

ROLE ON MUSLIM LEAGUE, HINDU-MAHASABHA AND THE PARTITION OF INDIA

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Abstract

The classification of India marked an important chapter in the history of South Asia. This event not only fragmented the land of the Indian subcontinent, but it also shattered the unity and diversity that had previously defined the strength of this area. Numerous historians have examined the partition through a singular lens, focusing on the involvement of the British government, the Muslim League, the Indian National Congress, and the Hindu Mahasabha. Nonetheless, comprehensive studies addressing this topic from multiple angles have not been prioritized by researchers. In light of this context, the current study explored the roles of the aforementioned organizations in the partition. It offers a clear overview of the participation of all these entities collectively in the process of India's division. Essential documents were sourced from the archives of Punjab as well as national archives. The research indicates that a sense of arrogance, opposition, and hostility was generated by various agencies and organizations during the partition. On 28 February 1924, the UAC and the Publicity Committee arrived in Vaikom. The Committee decided to organize a procession for the Avarnas through the streets following the Pulaya Mahasabha meeting the next day. Caste Hindus, accompanied by the local Magistrate, Police Inspector, and Tahsildar, approached the Congress leaders and proposed a delay. They assured that if given more time, they would work to alleviate communal tensions and contribute to the parade's success. The Congress party also became aware of the circumstances. They realized this time could be utilized for effective planning and preparation to initiate the protest. The procession was scheduled for 30 March 1924.

Keywords: Muslim league, Indian National Congress, Hindu Mahasabha

Introduction

The major political groups such as the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Communists, and Akalis, along with various pressure groups associated with royalty, marginalized sectors, Europeans in India, women's organizations, the Khakasars, among others, responded according to their respective ideologies. In this context, the Muslim League promptly convened a meeting of its Working Committee, which held sessions from August 16 to August 20, 1942. During this meeting, they adopted an extensive resolution denouncing the actions of the Indian National Congress for initiating the Quit India Movement. "The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League...expressed disapproval...of the AICC's resolution to instigate 'open rebellion' by resorting to a mass Civil Disobedience Movement aimed at establishing Congress Hindu Dominance, which led to chaos and significant loss of life and property..." The resolution from the Working Committee further emphasized that the League was open to discussions regarding a provisional government based on equitable terms. It urged Muslims to distance themselves from the movement and called on the British Government to meet the demand for Pakistan.

The narrative of nationalism in India originated as a reaction to imperialist history. In the 19th century, spurred by Indian nationalism, a group of historians advocating for nationalist perspectives began to take form. Because of the restrictions imposed by colonial rule on expressing anti-colonial views, this nationalist perspective offered minimal contribution to the understanding of the national struggle until the year 1947. Nevertheless, post-1947, the nationalist historians did not make significant strides in enhancing analytical or historiographic insights. The works by these nationalist historians primarily outline the history of the national movement and the elite figures who led it. Their studies lacked a thorough examination of Gandhi's populist strategies, which were essential to his achievements. Conversely, while highlighting the importance

of mass involvement, historians from a Marxist perspective concentrated largely on Gandhi's representation of the privileged class.

On the 15th of August in 1947, India was officially recognized as independent, subsequently leading to the emergence of two autonomous nations in the world, namely Pakistan and India on the 14th and 15th of August 1947. The Hindu and Muslim populations of the subcontinent attained two distinct nations, signaling the culmination of their fight for freedom. The Partition of 1947 held immense importance for the three principal communities present at that time in the subcontinent: Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. It was a very delicate situation where communities transitioned into national identities. This event was characterized by extensive acts of violence, looting, and killings. Before the partition, there were various political and religious factions including the Indian National Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Muslim League. Both these parties, alongside the British, were significantly involved in the partition process. This analysis will primarily concentrate on the operations and beliefs of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha.

The Mahasabha was recognized as one of the leading Hindu organizations during the 1930s and 1940s. The Congress party was founded in 1885 with the aim of representing all of India's communities. The Muslim League, a political and religious organization for Muslims, was established in 1906 to protect the interests of Muslims. Before the Partition, substantial differences in religion, caste, tradition, and lifestyle existed among the communities, which significantly contributed to the Partition of India. Some scholars suggest that the 1947 Partition of India was orchestrated by the British and carried out by them. This discussion will focus on the role played by the British in the Partition of India and the transformation of communities into nationalities.

The British presence in India was motivated by economic interests backed by the East India Company. For centuries, the English had served as humble supporters of the Mughal emperors. However, this scenario changed, and by the 1750s, their power began to grow significantly. Through strategic maneuvering, dominance, and exploitation, their quest to acquire the Indian subcontinent persisted for another century. The uprising for independence culminated tragically in 1857, marking the true beginning of British governance in India. The core strategy of British authority relied on fostering a division between the two primary religious groups in India, the Hindus and the Muslims, to aid and maintain their control. The differences between these two communities were evident and ranged across various aspects such as religion, culture, economy, and politics, but were also influenced by the background of imperialism. The Hindus and Muslims formed their own political groups—the Hindu Mahasabha, the Congress, and the Muslim League—to deliberate on shared communal issues and protect their respective interests. The aspiration for Independence and liberation from British rule resonated widely throughout the subcontinent. As a result of a prolonged struggle for freedom, India experienced a division. Control transitioned from British authority to India and Pakistan based on territorial status under the agreement outlined in the 3 June plan, which was accepted and agreed upon by prominent Indian leaders. This task required immense patience and involved numerous challenges related to the partition of land and the division of resources.

Hinduism and Islam had been not seen as opposing ideologies in pre-colonial methods of collective inquiry and representation; neither Muslim nor Hindu sovereigns ever saw religion as a political issue. The colonial state's methodical approach to disinterest, which focused on a lack of interest in religion, was the result of necessity rather than conviction. For the British, religion cannot ever be a matter of political indifference due to the necessity of appropriate standing ciphers of cultural legality. The use of religion as a check on the political tenacity of the colonial state had fundamentally different effects than those in earlier centuries since it was inherent to the hunt for traitors and the association of social mechanisms. British perceptions of Indian culture as a collection of religious groupings encouraged depictions of individuality in expressions that highlighted changes rather than unifications among persons who, among other things, ended up being Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and Christian. Nonetheless, British communal causes by themselves are unable to elucidate the intensity of Indian efforts to arrange the expatriate state's setups for their own social and political advancement. In the late nineteenth century, Indian partiality—whether expressed in its communitarian or distinct colors—instituted a crucial component in the study of identity.

Attorneys and dealers, two professions in which Muslims were relatively insufficient and in the middle, provided the Congress with support. Muslim classes were not inclined to use the colonial state's collective ties as a check because they were strongly pushed by the British to put an end to the uprising. Many Muslims were reluctant to postpone their coaches with a Congress that was predominately Hindu due to self-preservation, if not self-promotion. In the end, the amount of Muslim chains for Congress was determined by the equality of the various communities in the regions as a gesture of anti-colonial patriotism. The Indian

National Congress and the All-India Muslim League began working together in the middle of the World War, while moderates began to build barriers with previous radicals who had split out in 1907.

Stress, disputes, and unexpected levels of aggression disrupted the togetherness of Muslims and Hindus. The Hindu-Muslim community in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, where the Muslim communities baptized movements like Tabligh and Tanzeem and the Hindu and Muslim societal routines of Shuddhi and Sangathan, were the most affected. The ongoing struggle between nationalism and colonialism took a different course in the provinces that attracted large numbers of Muslims, particularly in Bengal and Punjab. On behalf of the exceptional centuries of the British Empire, the Government of India's Act of 1935 sought to firmly preserve the four centers of British effects. The colonial leaders increased the contract to 35 million and gave the regions a significant degree of independence while promising an all-India confederation in the distant future. In contrast to the 1919 reforms that kept important regional areas under British control, Indians were to have a say in all local government divisions. However, the management was not answerable to the government, and the all-India center could limit provincial authorities, thus the center's full worry was somewhat for the future. The Congress leadership, especially Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, and Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who led a resurrected All India Muslim League, vehemently condemned the lawful reforms.

Rather than focusing on the ambiguities surrounding the desire for Muslim "statehood," the historiographical dispute has focused on the question of Muslim nationhood. The disturbed fit surrounding a declaration of Muslim nationhood and the doubts and uncertainties of politics in the latter colonial period that resulted in the achievement of sovereign sovereignty have been highlighted by recent heretical historiography on partition. The demand for an entirely distinct and independent state of "Pakistan" continued to be susceptible to compromise in 1946, but the persistence on domestic prestige for Indian Muslims was a non-negotiable subject after 1940. A centralized or non-federal state structure encompassing all of India seemed dreamily compatible with the claim that Muslims founded a nation. The boundaries between states had to be permeable and flexible because "nations" straddled states. For this reason, Jinnah and the Muslim League persisted in ruthlessly opposing the division of Bengal and Punjab along religious lines. It was the genuine absence of a Muslim "communalism" across India. This was expected to serve as the foundation for a non-federal preparation with the Hindu majority areas, or Hindustan, at the subcontinental level rather than a secessionist demand for a Muslim nation-state. The front-runner and the party that had staked a claim on behalf of all Indian Muslims were separated from India as a result of the incident's cockeyed strategy. At the level of all India's political discourse, jointly cataloged electorates had helped transform the Muslim distinctiveness into a declaration of "nationhood." However, Muslim regional assistance was pitted against those raised on behalf of a subcontinental country or community due to the prominence of rural and local politics. The path to Islam used as a recruitment strategy to spark a political movement aiming to give Muslims a significant portion of power in an independent India.

Muslim League, Ideology and Activities

The backward and degraded state of the Muslims following the 1857 uprising was the driving force behind the creation of the All India Muslim League. For the benefit of the Muslim community, the Muslim leaders wanted to establish a political party. The viceroy met with the leaders of the Muslim delegation from Shimla to discuss the idea of starting a political party. Prominent Muslim leaders from all over India, including Nawab Salimullah Khan of Dacca, Nawab Viqar-al Malik, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and Maulana Zaffar Ali Khan, attended the annual All India Muslim Enlightening Conference at Dacca in 1906. Prior to this meeting, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan urged Muslims to abstain from Congress politics. Khan stated that Muslims make up one-fourth of India's overall population. The British will undoubtedly depart India, and the Muslims there will start under the dominance of that nation, which is four times larger than the Muslims.

Hindu-Mahasabha, Ideology and Activities

The first Hindu organization on the subcontinent, the All India Hindu-Mahasabha, was founded in 1915 during the All India Hindu Seminar at Haridwar. In response to British imperialism and worries about the Congress's obscene nationalism, the Hindu Mahasabha emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In a telegram to Jawaharlal Nehru, Motilal Nehru undoubtedly expressed the belief that the establishment of the Hindu Sabha 1910 was an all-India issue that would eventually cause Congress concerns. Despite Nehru's worries, the Hindu Mahasabha did not criticize the Congress in its early years. For instance, promoting and defending Hindu welfare was the focus of the 1915 All India Hindu Session. However, the later militant and

anti-Congress stance of the Hindu Mahasabha had little to do with the goals of the seminars. According to Nandini Gondhalekar and Sanjoy Bhattacharya (1999), the main objectives of the Mahasabhaitees were to protect the religious, moral, educational, social, and political welfare of the Hindu community, to foster greater unity and harmony among all segments of the country's Hindu communities and to bind them as methodically as fragments of one organic whole.

The rulings made at the Hardwar meeting in 1921 indicate that the Hindu Mahasabha sought to work with both the British and the Congress. In order to support Gandhi's noncooperation movement, the organization's name was changed to Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha and its constitution was altered. However, a call for Shuddhi's assistance in regaining the lost Hindus altered the social climate. The Mahasabha did not take an overt political stance against the Congress and Gandhi despite mounting concerns over the arrival of Hindu communities in the 1920s. In fact, Lajpat Rai, who served as chief from 1925 to 1927, opposed the Mahasabha's entry into politics and made a commitment to an Indian nationalism that went beyond religious boundaries. His interests were the need for Hindu unity, the abolition of untouchability, and improving the status of Hindu women. He did not bring the political sense that such statements would later have in Hindu Mahasabha rhetoric, even if he assumed his word to Indian nationalism and called for unity among Hindus. However, complete opposition to the Congress did not appear until 1932. Moonge, who served as president of the Hindu Mahasabha from 1927 to 1933, initiated a more assertive approach. He largely focused on protecting the Hindu community in the face of Muslim rage and the suppression of Hindu rights in Muslim princely states, rather than criticizing Congress political matters.

The Hindu-Mahasabha, Muslim League

Mukherjee made multiple attempts to reach an agreement with M.A. Jinnah and the League by the end of 1942. The community ideas and the opposition of several leaders of both parties to one another eventually hampered this attempt. Mukherjee enjoyed the unwavering support of the Non-Party leaders' session in his efforts to reach a solution with the Muslim League; he admitted that Savarkar's influence had brought them together. The Hindu-Mahasabha single group's edict provided Mukherjee with some minor support, but some questioned whether Mukherjee was using this meeting to overcome opposition from Savarkar and numerous other communal disciplinarians. With the help of Liaqat Ali, the Muslim League's general secretary at the time, Maheshwar Dayal was able to obtain Jinnah's opinions on communal issues. Both Savarkar and Jinnah disagree with this viewpoint and are unwilling to engage in dialogue. Savarkar boycotts in this manner, saying that Maheshwar Dayal has not had any conversations with the league. Savarkar's supporters accused Maheshwar Dayal for favoring the league and initiating talks. resigned as general secretary of the Mahasabha, Maheshwar Dayal, on December 29, 1942.

Anti Partition Movement - Congress's Position

Under Gokhale's leadership, the Indian National Congress decided in 1905 to support the anti-partition and Swadeshi Movement of Bengal and denounce Curzon's reactionary policies and the partition of Bengal. In order to achieve swaraj, the militant nationalists led by Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Aurobindo Ghosh wanted the movement to go beyond Bengal and transcend a boycott of foreign products into a full-fledged political mass fight. But the Moderates, who controlled Congress at the time, refused to go so far. But when it was announced that the Indian National Congress's objective was "self-government or swaraj like the United Kingdom or the colonies" of Australia or Canada at the Calcutta Congress session (1906), which was chaired by Dadabhai Naoroji, a major advancement was accomplished.

At the INC's Surat session in 1907, the Moderate-Extremist rift over the movement's speed and tactics of struggle came to a standstill, with dire repercussions for the Swadeshi Movement. The anti-partition movement, which emerged in reaction to the British decision to split Bengal, gave rise to the Boycott and Swadeshi movement. The start of the Swadeshi movement at the turn of the century marked a major advancement for the Indian National Movement. The INC adopted the Swadeshi call and backed the Bengal Swadeshi and Boycott Movement during the 1905 Benaras Session, which was chaired by G.K. Gokhle.

Conclusion

The conflict between various religions, philosophies, social customs, traditions, and literary works for separate territories during the Partition of India was ignited by the British Government and the political and religious parties of the time (Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha). The strategies and tactics used by the

Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha against one another were increasingly conceited, aggressive, and hostile. Chief leaders of both sides, including Liaquat Ali Khan, M.A. Jinnah, B.S. Moonje, and V.D. Savarkar, gave forceful speeches in favor of India's partition as soon as the British government announced it, showing no signs of a cordial environment or peaceful relations with the indigenous people. On the one hand, Liaquat Ali Khan was actively advocating for the establishment of Pakistan. He told Muslims that if little states could exist in Europe, then why not in India? This demonstrated a communal mindset. However, Liaquat denounced the Hindu-Mahasabha's encouragement of hatred against Pakistan through its troops. Because its leaders, such as N.B. Khare, had publicly stated that this nation would never accept the partition and that it must be reabsorbed into India once more, Liaquat characterized the Mahasabha as a group of cunning agitators.

As the head of the Muslim League, Jinnah persisted in the league's desire for independence through the 1946 Cabinet Mission plan, the Shimla Conference, and Cripps proposals. Jinnah declared August 16th to be Direct Action Day in order to establish Pakistan with vigor. The "Direct Action Day," which Jinnah proclaimed in 1946, was observed in Howrah, Hooghly, and Calcutta. The day's plan called for a full strike in all areas, both commercial and municipal. There were homicides and acts of looting, and the public employed tactics like strolling through minority neighborhoods. It was the month of Ramadan, and Muslims used to congregate in groups at every mosque after prayers on the day of Juma. This led to enormous chaos as members of the two communities fought. It reinforced the growing division between the two main political parties and the two main religious groups. The Congress accepted the resolution of Partition in accordance with the Mountbatten Plan, which divided India in 1947, because such ordinary episodes of murder, arson, and plunder were growing daily.

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