The Pakistan Movement 1927–39

The Simon Commission, the Nehru Report, Jinnah's 14 Points, Iqbal's Allahabad address, the Round Table Conferences, the Communal Award, Rahmat Ali and Pakistan, the Government of India Act 1935, the 1937 elections and Congress rule.

The Pakistan Movement 1927–39

Timeline

Year	Event
1927	Simon Commission appointed
1928	Nehru Report
1929	Jinnah's 14 Points
1930	Iqbal's Allahabad Address; First Round Table Conference
1931	Second Round Table Conference
1932	Third Round Table Conference; Communal Award
1933	Rahmat Ali's "Now or Never"
1935	Government of India Act
1937	provincial elections; Congress ministries
1939	Congress ministries resign; "Day of Deliverance"

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The Simon Commission, 1927–30

- The 1919 Act said that a commission would review the constitution after 10 years. In **November 1927** the British set up the **Simon Commission**, led by **Sir John Simon**. It had **seven British members and no Indians**.
- The Conservative government brought the date **forward** because it feared losing the coming election to Labour, which was thought more friendly to India.
- Indians were insulted. **Congress** and the **Jinnah** section of the Muslim League **boycotted** it (the **Shafi** section of the League, in the Punjab, **cooperated**). Protests met it everywhere, with the slogan "**Simon, go back**". Lala Lajpat Rai was fatally injured in Lahore.

- Its report (1930) recommended **provincial autonomy** and a federation, but the British took no action at once.

The Nehru Report, 1928

- To reply to the challenge to produce an agreed constitution, an **All-Parties Conference** appointed a committee under **Motilal Nehru**. The **Nehru Report (August 1928)** recommended **dominion status**, a **federation with a strong centre**, and **joint electorates** (with no separate electorates). It gave Muslims **no weightage** except in provinces where they were a minority, and it rejected the demands of the **Delhi Proposals**, including **one-third** representation in the Centre. It did not accept the Muslim demand for **Sindh** to be separated except on conditions. It offered Muslims about **one-fourth** of the seats in the Centre (against the one-third they wanted), and Hindustani (in either script) rather than Urdu alone as the national language, which Muslims feared would become Hindi.
- The committee under **Motilal Nehru** had nine other members, only two of them Muslims (**Syed Ali Imam** and **Shuaib Qureshi**), and Muslims said it was really a Congress document. Congress demanded that the British accept it by **31 December 1929** or face civil disobedience.
- **Muslim response.** Jinnah asked for **amendments** at the **All-Parties Convention** in Calcutta (December 1928), but they were **rejected**. He called it "**the parting of the ways**". Muslim leaders realised that they could not rely on Congress.

Jinnah's 14 Points, March 1929

Jinnah presented the **14 Points** as the Muslim League's minimum demands in a future constitution. The main points were:

1. a **federal constitution**, with **residual powers** left to the provinces;
2. a **uniform measure of autonomy** for all provinces;
3. all legislatures and elected bodies to have **adequate and effective representation of minorities**, without reducing a province's majority to a minority or to equality;
4. **Muslim representation** in the Central Legislature of **not less than one-third**;
5. **separate electorates** to continue;
6. any **redrawing of provincial boundaries** must not affect the **Muslim majority** in the **Punjab, Bengal and the NWFP**;
7. **full religious liberty** (belief, worship, education and association) for all communities;
8. **no bill or resolution** to be passed in a legislature if **three-quarters** of the members of a community oppose it;
9. **Sindh to be separated** from the Bombay Presidency;
10. **constitutional reforms** in the **NWFP and Balochistan** on the same footing as the other provinces;

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11. an **adequate share** for Muslims in the **public services** and in local bodies;
12. **safeguards for Muslim culture**, education, language, religion, personal laws and charities;
13. **at least one-third Muslim ministers** in the Central and the provincial cabinets;
14. **no change in the constitution** by the Central Legislature without the **consent of the states** that make up the federation.

The points set out the **safeguards** that the Muslims wanted as a minority. They remained the Muslim League's **basis** for negotiating until 1940.

Allama Iqbal's Allahabad Address, 1930

In **December 1930**, as **President of the Muslim League** at **Allahabad**, **Allama Muhammad Iqbal** said that Muslims were a **separate nation** and proposed that the **Muslim-majority areas of the North-West** (**Punjab, NWFP, Sindh and Balochistan**) should be combined into **a single state**, within the **Indian federation** (or within the British Empire). He said, "**I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Balochistan amalgamated into a single state.**" This was the first clear statement of the idea of a Muslim homeland (see chapter 10).

The Salt March and the Gandhi–Irwin Pact

In **March–April 1930 Gandhi** led a **Salt March** of about **240 miles** from his ashram near Ahmedabad to **Dandi** on the sea, where he made salt in defiance of the government's salt tax. It started a **Civil Disobedience Movement**, and tens of thousands of people (including Gandhi) were arrested. The Viceroy **Lord Irwin** wanted calm before the conferences, so on **5 March 1931** the **Gandhi–Irwin Pact** ended the campaign: prisoners were released, Indians could make salt for their own use, and Gandhi agreed to attend the Second Round Table Conference.

The Round Table Conferences, 1930–32

Conference	Date	Outcome
First	November 1930–January 1931	**Congress boycotted it**. Jinnah, Aga Khan, Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Shafi and others attended. It agreed on the idea of an **all-India federation** with responsible government
Second	September–December 1931	**Gandhi** attended for Congress (after the **Gandhi–Irwin Pact**). Disagreement over **minorities' rights** (Gandhi claimed to represent all India) meant that **no agreement** was reached
Third	November–December 1932	few attended; Congress absent. The results led to the **White Paper** (1933) and the Government of India Act 1935

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The **First** conference opened in London on **12 November 1930** under King George V, with Prime Minister **Ramsay MacDonald** in the chair, and about **89** delegates, in sub-committees on the federal structure, the provinces, minorities, franchise and other subjects. **B.R. Ambedkar** pressed for separate seats for the **Untouchables**. At the **Second**, Gandhi was the **only** Congress delegate and said that Congress spoke for all India, which Muslims and other minorities rejected. The **Third** had only about 46 delegates. The proposals were collected in a **White Paper (March 1933)** and then the Government of India Act (Royal Assent **August 1935**).

The conferences were **not very successful** because the parties could not agree on **separate electorates**. However, they showed the **British** that **Muslims** were a separate group and led to constitutional reform.

The Communal Award, 1932

The British Prime Minister **Ramsay MacDonald** announced the **Communal Award (August 1932)** since the leaders could not agree. It gave **separate electorates** to **Muslims, Sikhs, Christians** and the **Depressed Classes** (Untouchables). Muslims were the **largest group** in the **Punjab (86 of 175 seats)** and **Bengal (119 of 250 seats)**, but did **not** get an outright majority of seats. Congress opposed it, particularly for the Untouchables, and **Gandhi** fasted until the **Poona Pact** (September 1932) altered the arrangement for Hindu seats. Muslims accepted the Award.

Rahmat Ali and the Pakistan National Movement, 1933

Chaudhry Rahmat Ali was a student at **Cambridge**. In **January 1933** he published a pamphlet "**Now or Never: Are We to Live or Perish for Ever?**" in which he asked for a **separate nation** for the Muslims of the North-West and gave it the name **"PAKISTAN"** (**P**unjab, **A**fghania (NWFP), **K**ashmir, **S**indh, and **-tan** for Balochistan). He formed the **Pakistan National Movement**. At first few took the idea seriously (the Indian Muslim delegates dismissed it as a student's dream), but the **name** was later adopted.

The Government of India Act, 1935

The most important constitutional change before independence:

- **Provincial autonomy**: **dyarchy** was ended in the provinces. Elected ministers controlled **all** provincial subjects, subject to the governor's reserve powers.
- A proposal for an **All-India Federation** (of the provinces and princely states) with **dyarchy at the Centre**. **This part was never put into effect** because the princes would not agree.
- **Sindh** was **separated** from Bombay (1936). **Orissa** was created, and **Burma** was separated from India.
- **Separate electorates** continued. The **franchise** was widened (about 30 million people could vote).
- A **Federal Court** was set up.
- **Muslims** disliked some of its provisions, but accepted the **provincial** part and fought the elections.

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- **Three lists** of subjects: **federal** (such as defence, foreign affairs, currency), **provincial** (such as education, health, agriculture) and **concurrent** (shared). The federal legislature was to have two houses (a **Council of State of 260** and a **Federal Assembly of 375**). The **electorate** grew from about 7 million to about **30 million** or more, and **women** had a wider vote.

Why was it opposed?

- **Congress** thought it gave too little: the **Governor's special powers** and the Viceroy's veto limited provincial rule, and princes' nominees would fill much of the federal legislature.
- **Muslims** feared a federation in which Hindus would be a majority, and disliked the safeguards, and Jinnah called it "thoroughly rotten".
- The **princes** would not agree to join the federation, so that part was never started.
- Some **British Conservatives** thought it went too far.

Why was it important? It gave Indians real **provincial power** for the first time, created new provinces (**Sindh**, **Orissa**), set up a **Federal Court**, and became the base of the constitutions of both **India and Pakistan** (Pakistan used it, with changes, until 1956).

The 1937 elections

Party	Result
Congress	won a **majority in 5 provinces** of 11 and formed governments in 7 (later 8) provinces
Muslim League	won only about **106–109 of 482** Muslim seats (sources differ), and **did badly** in the Punjab and Bengal (and nowhere had a majority). It showed that it was **not yet the voice of all Muslims**

Significance. Congress was **confident** that it was the only party that mattered, and **refused to form coalitions** with the League (in the **United Provinces** it demanded that the League members join Congress, and dissolve their party). Jinnah then **reorganised the League** into a **mass party**, and the League gained members rapidly.

Congress rule, 1937–39

Muslims were uneasy about the way Congress ruled:

- **"Vande Mataram"** (a song from a novel with Hindu religious imagery) was sung in schools and assemblies, and the Congress flag was used on government buildings.
- **Hindi** was promoted over Urdu; the **Wardha Scheme** and the **Vidya Mandir** schools were seen as promoting Hindu culture and ideas.
- **Cow protection** laws harmed Muslim butchers and ignored their interests; Muslims said that they were treated unfairly in **government jobs**; and there were **communal riots**.

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- Muslims also complained that there was **music in front of mosques** at prayer times, **limits on building new mosques**, the use of **Gandhi's picture** in some schools, and unfair treatment by the police and courts. The two parties' **election manifestos** had differed mainly on **joint v separate electorates** and on **Hindi v Urdu**. Congress rule lasted about **27 months**.
- The **Muslim League** collected complaints in the **Pirpur Report** (1938) and the **Shareef Report** (1939).
- In **September 1939** the Viceroy took India into the **Second World War** without asking Indian leaders, and **Congress ministries resigned** in **October–November 1939**.
- Jinnah called on Muslims to celebrate **"Day of Deliverance"** on **22 December 1939**, to mark the end of Congress rule. Some non-Muslims joined in.

Summary: how successful was the Pakistan Movement 1927–39?

Successes	Failures
Jinnah gave Muslims a **clear programme** (14 Points)	the **Nehru Report**, the Round Table Conferences did not give Muslims safeguards
Iqbal and **Rahmat Ali** raised the idea of a **Muslim homeland**	the League **did badly in 1937**
the **Government of India Act** gave **provincial autonomy** and Muslim provinces (Sindh)	Muslims **divided** between parties, the Punjab Unionists and Bengal's Krishak Praja
Congress rule united Muslims behind the League	no clear aim of a separate state before 1940

> **TRY IT**
>
> Why was Congress rule (1937–39) unpopular with many Muslims?

Outline. Refused a coalition with the League; the Vande Mataram and flag; Hindi and the Wardha Scheme; cow protection; unfair treatment in jobs; communal riots; the Pirpur and Shareef Reports. **Result:** Muslims united behind the League, and Jinnah celebrated the "Day of Deliverance".

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