organization in the right direction and lead it towards the destination for which it had started its journey. Thus the absence of Jinnah's leadership was intensely felt, and he was requested to return to India and resume leadership of the League, to which Jinnah responded positively. This was the second phase of his leadership extending from 1934 to 1947, which proved to be a revolutionary period in the League's history. During this phase, he provided strategic and visionary leadership to the AIML, strengthened its position, and transformed it into a disciplined political organization. He rallied the Muslims around the League, which emerged as their sole representative political party with a new creed of partition of India and eventually succeeded in securing a separate state for the Muslims of India in 1947.

A comparative assessment of Jinnah's leadership with that of his predecessors demonstrates that whenever the AIML faced leadership and organizational crises, Jinnah stepped forward and provided effective and consistent leadership to the party. During the decisive decade (1937-47), his leadership proved instrumental in transforming the League into a cohesive and effective political organization, enabling it not only to restore its prestige and overcome organizational challenges, but also to respond effectively to the evolving political and constitutional dynamics.

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