



RESEARCH PAPER

Channelling the Differences within Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress Leadership, and Politics of India (1940-47)

¹Dr. Misbah Umar* ² Dr. Fozia Umar

1. Assistant Professor, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan
2. Lecturer, Department of History, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan

PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: March 25, 2022 Accepted: June 27, 2022 Online: June 30, 2022 Keywords: Congress Working Committee, Gandhi, Indian National Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Partition, Second World War *Corresponding Author: Misbah.umar@qau.edu.pk	The article takes into account the political and constitutional developments significant to the overall scheme of colonialism in India from 1940 to 1947 with reference to the role of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the responses made by the Indian National Congress leaders. During this period, differences of opinion often occurred among the top leadership of the Congress party over how to approach various matters of political importance, ranging from India's participation in WWII to the plans and formulas for resolving the Indian communal problem. Whenever differences emerged within the party leadership, they were sought out carefully before they could grow further and undermine the interests of the party. This helped the Congress present a consensual response from the party platform and secure its political interests. It also ensured the party a stronger position for exercising its influence as a political force at an all-India level.

Introduction

The last decade of the first half of the 20th century marked a significant development in the history of the Indian subcontinent. The period witnessed the termination of British rule and the partition of India into two independent sovereign states, i.e., Pakistan and India. It was a long struggle, and multiple factors working side by side paved the way for the independence and partition of India. It was the period during which the political aspirations of Hindus and Muslims became more visible than ever before. The ideals of Muslims embodied in the demand for Pakistan and the desire of Hindus to secure independence while retaining the geographical integrity of India both experienced crystallization and momentum from 1940 to 1947.

The political happenings during this period and strategies in response to them were due to the interplay of three actors: the British, the Hindus, and the Muslims. The British power upholding the imperialist attitude wanted to continue its rule in India; the Hindus wanted independence from British power by inheriting a united India, whereas the Muslims, for the safeguard of their interests, wanted termination of both British and Hindu authority by seeking an independent Muslim state. In this effort, all three worked toward the fulfilment of their respective objectives.

The political course adopted by Azad from 1940 to 1947 manifested his deep concerns for the abolition of British rule in India and his solemn desire to secure the

territorial integrity of India. He worked to achieve both objectives and expressed his viewpoints on the various political and constitutional developments. He affirmed his inclination towards composite nationalism and worked for the promotion of accommodative tendencies in the Indian National Congress (INC), which occasionally led to his disagreements with the Congress leadership. He firmly stood in opposition to the idea and struggle for the creation of Pakistan and considered it destructive for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent.

Azad's politics from 1940 to 1947, with reference to his stance on various constitutional and political developments, constitute a significant episode in the history of the Indian freedom movement. Azad aimed to accomplish composite nationalism that often brought him into disagreement with other Congressmen, primarily on the issue of India's participation in World War II, the holding of Gandhi-Jinnah talks (1944), the acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan (1946), and the approval of the 3rd June Plan (1947). His political endeavours during this period were highly motivated by his aspirations to seek independence from imperial power by securing the territorial integrity of India, which served as the ideals of his composite nationalism.

Literature Review

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has been researched by various scholars working on Indian nationalism and the partition of India. The works produced so far can be categorized as biographies, literary accounts, and political studies. The early study on Azad includes Abdullah Butt's edited book *Aspects of Abul Kalam Azad: Essays on His Literary, Political and Religious Activities* (1942), A.B. Rajput's *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad* (1957), Mahadev Desai's *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: The President of the Indian National Congress: A Biographical Sketch* (1946), and Humayun Kabir's edited work *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: A Memorial Volume* (1959). These works deal with the literary, religious, and political thoughts and contributions of Azad, especially as Congress President during the last years of British rule. These works, being the earliest accounts, lack a rigorous methodological approach. But being the earliest works, they inspired readers and researchers to further seek exploration of the queries that were raised and to enrich the left-over emptiness.

The task of contributing further to bring forth the political contributions of Azad was carried out by other writers. V. N. Datta's *Maulana Azad* (1990) is indeed a significant contribution in this regard. It is a comprehensive biographical account that takes into discussion the journey of Azad's life through his religious, intellectual, and political activities. The book shows the vitality of his mind and the richness of his personality. The writer has also taken into consideration the motivating factors and developments that shaped the course of his thoughts. But the study lacks conceptual and analytical grounds for the information and arguments in it.

Abul Kalam Azad: The Secular Leader (1991) by S. R. Bakhshi deals with Azad's political career and his political ideology. It explores his deep links with Gandhian philosophy. The developments in the Indian and international political scenarios and the responses to them by Azad and INC are also analysed. The argument of the work focuses on the nation that Azad envisioned secular nationalism for, especially in the Indian context of multiplicity, and he worked with INC for the accomplishment of this ideal.

The same argument is taken up by J. C. Johari in his work *Voices of Non-Violent and Truthful Nationalism* (1993). He is of the opinion that Azad was not inclined to the religious orientation of nationalism, and it was for this reason he strongly opposed the Muslim League's ideology and its demand for Pakistan on ideological grounds. The point of argument is established with reference to Azad's ideological and political affiliation with

the INC. He was of the view that INC best served the interests of the Muslims of India. Discussion on these lines is elaborated in an edited work titled *Islam and Indian Nationalism* (1992) by Mushir-ul-Hassan. He indicates the intellectual conviction of Azad that Islam promotes a feeling of harmony and brotherhood. The philosophical interpretation of Islam affirmed his desire to pursue Hindu-Muslim cooperation, which was eventually embodied in composite nationalism. The in-depth study of Azad's writings suggests that his idea of composite nationalism, wherein Hindus and Muslims could culturally coexist amicably in India, was perceived within the spheres of Islam. That was also one of the reasons for his call to the Muslims to adhere to his line of thought and not aspire for the partition of India.

Another work of significance is Azad's autobiography, *India Wins Freedom*, which deals with Congress politics and Azad's response to the changing political conditions in India during the last years of British rule. It is a primary source to gain insight into Azad's nationalist politics at that time. It explores Azad's objections to the All-India Muslim League's political ideology. Azad's antagonism towards British rule and his opposition to the partition of India can also be well understood in his autobiography. The book has a candid style of expression but focuses entirely on the later political phase of his life. Consequently, the task of examining his political actions in relation to his ideological leanings, which had by then completed evolution, was not accomplished.

The above-mentioned works are important to understand various aspects of Azad's politics, but there's scope for understanding his political position in relation to other important leaders of the INC on matters of political and constitutional importance leading to Indian independence and its partition. The present study is an attempt to fill the gap. It helps its readers understand the Hindu-Muslim communal tangle in British India and the solutions proposed by Azad and other Congress leaders in this regard.

Material and Methods

The present study is dealt with within the framework of descriptive historical research using the qualitative approach. The framework of analysis provides an examination of Azad's role in the politics of India from 1940 to 1947. It helps in assessing the role of the central leadership of the INC with reference to important political and constitutional developments during the period. For this study, both primary and secondary sources are utilized. The primary sources include government records, private papers, and autobiographical accounts. Whereas the significant secondary sources include relevant books and academic articles on the subject.

Results and Discussion

Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, declared India's joining WWI without consulting the country's legislatures, provincial ministries, or political parties in September 1939. The political arena in India was uproared by this. Indian nationalists felt humiliated by the Viceroy's proclamation. The Indian National Congress (INC) ordered the resignation of all seven of its provincial cabinets in protest at the Viceroy's unilateral proclamation and vowed never again to work with the Viceroy (Mitra, 1939, p. 236). But there was disagreement among the leadership over the issue of India's involvement in the conflict and its refusal to work with the British government. Gandhi, a pacifist by conviction, wanted to remain aloof from the war and stated that his decision was not motivated by political expediency but by the moral values of non-violence (Azad, 1988, p. 13). In political undertakings, non-violence involved rule for Gandhi, but for many of Gandhi's counterparts—C.R. Das, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, Acharya Narendra

Dev, and others—it involved strategy (Chandra, Bipan., Mukherjee, Mridula., Mukherjee, Aditya., Panikkar, K. N., & Mahajan, Sucheta., 1989, p. 514). Despite Gandhi's faith in his leadership, others within the INC did not agree with him on India's refusal to join WWII. In the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting that took place in Wardha from June 17 to 20, 1940, there was debate as to how far INC would be able to stand for nonviolence during its fight with Britain's imperial rule in India. Gandhi's argument that non-violence must be practiced as a matter of faith in all circumstances gave rise to differences within the CWC. Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Patel were CWC members who disagreed with Gandhi's *Ahimsa* and believed that it was a question of policy rather than creed. In their view, a scenario that changes from day to day in the changing battle environment will be unavoidable for the way this policy of nonviolence is applied (Gopal, 1978, p. 56). In exchange for ensuring freedom for India, Azad, Nehru, Patel, and Rajagopalachari agreed to help Britain (Azad, 1988, p. 32). These members were ultimately able to carry their line through the CWC, which resolved that it could not make non-violence a matter of policy in meeting external aggression. It was decided that in the face of external aggression and internal trouble, Gandhi must be allowed to pursue his great ideals on his own terms in a way that would absolve him from responsibility for INC's programmes and activities under such conditions as exist in India and abroad (Sitaramayya, 1969, p. 192-93).

Despite Gandhi's appeal to his colleagues not to push for a position that they had adopted during the meeting in Wardha in June 1940, the CWC did not change its decision when it met in Delhi between July 3 and 7. The CWC came up with the Delhi Resolution, drafted by C. Rajagopalachari, which called for provisional self-government in return for supporting Britain (Coupland, 1944, p. 240). The declaration was duly adopted by the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) meeting convened at Poona on July 27 and 28, 1940, by 95 votes to 47, with the ambivalent belief of the CWC. Maulana Azad, President of INC, said that the Congress cooperation is conditional if Britain secures INC's trust while clarifying the war objectives and if it promises to free India. (Chopra, 1990, p. 28) Several members of the CWC expressed dissatisfaction with the Delhi Resolution. At the insistence of Rajendra Prasad and several other CWC delegates, Maulana Azad was persuaded to accept Gandhi's views on the war (Azad, 1988, p. 33). Gandhi was determined to stop Congress from taking part in the war, and ultimately his opinion prevailed (Azad, 1988, p. 33). This resulted in Maulana Azad and other members of the resolution's supporters being forced to retreat.

L. S. Amery, Secretary of State, advised the Viceroy to invite the Indian leaders for a meeting to resolve the issue of cooperation for the Second World War. Amery wanted to explore how any agreement would be reached for the ministries to continue operating in the provinces with widespread support. Another goal was to give the Viceroy's Executive Council a few Indian leaders to campaign against their enemies (Menon, 1957, p. 87-88). After speaking with the leaders of several political groups, Viceroy Lord Linlithgow issued a statement on August 8, 1940, afterwards called the August Offer. In addition to the establishment of the War Advisory Council, it proposed an increase in the Governor-General's Executive Council.

To make a significant Indian commitment to the triumph of the Allies in the war, the declaration concluded with a call for assistance. It was hoped that the new level of cooperation would be achieved to lead towards India's equivalent collaboration in the British Commonwealth, as per the announced and recognised objectives of the Crown and of the British Parliament (Menon, 1957, p. 93-94). The proposal, however, obviously averted Congress' insistence on instant freedom while offering optimism for the realisation of Congress' demand about its support for the war. Without consulting other Congressmen, Maulana Azad declined Lord Linlithgow's invitation to discuss the August Offer with him

on the grounds that there was no commonality in increasing the Executive Council's membership and Congress resolve on India's freedom (Azad, 1988, p. 34). Gandhi later expressed his appreciation for Azad's choice because he feared that, had he met the Viceroy, there could have been a potential for a solution that would have dragged India into the war (Azad, 1988, p. 34). The August Offer was finally refused by the INC since it declined the Congress insistence of self-government.

The Congress Party used a new tactic, civil disobedience, to put pressure on Britain to meet its demands. The limited Satyagraha movement was started on September 18, 1940, at Gandhi's request. The initial concern that sparked the campaign was to defend "civil liberty" (the right to free expression). This meant having the freedom to spread the myth that India was not willing to assist the Allied powers and to discourage Indians from contributing to the cause (Datta, 1990, p. 166). Azad delivered a fiery speech criticising the government, which led to his arrest on December 31, 1940, and his subsequent two-year sentence. He was set free on December 3, 1941, to win over Indian sympathy for the war effort, and the Government adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the captured *satyagrahis*. However, an insufficient level of interest among Congressmen and the public led to the collapse of the movement.

With each passing day, it became more and more apparent that there were fissures within the Government as well as among India's political parties, particularly Congress. The worries for the British escalated with the westward Japanese advance into Asia. When Singapore fell to Japan in February 1942, they felt a serious threat to their power in India. In this situation, a political settlement with Congress became a dire necessity for Britain. Sir Stafford Cripps, the Lord Privy Seal, had been carefully selected for negotiation with the Indians to gain their support. It was reported that he had been a friend of Nehru (Menon, 1957, p. 121). On March 23, 1942, he came to Delhi with a draft about India's future independence and a proposal for an interim constitutional procedure that would be taken until a new constitution could be drawn up (Qureshi, 2000, p. 151). As it was to be accepted or rejected as a whole, the offer submitted by Cripps precluded the choice of any selective acceptance or rejection.

Following his arrival, Cripps began meeting with Indian representatives. On March 25, 1942, Cripps held a meeting with Azad, the Congress president, to discuss these proposals. Azad keenly listened to Cripps, who read the document and raised a query dealing with defence issues. He demanded that the Congress take over the Defence Ministry to effectively mobilize all Indians (Wolpert, 2006, p. 20). He was not happy with one of the features of the offer, which suggested equal provincial autonomy and the provision of one or more Indian unions (Rajput, 1957, p. 172). He considered it to be one of his biggest disagreements with the document. This, he considered, was an attempt to undermine the concept of a free and united India because whenever provinces or states chose to part ways with their main union, they would be divided into independent units (Rajput, 1957, p. 173-174). Cripps had also met Gandhi and Nehru while he was still engaged in negotiations and correspondence with Azad. Cripps wanted Gandhi to persuade Congress that the offer would be accepted. Gandhi thought it'd be better if Cripps hadn't arrived in India with a cutting and drying system, which he intended to implement on the Indians (Wolpert, 2006, p. 22). Nehru also opposed the non-accession clause on the grounds that it would lead to the Balkanization of India.

The chief concerns of Congress were extended to Cripps by Azad through correspondence, which mainly centred on two issues: the defence and self-government. Congress insisted that the defence of India should be transferred to Indians immediately, whereas the British Government, as indicated by Cripps, was not ready to transfer the

power to Indians till the end of the war (Menon, 1957, p. 123). The Congress stressed that additional powers should be conferred on the Executive Board as well as reducing the role of the Secretary of State (Datta, 1990, p. 167-168). Cripps asserted that the Executive Council and the new government would remain unchanged. He declared that queries about the functioning of the government were to be discussed by the Viceroy once the settlement was to be made (Menon, 1957, p. 131). Congress eventually rejected the Cripps offer on the plea that it did not concede its demands. In a resolution on April 2, 1942, the CWC announced the verdict of the Congress party. However, negotiations between Azad and Cripps failed to reach any settlement. The negotiations brought about a revised draft of the offer but did not allow the concessions sought by the INC, and the INC declined the proposal.

The rejection of the Cripps Mission by Congress, evident from the Azad-Cripps correspondence, was not only based on the formula about defence responsibilities but also on the fact that Congress insisted on autonomous self-government instead of being a vessel of the Governor-General's Council (Agarwal, & Mahesh, 2005, p. 295). Azad criticised the Cripps Proposal since it created the possibility of the creation of Pakistan as any province might opt for its separation from India after the constitution was enforced. To Azad, the mission has the potential for the creation of Pakistan, as it recommended that once the constitution was formulated, there was a possibility for provinces to become independent (Datta, 1990, p. 168). This was never acceptable to Azad, who was committed to retaining the territorial integrity of India. Both the Muslim League and Congress rejected the Cripps Mission Plan. Congress thought that it threatened Indian unity, and the All-India Muslim League (AIML) was of the view that it lacked clear recognition of their call for Pakistan.

The unsuccessful Cripps Mission was a prelude to the agitation launched by Congress through the Quit India movement. Azad, along with Nehru, had reservations about starting such a movement. He speculated that the Government would arrest all the leaders of Congress (Azad, 1988, p. 76-77). He discussed his assessment with Gandhi for several days, but disagreement grew further, reaching the point that Gandhi expressed to him that they could not work together (Azad, 1988, p. 77). As mentioned in *The Collected Work of Mahatama Gandhi* (1979, p. 293-294), the gulf between Azad and Gandhi kept widening. Gandhi demanded the resignation of Azad as Congress President and allowed him to continue as a member of the CWC, if Congress urged Gandhi to lead. In this grave situation, Patel intervened and brought the crisis under control by indicating that it would be disastrous for both the party and the country if Azad resigned (Azad, 1988, p. 77). In the end, Azad was also in agreement with Nehru once he became part of the movement. On July 14, 1942, the CWC passed a resolution that expressed the line of further action by Congress and asked for the immediate British withdrawal and India's independence (Kumar, 1991, p. 272). The decision was authorized by the CWC on August 8, 1942, with thirteen votes in opposition (Datta, 1990, p. 168). The resolution demanded the immediate withdrawal of Britain and appealed to Indians to face their sufferings and stay united under Gandhi's leadership for independence (Nicholas, & Lumby, 1971, p. 621-624).

Bakhshi (1991) writes during the Quit India Movement Gandhi defined that in the movement "their quarrel was not with the British people but against their imperialism." He also appealed to people to "Do or Die. Either free India or die in the attempt" to overthrow British from India. generated unprompted responses from the public. The Quit India movement of Congress committed to non-violence acquired a violent character, and the worst effects were glaringly visible in U.P., C.P. and Berar, Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Gujrat, Andhra, and Karnataka (Bakhshi, 1991, p. 123). The deteriorating situation escalated British apprehensions, which were already at their height due to the Second World War. The Government reacted harshly to the movement and arrested Gandhi and other participants, including Sarojini Naidu, Mahadev Desai, Nehru, Patel, Asaf Ali, Syed Mahmud,

Narendra Deva, and Azad. The Government records stated that 23,358 persons were convicted by ordinary courts, 313 by military courts, and 41 death rulings were declared, while 67 individuals in total were penalized with a death sentence (Bakhshi, 1991, p. 133). The Quit India movement proved damaging for Congress, as Azad suggested. The Congress leaders remained in confinement as war prisoners until 1945. The agitation shown by the Congress created a British perception that the party had sided with Japan, as it had organized a rebellion when the Japanese forces were banging at India's door (Qureshi, 2000, p. 170). The movement, however, augmented the Muslim League's support among the Muslim masses as it had not only condemned the attitude of Congress but also abstained from participating in it.

The deadlock over the political and constitutional settlement lasted between the Indian leaders and imperial authority throughout the war. The efforts in this regard made by the C. R. Formula and Gandhi-Jinnah talks could not produce any substantial result. All these attempts failed, for they could not acknowledge Muslims the right to self-determination as well as the nationalistic demands of Congress. In this situation, the Wavell Plan was presented. On June 14, 1945, Leopold Amery, the Secretary of State for India, highlighted some significant features of the plan. The plan proposed the reconstitution of the Executive Council of the Viceroy and the inclusion of Muslims and caste Hindus in the same proportion. For this purpose, the British Government requested that Indian political parties propose a list of names that could be selected for membership. To execute the plan, Viceroy Lord Wavell was authorized to coordinate with Indian leaders. The invitation was first transmitted in a Broadcast speech by Lord Wavell, on June 14, 1945, from Delhi by Viceroy Wavell. (Nicholas, & Lumby, 1974, p. 1122). All political leaders, including Gandhi and Jinnah, were sent invitations by the Viceroy. The invitation, however, was not addressed to Azad, the President of Congress (Menon, 1957, p. 185). Azad was invited only when Gandhi indicated the latter held no official position in Congress. In a private meeting with Lord Wavell, Azad seemed to have accepted the key principles of those proposals. On the issue of parity, he expressed that the INC would agree to parity for caste Hindus and Muslims, but the selection of these communities must not be made by an entirely communal party [AIML] (Nicholas, & Lumby, 1974, p. 1141). The concern raised by Azad remained dominant throughout the discussions during different sessions of the Simla meeting, convened to deliberate the plan.

The first point on which Azad disagreed with Jinnah, the President of AIML, was that he wanted to nominate certain nationalist Muslims from Congress for the proposed Executive Council to show that INC was the representative of all communities in India (Rajput, 1957, p. 187). Jinnah opposed the proposal; he wanted the AIML, representing Muslims in India, to propose Executive Council members. Conversely, Azad did not acknowledge AIML as the sole representative of the Muslims, as AIML failed to establish rule even in the Muslim-majority provinces. There was a Congress Ministry in the Frontier Province; a Unionist Ministry in the Punjab; in Sindh, Sir Ghulam Hussain relied on INC collaboration; and the same was the situation in Assam (Azad, 1988, p. 123). He asserted his stance, for he feared that any nationalist Muslim nominated by Congress would be inclined towards Congress and, thus, would oppose the Muslim's right of self-determination. Azad, aware of that fact, opposed only the AIML's nomination. The disagreement between INC and AIML at the Simla Conference created a general atmosphere of discontent, which was also felt among the people of the two communities. During his correspondence with Lord Wavell, Azad raised reservations and concerns within the Congress about the League's demands as well as the content of the plan. The formal opening of the Simla Conference on June 25, 1945, was followed up by further negotiations with Indian leaders and the Viceroy. However, no agreement could be reached, and on July 14, 1945, Viceroy Wavell declared the conference unsuccessful.

Azad seemed to have realized AIML's resolve to safeguard the right of self-determination for Muslims. He became aware that the Muslim League's response and remedy to communal issues could alienate the Muslims from INC. He, therefore, drafted an outline for a communal solution and forwarded it to Gandhi with a letter on August 2, 1945. Azad wrote that a federating and united India fulfilled Muslim interests, and if Muslims were provided guarantees, they would withdraw their call for partition. He emphasized that the scheme attached to the letter was presented to Gandhi not as Congress President but in his personal capacity. The scheme resolved for a federal constitution authorizing the federating units the right of secession. It also advocated for joint electorates with reserved seats on a population basis, and the principle of parity was suggested in the central legislature and executive on economic and political grounds. Lastly, he proposed a convention to a Hindu and Muslim head of state successively (Nicholas, & Lumby, 1976, 155-57). Gandhi replied on August 16, stating that he disliked the proposal of Hindu and Muslim heads of state alternately, as it would bar other communities from statecraft. He assigned the responsibility for the decision to the CWC (Nicholas, & Lumby, 1976, 172).

The scheme proposed by Azad presented a resolution to the communal crisis that could keep the Muslims from pursuing their demand for Pakistan. Gandhi, however, disagreed with the solution put forward by Azad. He feared that the scheme presented by Azad contained the idea of an independent Muslim state through secession. This was not acceptable to Gandhi and Congress. Thus, Gandhi asked Azad not to make the scheme public and to meet him because he knew he could concede to Azad's terms.

After the Wavell Plan, the Hindu-Muslim problem, the underlying cause of the stalemate between Congress and the League, became a major issue for the British Government. Fresh efforts were required to reach agreement on the constitutional issues following the emergence, after the 1945 general election, of Congress and the League as two strong forces in politics. With this consideration, another attempt was made by sending the Cabinet Mission to India. A special delegation, comprising Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. V. Alexander, First Earl of Admiralty, was sent. The mandate of the mission included: preliminary deliberations with elected representatives of British India and with Indian States to achieve consensus on the process of framing a constitution; the creation of a constitution-making body; and constituting an Executive Council with the trust of major political parties. (*The Indian Annual Register*, 1946, vol. I, p. 129).

On March 24, 1946, the Mission arrived in India, and for the next fourteen days, they interviewed and exchanged notes with Indian leaders, provincial chief ministers, and heads of princely states (Qureshi, 2000, p. 209). On April 6, 1946, members of the mission met with Azad. Azad spoke at length with the mission about his plan for addressing the Hindu and Muslim problems. His plan suggested a federal constitution. It should ensure provincial autonomy, and subjects like defence, communication, and foreign affairs should be left to the central government while other subjects should be vested in provinces. Moreover, there should be a third list of subjects where the provincial legislature would decide whether to retain them as provincial subjects or delegate them to the centre (Azad, 1988, p. 147). The CWC held an elaborate discussion in a meeting on April 12, 1946, in which the members, especially Sardar Patel, raised doubts and objections that Azad managed to clarify. Finally, the plan earned consent from the committee. Gandhi also showed complete agreement with the solution (Azad, 1988, p. 149). He believed that it would eradicate all suspicions of supremacy. Fully convinced of the soundness of the plan, and after discussing it with the Cabinet Mission and Congress Working Committee members, it was made public in a statement on April 15 (Azad, 1988, p. 149-150).

Meanwhile, the mission had continued to meet with party leaders so that it could gain an understanding of their views. During the formal and informal discussions of the plan, both Congress and the Muslim League raised their concerns. Some changes were made to the plan after considering their concerns. On the revised version, Congress, particularly Gandhi, expressed resentment, especially on the issue of parity, through which 90 million Muslims would have equal representation with 200 million Hindus. He termed this idea "really worse than Pakistan." (Nicholas, & Lumby, 1977, p. 466) The INC proposed a constituent assembly composed of all provinces and princely states, while the AIML offered a separate constitution-making body for the six Muslim provinces. Congress and the League failed to reach an agreement. Thus, the Cabinet Mission announced its own plan on May 16, 1946, which was later modified on June 16, 1946.

The plan was carefully reviewed by INC and AIML, which agreed to it at first. The Congress did so because it rejected the AIML's desire for an independent state, (Azad, 1988, p. 158) whereas the AIML believed that the foundations of Pakistan lay in the Cabinet Mission Plan (Qureshi, 2000, p. 221-22). However, the establishment of a provisional government became a matter of contention for both the INC and the AIML, leading to their refusal. The Congress and British attitudes toward the plan were one of the main reasons why the Muslim League rejected it. At this critical juncture, when earnest efforts were being made by Azad to earn the support of Congress for the Cabinet Mission Plan, he was replaced by Nehru as the president of the party. Although the scale of his influence in terms of exercising decisions and opinions had been less dominant, with the appointment of Nehru as President, his words completely lost their significance in the roars of Nehru and Gandhi. He and his assertions for Indian integrity were sidelined with INC's decline of the plan. Perhaps that was the reason that he later regretted proposing Nehru as his successor as president of Congress instead of Patel. Had Patel been INC's president, he would have successfully implemented the plan (Azad, 1988, p. 162).

Conclusion

With the failure of the Cabinet Mission Plan, prospects for a power transfer to a unitary India were now very bleak. Soon after his arrival in India, Lord Mountbatten found himself convinced that "partition was inevitable" due to the stalemate between INC and AIML. Nehru had recognized partition as unavoidable without another alternative for the Hindu-Muslim problem of India, which he wanted Azad to accept as fact and not oppose Lord Mountbatten on this issue. But Azad did not take that view with the same confidence. He resented the idea of partitioning India and tried to convince Congress leaders to ward off the idea of Indian partition. He attempted to persuade Patel by indicating that "to accept partition was to accept the slogan of two nations raised by Jinnah". According to Azad in *India Wins Freedom* Patel, who by then was sure that partition was the last solution to the Indian question, replied that "whether we like it or not, there were two nations in India. Gandhi, too, was not different from Patel in his conviction. Gandhi, who had earlier declared that the INC's acceptance of partition would be over his "dead body," now adhered to the notion that partition was inevitable. The All-India Congress Committee, which convened in Delhi on June 14 and 15, adopted a declaration by 157 votes to 29 that endorsed Lord Mountbatten's 3rd June Plan for the division of India. For Azad, it was the strangest and most unfortunate meeting he had attended. He spoke with distress against partition, calling it a tragedy and an artificial divide that was not meant to divide the culture of India. With great sadness, he denounced the partition, calling it a tragedy and an artificial division to separate India's cultures. However, during events, partition emerged as a viable alternative, forcing many who rejected the idea of it in the first place to accept it, despite all nationalist ambitions and the political fight of the INC for a free and unified India.

References

- Agarwal, R. C., & Mahesh, Bhatnagar. (2005). *Constitutional Development and National Movement in India*. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd.
- Azad, Abul Kalam. (1988). *India Wins Freedom: The Complete Version*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Bakhshi, S. R. (1991). *Abul Kalam Azad: The Secular Leader, Indian Freedom Fighter Series 19*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications.
- Chandra, Bipan., Mukherjee, Mridula., Mukherjee, Aditya., Panikkar, K. N., & Mahajan, Sucheta. (1989). *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857-1947*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Chopra, P. N. (Ed.). (1990) *Maulana Azad: Selected Speeches & Statements, 1940-47*. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House.
- Coupland, R. (1944). *The Constitutional Problem in India, Part II*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Datta, V. N. (1990). *Maulana Azad*. New Delhi: Vanguard Books.
- Gopal, S. (Ed.). (1978). *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol. 11*. Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Kumar, Ravindra. (Ed.). (1991). *The Selected Works of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, 1936-42. vol. I*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Mansergh, Nicholas, & Lumby, E. W. R. (Eds.). (1971). *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-47. Vol. II. Quit India, 30 April- 21 September 1942*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Mansergh, Nicholas, & Lumby, E. W. R. (Eds.). (1974). *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-47. Vol. V. The Simla Conference: Background and Proceedings, 1 September 1944- 28 July 1945*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Mansergh, Nicholas, & Lumby, E. W. R. (Eds.). (1976). *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-47. Vol. VI. The Post War Phase: New Moves by the Labour Government, 1 August 1945- 22 March 1946*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Mansergh, Nicholas, & Lumby, E. W. R. (Eds.). (1977). *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-47. Vol. VII. The Cabinet Mission, 23 March- 29 June 1946*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Menon, V. P. (1957). *Transfer of Power in India*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Mitra, Nripendra Nath. (Ed.). (1939). *The Indian Annual Register, July-December 1939. vol. II*. Calcutta: The Annual Register Office.

Qureshi, I. H. (2000). *The Struggle for Pakistan*. Karachi: Karachi University Press, (Original published in 1987).

Rajput, A. B. (1957). *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad* (2nd ed.) Lahore: Lion Press.

Sitaramayya, Bhogaraju Pattabhi. (1969). *History of the Indian National Congress, 1935-1947*, Vol. II. Delhi: S. Chand.

The Collected Work of Mahatama Gandhi, Vol. LXXVI. New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1979.

Wolpert, Stanley. (2006). *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of British Empire in India*. Karac