The Pakistan Movement in the Early 20th Century

The Partition of Bengal, the Simla Deputation and the foundation of the Muslim League, the Morley–Minto Reforms, the First World War and the Lucknow Pact, the Rowlatt Act and Amritsar, the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms, communalism and the Delhi Proposals (1905–1927).

The Pakistan Movement in the early 20th century

Timeline

Year	Event
1905	Partition of Bengal
1906	Simla Deputation; foundation of the All-India Muslim League
1909	Morley–Minto Reforms
1911	the Partition of Bengal annulled
1914–18	First World War
1916	Lucknow Pact
1919	Rowlatt Act, Amritsar Massacre, Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms
1920–22	Non-Cooperation Movement
1927	Delhi Proposals

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The Partition of Bengal, 1905–11

- In **1905** the Viceroy, **Lord Curzon**, divided **Bengal** (a huge province, with about 78 million people) into two: **East Bengal and Assam** (capital **Dhaka**, with a **Muslim majority**) and **West Bengal** (with Bihar and Orissa, a Hindu majority).
- The official reason was **administrative efficiency**. Muslims **welcomed** the new province, which gave them opportunities in education, jobs and trade.
- **Hindus strongly opposed it**, saying that it was "**divide and rule**". They organised protests, a **boycott of British goods (swadeshi)**, and some used violence.

- In **1911** King **George V**, at the **Delhi Durbar** (**12 December**), **annulled** the partition, and moved the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Muslims were **bitterly disappointed**: the British had given way to Hindu pressure. They realised that they needed their **own political organisation** to protect their interests.

Why Bengal was partitioned (1905)

Reason	Detail
Size	the province had about **80 million** people and was too big for one Lieutenant-Governor to manage or even tour
Communications	rivers and forests made travel slow, and **police and law and order** were weak, especially in the east
Language and culture	the people of East and West Bengal differed, and the east was neglected: Calcutta got most of the schools, jobs and money
Trade	a new province would help the port of **Chittagong** and the trade of the east
Political	some historians say the British also wished to **please the Muslims**; Hindus said it was **"divide and rule"**, aimed at weakening the Bengali nationalist movement

Muslim response: they welcomed it: a Muslim-majority province with its capital at **Dhaka** offered schools, jobs and freedom from Hindu landlords and moneylenders (East Bengal and Assam had about 18 million Muslims and 12 million Hindus).

How the Hindus opposed it

- Hindu landlords, lawyers, journalists and traders feared losing their influence; **Congress** backed the protest.
- **16 October 1905** (the day it began) was observed as a **day of mourning**; the song **Bande Mataram** became the protest anthem.
- The **Swadeshi movement** (boycott of British goods and promotion of Indian-made goods) hit British trade, and there were **violent attacks** on British officials.
- The British replied with press and meeting restrictions, and arrests (**Tilak** was jailed for six years in 1908).

Why it was reversed (1911)

- Constant **Hindu pressure**, the boycott, and **terrorism** made the British fear for law and order.
- The Viceroy **Lord Hardinge** and the government wished to win back **Hindu support**; the planned **move of the capital to Delhi** at the same time was a way of making the change look like a reform.
- The Muslim League was still new and weak, and its loyalty was taken for granted.

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- **Result:** Bengal was reunited under a Governor, **Bihar and Orissa** became a separate province and **Assam** a Chief Commissioner's province.

> NOTE
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> Questions often ask whether the reasons for the **partition** were more important than the reasons for the **reversal**. Link them: the British acted for administrative reasons in 1905 but yielded to political pressure in 1911, and Muslims drew the lesson that they needed their own party.

The Simla Deputation (1906) and the Muslim League

- In **October 1906** a delegation of **35 Muslim leaders**, led by **Sir Aga Khan III**, met the Viceroy **Lord Minto** at **Simla**.
- They asked that: Muslims should have **separate electorates** (voting for Muslim candidates only) and **weightage** (more seats than their population share, because of their political importance and their service to the Empire) in any new reforms, and fair representation in government jobs.
- Their other demands: a **share** for Muslims on **municipal and district boards** and **university senates**, **Muslim representation** on the Viceroy's Executive Council, and a **Muslim university** (Aligarh).
- Minto agreed, which showed the British would listen.

Why the Muslim League was formed

- **Congress** was mainly Hindu and did not defend Muslim interests (for example in the **Hindi–Urdu** controversy).
- Muslims were **backward** in education and jobs and needed a body to speak for them.
- The **Simla Deputation's success** showed that a Muslim organisation could win concessions.
- The **Partition of Bengal** protests showed that Hindus could influence the British, and that Muslims needed their own voice.
- Sir Syed's idea that Muslims were a **separate community** with separate interests.

The League's founding resolution was proposed by Nawab Salimullah and supported by leaders such as **Hakim Ajmal Khan**, **Maulana Muhammad Ali** and **Zafar Ali Khan**.

The Indian National Congress

The **Indian National Congress** had been founded in **1885** by **A.O. Hume**, a retired British official, with the approval of the Viceroy. Its first session was in **Bombay** (28–31 December 1885), with **72 delegates** and **W.C. Bonnerjee** as president. At first it sought a bigger share for educated Indians in government and was not opposed to British rule.

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The Muslim League. On **30 December 1906**, at **Dhaka**, at the **All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference**, **Nawab Salimullah Khan** proposed the formation of the **All-India Muslim League**. **Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk** presided. Its aims were:

- to promote **loyalty** to the British Government;
- to **protect the political rights and interests of the Muslims** and put their needs before the Government;
- to prevent **hostility** towards other communities.

The first president was **Sir Aga Khan**. Over time its aims changed: in **1913** it accepted **self-government** for India as an aim, and in **1940** it demanded a separate state.

The Morley–Minto Reforms, 1909

The **Indian Councils Act 1909** (named after **Lord Morley**, the Secretary of State, and **Lord Minto**, the Viceroy) provided for:

- **enlarged** central and provincial **legislative councils**, with **Indian members** elected for the first time and more powers to discuss the budget;
- **separate electorates for Muslims**: Muslims voted for Muslim candidates in special constituencies, and received **weightage**;
- one Indian on the **Viceroy's Executive Council** (S.P. Sinha), and two Indians on the **Secretary of State's Council** in London;
- the central council grew from 16 to about **60** additional members, and the provincial councils to about **50** (in Bengal, Madras and Bombay) or **30** (in the rest), though the British kept a majority of official members at the centre.

Importance. The **separate electorates** were a great success for the Muslim League and were the **first constitutional recognition** that Muslims were a separate political community. Congress opposed them. Separate electorates remained until 1947.

The First World War (1914–18) and the Muslims

- Turkey (the **Ottoman Empire**, whose Sultan was the **Caliph**) joined the war on the side of **Germany**, against Britain. Indian Muslims were **divided between loyalty to the British and loyalty to the Caliph**.
- The British promised **self-government** after the war, and about **1.3 million** Indians fought. In 1917 the Secretary of State **Montagu** announced the aim of "**responsible government**" for India.
- The war and the British treatment of Turkey caused the **Khilafat Movement** (chapter 7).

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Congress, the Muslim League and the Lucknow Pact (1916)

- In **1916** the Congress and the Muslim League held sessions at **Lucknow**. **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**, a member of both, helped to bring them together.
- **The Lucknow Pact**: Congress **accepted separate electorates** for Muslims (and the Muslim League agreed to demand self-government). It gave Muslims **weightage** in provinces where they were a minority and a fixed share (**one-third**) of the seats in the Central Legislature. Both parties made **joint demands** for more reform.
- **Other clauses** included a larger central council, that **no bill affecting a community** should pass if **three-quarters of that community's members** opposed it, and a demand that half of the Viceroy's Executive Council should be Indians.
- **Why it was made:** Muslims felt **betrayed** when Bengal was reunited in 1911 and no longer trusted the British; the League had moved to a **self-government** aim (1913); the First World War and Turkey's position had made Muslims angry; **Jinnah** belonged to both parties and worked for agreement; and Congress wanted Muslim support for its demand for **self-rule** (the **Home Rule Leagues** of Tilak and Annie Besant were active in 1916).
- It was the **high point of Hindu–Muslim unity**. Jinnah was called the "**ambassador of Hindu–Muslim unity**" (by Sarojini Naidu). The pact was important because Congress **recognised** the Muslim League as the representative of Muslims. However, many Hindus and Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal were unhappy, as Muslims were a majority there but given less weightage.

The Rowlatt Act and the Amritsar Massacre

- The **Rowlatt Act (March 1919)** allowed the Government to **imprison people without trial** for up to two years, and to try political cases without juries. It was passed in spite of the opposition of all the Indian members. Indians were angry, because they expected reforms as a reward for helping in the war.
- **Gandhi** called for protests, a **hartal** (strike).
- On **13 April 1919**, in **Amritsar**, a large crowd (many had come to the Baisakhi festival) gathered in **Jallianwala Bagh**, a walled garden with few exits. General **Reginald Dyer**, without warning, ordered his troops to **fire into the crowd**. About **379** people were killed officially (Indian estimates are higher) and over 1,000 injured.
- The massacre turned many Indians **against the British**. The **Hunter Committee** (1920) criticised Dyer, but he was only forced to retire; some in Britain **praised** him and a fund was raised in his honour, which angered Indians further.

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The Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms (Government of India Act, 1919)

- **Dyarchy** in the provinces: some subjects (such as education, health, local government) were **transferred** to elected Indian ministers, while others (such as law and order, finance) were **reserved** for the British governor.
- A **bicameral** central legislature: a **Council of State** (about 60 members, five-year term) and a **Legislative Assembly** (about 145 members, three-year term), with a majority of elected members, but the Viceroy kept full control of defence, foreign affairs and finance. The **franchise** was limited to a small, property-owning minority.
- Reserved subjects included **justice, police, land revenue and irrigation**; transferred subjects included **local government, education, public health and agriculture**.
- **Separate electorates** for Muslims were **continued** (and extended to Sikhs).
- **Reaction:** Congress and many Indians thought the reforms were **too small**. Muslims accepted separate electorates but felt that more was needed.

The Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22)

Led by **Gandhi** and linked to the Khilafat Movement, Indians were asked to **boycott** British courts, schools, titles and cloth, and not to pay taxes. It ended in **February 1922** after violence at **Chauri Chaura** (a mob killed policemen) and Gandhi called it off. Many Muslims thought that Gandhi had **abandoned them** (see chapter 7).

Communalism and divisions in Congress

- After the end of the Khilafat Movement, **Hindu–Muslim relations worsened**. There were **riots** in the 1920s (Kohat, 1924; Multan; Calcutta, and others). Hindu organisations began **Shuddhi** (reconversion of Muslims) and **Sangathan** (organisation of Hindus), and Muslims responded with **Tabligh** and **Tanzim**.
- In **Congress**, there was a split in **1923** when **Motilal Nehru** and **C.R. Das** formed the **Swaraj Party** to take part in the councils, against Gandhi's boycott.
- The Muslim League also **split** (the **Jinnah** and **Shafi** groups, over whether to boycott the Simon Commission, 1927).

The Delhi Proposals, 1927

In **March 1927**, a group of Muslim leaders led by **Jinnah** met in **Delhi** and made proposals to Congress. They offered to give up **separate electorates** (and accept **joint electorates** with reserved seats) if Congress accepted these demands:

1. **Sindh** separated from the Bombay Presidency to become a separate Muslim-majority province;

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2. **reforms** (the same constitutional rights as other provinces) in the **North-West Frontier Province** and **Balochistan**;
3. Muslims to have **one-third of seats** in the Central Legislature;
4. in the **Punjab and Bengal**, representation in proportion to population.

Result. Congress **did not accept** them fully (the **Nehru Report**, 1928, rejected separate electorates and the one-third demand) and the Hindu Mahasabha opposed them. The failure pushed Jinnah towards a harder position (chapter 8).

> **TRY IT**
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> How and why did relationships between Muslims and Hindus change between 1916 and 1927?

Outline. *1916:* Lucknow Pact, a high point of cooperation. *1919–22:* Khilafat and Non-Cooperation brought Hindu–Muslim cooperation under Gandhi, but it **collapsed** after 1922 (the end of the Khilafat Movement, Gandhi's decision to end it, Chauri Chaura). *1920s:* **communalism**, riots, Shuddhi and Sangathan. *1927:* the **Delhi Proposals** offered a compromise, but were not accepted. **Conclusion:** relations changed from cooperation to **suspicion and conflict**.

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