

All-India Muslim League: Split and Reunification (1927-30)

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The All-India Muslim League (AIML)¹ struggled through a variety of circumstances to protect the rights of Indian Muslims. Throughout its history it had to face many challenges and passed through many crises. However, for the AIML the most crucial juncture was the year 1927 when it was divided into two groups: one led by Jinnah (1876-1948) and the other by Sir Muhammad Shafi (1869-1832). The AIML was reunited at Lahore but soon another serious challenge threatened its unity. Before going into details of split and reunification of the AIML it seems appropriate to analyse the political scenario of that time.

The year 1926 saw bitter communal riots in various parts of India most of these riots took place in towns and cities where the Muslims were in a minority and therefore they suffered much more than the Hindus. It is reported that there were 40 riots between April 1926 to 1927 which resulted in 197 deaths and 1598 injured.² These communal riots in 1926 culminated in Swami Shurdhanund's murder on 23 December 1926, at the hand of a Muslim in Delhi which led to another round of communal disturbances.³ The gravity of the situation can be understood from the fact that Muhammad Yaqub (1879-1942) wrote a long letter to secretary AIML stating:

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1. AIML was founded at Dacca (Dhaka) in 1906.
2. See Rushbrook William, (ed.), *India in 1926-27* (Calcutta: Govt. of India, 1928), p.2.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

...All India Muslim league is responsible for the protection and promotion of their⁴ political rights and interests. It is not fear to keep them in the darkness. Let us tell them that the league has ceased to exercise its functions so that they may organize and form another political body if they choose to do so.⁵

At the same time, the Hindus raised their voices against the separate electorates and blamed the AIML for the prevailing communal tension. The All-India Hindu Mahasbha (f. 1906) opposed the separate electorates and condemned the Lucknow pact of 1916. This was the communal situation in India when party meetings of assembly members at Delhi were held on 17 March 1927, to exchange views on the direction in which modification of the system of communal representation was desirable. The Hindu members of the assembly decided in favour of joint electorates with reservation of seats to Muslims either on the basis of Lucknow Pact or the Muslim population in each province.⁶ Many Muslim leaders like Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari (1880-1936), Abul Kalam Azad and Ali Imam (1869-1932) were willing to give up separate electorates.⁷

In 1927, Jinnah was in Delhi to attend the budget session of the Central Legislative Assembly. During discussion on political matters, Motilal Nehru interpreted separate electorates as the bone of contention between the Hindus and the Muslims. He offered that if Muslim gave up separate electorates he could persuade the Indian National Congress (INC) to accept other Muslims demands. Under the circumstances, Jinnah was anxious to form a Muslim consensus on future constitution.⁸

The Delhi Muslim Conference under Jinnah on 20 March 1927 took a bold initiative to give up separate electorates if their four proposals were accepted; such as, Separation of Sind from Bombay; reforms in the N.W.F.P and Baluchistan; representation on the basis of population in the Punjab and Bengal; and thirty three percent seats for the Muslims in the Central Legislature.⁹ The All-India Congress Working Committee

4 The Muslims.

5. Muhammad Saleem Ahmed, *Promise and fulfilment: Documented History of the All-India Muslim League* (Bahawalpur: Department of History, 2005), pp.182-85.

6. *All-India Muslim League Papers* (MLP) Vol.163. See, *Proceeding of the Muslim Conference at Delhi*.

7. *MLP*, Vol.125.

8. See for details. Abdul Razzaq Shahid, 'The All-India Muslim League 1930-37', *Unpublished M.Phil. Thesis* (Islamabad: History Department, 1996), Introduction.

9. *MLP*, Vol.163. Among others the Dehli Muslim Conference was attended by Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Ali Imam, Maharaja of Mahmudabad, M.A.

(AICC) at its meeting in New Delhi on 21 March 1927, recorded its satisfaction on the Muslim proposals.¹⁰ Hindu members of the Central Legislature also approved the joint electorates with reservation of seats on population basis in all the Legislatures but left open the vital question of redistribution of provinces. Lord Irwin, the viceroy of India, was appreciative of the stance of M.A. Jinnah at Delhi Muslim Proposals because the Government thought that the Muslim politicians in general were not ready to give up separate electorates.¹¹ The Central Sikh League, termed the Muslim proposals as a step in the right direction.¹² However, the Hindu Mahasabha challenged the representative character of the INC and stressed that only the Hindu Mahasabha was the proper body to negotiate a settlement on behalf of the Hindu community with any Muslim organization.¹³ The Hindu Mahasabha held its meeting in April 1927, with Dr. Moonje (1872-1948) in the chair, opposed new provinces where Muslims would get majority. It stressed mixed electorates with reservation of seats only for a definite period of time on a uniform basis of representation.¹⁴

This attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha forced some of the Muslim leaders to revise their Delhi decision. A general meeting of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League was held at Lahore on 1 May 1927 under the Presidency of Sir Shafi. He maintained that until the mentality of the Hindu Mahasabha underwent a change there was no option for the Muslims but to “continue to insist on the retention of separate communal electorates as an integral part of the Indian constitution”.¹⁵ Allama

Ansari, Mufti Kifayat Ullah, Nawab Ismail Khan, Mian Shah Nawaz, Sir Abdul Rahim, Lt. Sardar Muhammad Nawaz Khan, Abdul Mateen Chaudhry, Syed Abdul Aziz, Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Dr. Hyder, Maulvi Syed Murtaza, Syed Ahmad Shah, Abdullah Al-Mamoon Suhrawardy, Syed Ale Nabi, Shah Muhamad Zubair, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Sir Muhammad Shafi, M.A. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Yakub, Sir Shah Nawaz, Abdul Latif Farooqi, Sahibzada Sir Abdul Qayyum Khan, Yaqoob Arif, Ijaz Hussain, Anwarul Azim, Abdur Rahman Ghazi, Syed Murtaza, Mirza Abdul Qadir, Ehtishamuddin, Syed Ahmed, Maulvi Shafi Daudi and Arif Hasvi. Sir Fazli Hussain was also invited but he did not attend the meeting.

10. H.N. Mitra, (ed.), *Indian Annual Register (IAR)*, (New Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1990), Vol.I., Jan-June 1927, p.34.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, pp.35-36.
13. *Ibid.*, p.35.
14. *Ibid.*, p.416. 10th session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha was attended among others by Lajpat Rai, Rajendra Prasad, Swami Satyadev, M.M. Malaviya and Raja Narendranath.
15. *Ibid.*, p.431.

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) also expressed his conviction that in the existing political conditions in India separate communal electorates provided the 'only means of making' the legislatures 'truly representative of Indian peoples'.¹⁶

The first Muslim opposition to the Delhi Muslim Proposals came from the members of the Madras Legislative Council who held the view that joint electorates for Muslims in Madras Presidency particularly "will jeopardise the interests of the Muslims".¹⁷ Muslim representatives of Bihar and Orissa held a meeting on 8 May 1927, at Patna to consider the Delhi scheme of joint electorate. Sir Ali Imam (1869-1932), Maulana Shafi Daudi (1879-1946) and Syed Abdul Aziz (d. 1946) supported the Delhi proposals, but Nawab Muhammad Ismail (1884-1958), Sir Fakhruddin (1868-1933), Ather Hussain and Nawab Sarfraz Khan (d. 1933) led the opposition to the joint electorates.¹⁸ The Bengal Muslim Conference held under presidentship of Sir Abdur Rahim (1867-1948) at Barisal on 8 May 1927 and maintained that Muslim opinion was decidedly against the joint electorates.¹⁹ In reply to an AIML circular letter of 5 May 1927, many prominent Muslim leaders expressed themselves in favour of the separate electorates. Syed Ahmad Shah (1886-1959), Imam Jamia Masjid Delhi, not agreed with the proposal of joint electorate.²⁰ M.A. Azim, M.L.A. from Chittagong expressed the same view in his letter to the Secretary of the AIML.²¹ By the middle of May 1927, the Muslims of Madras, U.P., the Punjab, Bengal and Bihar had condemned joint electorates.

Under the circumstances, Jinnah visited Lahore in June 1927 and advocated the acceptance of the proposals but met with little success. Sir Fazli Husain (1877-1936) strongly opposed the system of joint electorates. Hence, implicitly, the AIML stood divided into two camps: those who supported the joint electorates were led by Jinnah (known as Jinnah League) and those who opposed were led by Sir Muhammad Shafi (Shafi League). The Council Members of the AIML from the Punjab met at Lahore under Malik Firoz Khan Noon (1893-1970). A

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, pp.37-38.

18. *Ibid.*, pp.39-40.

19. *Ibid.*, pp.432-33.

20. *MLP.*, Vol.163.

21. *Ibid.*

joint manifesto was issued on 23 July 1927 thoroughly disapproving the joint-electorates scheme.²²

On the meanwhile, the question before the AIML Council (Jinnah group) was to consider the venue for the 1927 annual session, and to elect the party president.²³ On 8 September 1927, Malik Barkat Ali (1885-1946), and Malik Firoz Khan Noon invited the AIML to hold its 1927 annual session at Lahore.²⁴ Mirza Ijaz Husain, Joint secretary of the AIML wrote to Jinnah on 30 September 1927, that there were four invitations to consider for the League session i.e., from Madras, the Punjab, U. P and Calcutta.²⁵

In this situation, the Viceroy in a statement announced the appointment of the Statutory Commission on Reforms on 8 November 1927. It was to be headed by Sir John Simon (1873-1954) and assisted by six other Members of Parliament. On 13 November 1927, only five days after the commission was announced, the Punjab Muslim League met officially and voted for co-operation with the commission. The only opponents of the resolution were Dr. Kitchlew (1888-1963), Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (1873-1956), Malik Barkat Ali and Ghulam Mohiuddin.²⁶ This had been done before Jinnah sent his protest telegram to the Secretary of State. Thus both the groups stood divided on the issues of Simon Commission as well as the electorates. It seemed that the British government wanted to use it as a bargaining counter so as to disintegrate the Swaragist party. Further more through the Muslims discarding separate electorate in Delhi, the Government had got the chance to divide the Muslim on this issue and deprived Jinnah of some Muslim backing.

Now Malik Barkat Ali changed his position and wrote to the Joint Secretary, AIML, on 19 November 1927 that “the Lahore invitation may be treated as withdrawn”. However, this move was neutralized in time by

22. *IAR*, Vol.II, July-December, 1927, p.10.

23. *MPL.*, Vol.163, Mirza Ijaz Hussain to Muhammad Yakub, Letter dated: 24-8-1927.

24. *MPL.*, Vol.124, Malik Barkat Ali wrote to The Secretary AIML “I am authorized by the Council of the Punjab Muslim League to invite the AIML for the next session at Lahore to be held in Christmas 1927” Malik Firoz Khan Noon, Minister For Local Self Government addressed a letter to sec. AIML. ‘Several people have expressed to me the desirability of inviting the League to the Punjab for 1927 annual meeting at Lahore. I shall be obliged if you will kindly please this invitation before the Council of the All-India Muslim League’.

25. *MPL.*, Vol.124. In spite of Shamsul Hasan’s and Ijaz Hussain’s efforts there was no actual invitation from U.P. as it is clear from U.P. provincial Muslim League’s letter to Dr. Kitchlew dated November 10, 1927.

26. Muhammad Rafique Afzal, *Malik Barkat Ali: His Life and Writings* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1969), pp.1920.

Firoz Khan Noon with the support of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. On the same date Noon wrote a letter to the Secretary of the AIML on 19 November 1927 that he 'considers the Punjab invitation as still standing and not withdrawn'.²⁷ Thus Punjab Muslim League was divided into two groups. One group was in favour of cooperation with the Simon Commission and the other opposed it.

However, in the Council meeting under the presidentship of Sir Shafi, on 20 November 1927 passed resolution in favour of the Lahore faction.²⁸ An interesting thing is that Malik Barkat Ali was among those members who voted in favour of Sir Shafi.²⁹ In connection with this meeting Syed Shamsul Hassan, Assistant Secretary of the AIML, narrates an interesting story that followers of Sir Shafi created a situation in which the League would have followed a course different from that laid down by the Jinnah. Jinnah could not attend the meeting. Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan, who was one of the Vice-Presidents, presided. The group which did not want to boycott the Commission, proposed to hold the Session at Lahore under the presidentship of Sir Shafi. The other group under the leadership of Maulana Mohammad Ali and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew (1884-1963) pressed for holding the session at Calcutta under the presidentship of Hakim Ajmal Khan (1863-1927). While the matter was still under discussion, a message was received from Hakim Ajmal Khan that as he was seriously ill, his name should not be proposed for presidentship. Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan did not allow Maulana Mohammad Ali to propose any other name, and announced that in view of the withdrawal of Hakim Ajmal Khan's name, the resolution moved by Sir Firoz Khan Noon, proposing the name of Sir Shafi as president and suggesting Lahore as venue for the Session, being the only resolution before the house, was carried through. This resulted in uproarious protests and the president immediately adjourned the meeting.³⁰

Dr. Kitchlew considered the Council decision of 20 November regrettable and highly detrimental to national and communal interests and bound to create division in the Muslim camp. On 23 November 1927 seven members of the AIML Council requested Dr. Kitchlew to hold

27. *MLP.*, Vol.167.

28. David Page, *Prelude to Partition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.169.

29. *MLP.*, Vol.167.

30. Syed Shamsul Hasan, . . . *Plain Mr. Jinnah* (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1976), p.34.

another meeting to revise Council decision about venue and presidentship.³¹ Mujibur Rahman (1869-1940), Secretary, Bengal Presidency Muslim League, also sent a telegram on 24 November 1927 to AIML office, Delhi, demanding revision of the Council decision. Jinnah telegraphically asked Shamsul Hasan, on 28 November 1927, from Bombay to call a Council meeting. Consequently an agenda (making as urgent) was issued from the AIML office Delhi on 28 November 1927, for a Council meeting to be held on 11 December at the AIML headquarter Ballimaran street.³² Jinnah urged Dr. Asnari to use his influence to secure a majority for Calcutta, with the Aga Khan (1877-1957) as President.³³ He urged Dr. Kitchlew to do his bit. In his letter to Kitchlew he hoped that the League would not fall prey to the reactionary forces of the Punjab. He also sent a letter to Mirza Ijaz Hussain, Joint secretary of the AIML, in early December 1927 to do his best to give to the members of the AIML Council proper information about the situation. Jinnah got in touch with Aga Khan who replied to his communication strongly urging the next meeting be held at Calcutta.³⁴

Under the circumstances, Sir Shafi sent a telegram to Dr. Kitchlew requesting him to postpone the Council meeting to promote Muslim solidarity. However, the Council meeting took place as scheduled on 11 December 1927.³⁵ Some of the members questioned the Legality of this meeting and regarded it unconstitutional. Among them were S.M Abdullah, of Aligarh, Gul Muhamad Khan of Ferozpur, Abdul Latif Faruqi M.L.A. and Zafarullah Khan from Lahore. Only 23 members attended the Council meeting in person, a large number of absentee votes polled in which swung the decision in Calcutta Favour. The previous decision was reversed by 84 votes (74 absentees) to 54 (41 absentees). Sir Firoz Khan Noon, Dr. Iqbal, Hasrat Mohani (1878-1951) and their followers left the meeting in disgust.³⁶ It is to be noted that Sir Shafi declined to preside over Calcutta meeting due to fear of some unpleasant treatment and agreed to change the venue. But Jinnah insisted on Calcutta. The split in the League ranks had finally become absolutely clear. The decision of the Council meeting opened a new debate on the question of venue.

31. *MLP.*, Vol.167.

32. *Ibid.*

33. David Page, *op.cit.*, p.160.

34. *MLP.*, Vol.167.

35. *MLP.*, Vol.171.

36. *Ibid.*

Syed Abdul Jabbar, Vice-President Rajputana Provincial Muslim League, Sir Abdur Rahim, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan (1895-1963) and many others wanted the annual session of the AIML to be postponed to a later date to save the split in the AIML. Mushir Hussain Kidwai (1877-1937), Aga Khan and Hasrat Mohani tried to hold another meeting of the AIML Council to change the venue.³⁷ Some of the important UP Muslims leaders asked the Secretary to convene a Council meeting to change venue of the AIML session from Calcutta to Delhi.

Though the Reception Committee was formed at Lahore with Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan (1876-1933) as its chairman, decided to hold the AIML meeting at Lahore but last bid effort was made by Ahmad Yar Khan Daultana (1896-1940) to save the situation. He wired to Jinnah at Calcutta:

We are extremely gratified that majority of Muslims favour separate electorates. If settlement with Hindus possible its detail and boycott question may be discussed by both communities otherwise only by Muslims of India at full joint meeting on last Saturday and Sunday in January. Pray do not hold regular session of League but as members must have arrived discuss matters only informally. If you agree same course may be followed here. Kindly save situation as true statesman wire considered reply immediately.³⁸

That reply never came. The Leaguers at Lahore waited till the evening of 30 December for decision of the Jinnah group. Having learnt that Jinnah group had decided not to postpone the meeting, it was decided to hold the Lahore session the next day i.e., 31 December 1927. So there were two AIML sessions in 1927, one at Lahore with Sir Shafi in the chair and the other at Calcutta presided over by Maulvi Muhammad Yakub (1879-1942).³⁹ The Pan-Islamists, Khilafatists and the pro-Congress Muslims dominated the Calcutta session.⁴⁰ The Lahore session was supported by many Muslim leaders 'from various parts' of India. In Calcutta session it was reiterated that the AIML was not prepared to give up separate electorates unless its conditions were fulfilled. The Punjab Muslim League was disaffiliated. Jinnah was elected the President of the AIML for the next three years.⁴¹

37. *MLP.*, Vol.176.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *IAR.*, Vol.II, July-December, 1927, p.152.

40. *MLP.*, Vol.176.

41. *Foundations*, Vol.II, pp.114-18.

The INC in its annual session at Madras, called for an All-Parties Conference 'to draft a Swaraj Constitution'.⁴² The All-Parties Conference which had started on 12 February 1928, at Delhi continued its day to day sittings till 22 February 1928 and formulated some proposals. These proposals were opposed by the Hindu Mahasabha. The AIML, Jinnah group, appointed a 13 member committee⁴³ to confer with representatives of other organizations to press them to accept the Muslim proposals as embodied in the AIML resolution IV of Calcutta 1927 and to report the result to the council before proceeding with the framing of the constitution.

The All Parties Conference was held on 8 March 1928. There was no agreement between Jinnah group and the Hindu Mahasabha on the separation of Sind and on reservation of seats. The Hindu Mahasabha rejected creation of a new province of Sind because it would increase the number of Muslim provinces and that would ultimately divide India into Hindu India and Muslim India. Jinnah group was left with no alternative but to withdraw.⁴⁴ In short all the agreements from Lucknow (1916) to Madras (1927) Pacts between the two communities were practically renounced. This indeed was the end of negotiations.

The All-Parties Conference held at Lucknow from 28 to 31 August 1928, the resolution adopting the Nehru Report was moved by Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) seconded by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) and supported among others by M. M. Malaviya, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Moulvi M. Yakub, Maulana Ahmad Shah, M. C. Chagla, Tufail Ahmad and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949). However, both the Jinnah and Shafi groups, kept aloof from the Conference. The only prominent Muslim leader to oppose the Report at the Conference was Maulana Hasrat Mohani.⁴⁵

The Nehru Report discarded separate electorates and reservation of seats in the Punjab and Bengal as desired by the AIML. The principle of weightage was also condemned. The separation of Sind and equal status as provinces to Baluchistan and NWFP though recommendation was made conditional i.e. subject to administrative and financial feasibility and implementation of the Nehru Report. One third Muslim seats in the central Legislature, already agreed to by Lucknow Pact of 1916 was dropped in

42. *IAR.*, Vol.II, July-December, 1928, *All Parties Conference Text of the Committee Report.*

43. *MLP.*, Vol.177, Its members were: Jinnah, Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad, Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum, Raja Nawab Ali, Nawab Muhamd Ismail Khan, Shah M. Zubair, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Maulvi M. Yakub, Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtola, Maulvi Tufail Ahmad, Abdul Mateen Chaudhry and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew.

44. *IAR*, July-December, 1928, p.14.

45. *Ibid.*, p.63.

spite of Shuaib Qureshi's (1891-1962) note of dissent. In brief all the agreements reached on Hindu-Muslim unity were swept away and sacrificed at the altar of Hindu Mahasabha. The worst that the Nehru Committee could do was practically its recommendation for Unitary System of government instead of a truly federal one.⁴⁶ The UP All-Parties Muslim Conference and the Khilafat Conference condemned the Report. The Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind also broke away from the INC and joined the Muslim critics of the Report. Despite all this, AICC accepted the Nehru Report in toto on 3 November 1928.⁴⁷

The Nehru Report led to the issuance of a manifesto at Simla signed by a large number of Muslim members of the central and provincial Legislatures on 10 September 1928. They made it clear that no constitution would be acceptable to the Muslim unless it provided effective and adequate protection of their interests.⁴⁸ This ultimately paved the way for the All Parties Muslim Conference (later on called All-India Muslim Conference, AIMC) held on 31 December 1928 and 1 January 1929 under the presidentship of the Aga Khan at Delhi. The Shafi Group of the AIML was very active in organizing this conference.

Some Muslim leaders suggested postponement of the AIML session till after the AIMC at Delhi but Jinnah Group decided to hold the twentieth annual session on 26 to 28 December 1928 at Calcutta and the Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad was elected its President.⁴⁹ Thus, Jinnah Group and Shafi Group, went on their own respective ways. The Shafi Group proceeded with the AIMC at Delhi under the Aga Khan to provide the Muslims a common platform to formulate their united demands *vis-à-vis*, the Nehru Report. The Shafi Group did not hold any annual session after 1927.

The AIML, Jinnah Group, held its twentieth annual session at Calcutta from 26 to 30 December 1928, under the presidentship of Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad. Resolution IV of the Jinnah Group regretted that it could not accept the invitation of the AIMC as that would be disastrous to Muslim interests if rival and *ad hoc* organizations were set up at every crisis in the history of the community. This resolution was opposed by Fazlul Haq (1873-1962).⁵⁰

46. *Ibid.* Text of the Committee Report, pp.17-21.

47. K.K. Aziz, (ed.), *The All-India Muslim Conference*, (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1972), pp.5-6.

48. *Ibid.*, pp.17-18.

49. *MLP.*, Vols.146 and 178.

50. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan* (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1970), Vol.II, p.139.

Jinnah moved his amendments in the open session of the All Parties Convention on 28 December 1928. No progress was possible in the face of opposition by the Hindu Mahasabha. Mukund Ramrao Jayakar questioned the representative character of Jinnah and emphasized that Jinnah only represented a small minority of Muslims. To this Jinnah responded, "Do you want the Muslim India to go along with you?... If you do not settle this question today, we shall have to settle it tomorrow".

The All Parties convention rejected Jinnah's amendments in the very presence of those INC leaders who had accepted the Delhi Muslim Proposals at Bombay and Madras claiming themselves to be in the forefront of the movement for Hindu Muslim Unity.

When Jinnah's amendments to the Nehru Report were summarily rejected, the only natural course open to Jinnah was to concentrate on Muslim unity. Jinnah explored the possibility of unification of the two Leagues when he came to Delhi in February 1929 to attend the Legislative Assembly's winter session. Meanwhile Sir Shafi also happened to be in Delhi. Both the leaders met and after the meeting the two expressed themselves as satisfied with the views of each other and the prospects of unity appeared exceedingly hopeful.⁵¹ The meeting of the Council of the Jinnah group was held on 28 March 1929, with Jinnah in the chair. It was attended by more than sixty members. The president initiated the discussion on the question of bringing unity in the ranks of the AIML.⁵²

After some discussion on the question of unity, the consideration of the matter was postponed to the following day, 29 March 1929. Meanwhile the Shafi League delegation consisting among others, of Sir Abdul Qadir, Dr. Iqbal, Nawab Muhammad Yousaf and Malik Firoz Khan Noon had been waiting in the adjacent room.⁵³ Informal discussions went on between the ten member delegation of the Shafi Group and an equal sized delegation of the Jinnah Group. The discussion proved inconclusive.⁵⁴ At the subsequent meeting of the council of Jinnah Group antagonistic spirit prevailed among the section of the members whose support for the Nehru Report was well known.⁵⁵ The President Jinnah, himself announced on behalf of the Shafi Group that 16 members of their party who were members of the AIML, were prepared to take part in the deliberations of the Council provided three

51. *IAR*, Vol.I, Jan-June, 1929, p.373.

52. *MLP.*, Vol.185.

53. *IAR.*, Vol.I, Jan-June, 1929, p.364.

54. *MLP.*, Vol.185.

55. *IAR.*, Vol.I, 1929, p.364.

members of their party who were not members of the AIML Council were admitted as members of the AIML Council. The Council failed to oblige.⁵⁶

The adjourned 20th session of the AIML Jinnah Group opened at Roshan Theatre on 30 March 1929, and Jinnah took the chair in the absence of the Raja Saheb of Mahmoodabad who could not come owing to illness. Jinnah in his address emphasized, if the Indian Muslims wanted their will to be registered then that could only be accomplished by united decision. Talking about his 15 point Resolution, he clarified that he had taken the idea from various persons. He had consulted various groups and schools of thoughts and prepared a draft which he thought would command the support of a large body of people. A committee was formed and the open session was adjourned to the next day 31 March 1929.⁵⁷

The efforts to evolve an agreed formula continued till 31 March 1929, when the Council of the AIML Jinnah Group held its meeting in the morning where some 75 members were present.⁵⁸ Some of them were in favour of Nehru Report and other opposed it.⁵⁹ In this situation of a deadlock Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan proposed to the subject committee that the session of the AIML Jinnah Group should be postponed to enable negotiations to be carried on for that purpose. This proposal was not agreed to by a majority of the committee and some members including Ali Brothers, Shafi Daoodi, Moulvi Muhammad Yakub and Nawab Ismail Khan walked out of the subject committee and they went to Hakim Ajmal Khan's house where they held conference with other leaders and discussed Jinnah's draft resolution.⁶⁰ This walkout amounted to a further split in the AIML and was a split caused even in the Jinnah Group as well as the Subject Committee.⁶¹

Shafi Group already staying away and a section of the Jinnah Group having walked out, Jinnah was left alone to fight the pro-Nehru extremists in the AIML Council of Jinnah Group as best as he could.⁶² When these negotiations broke down, Jinnah left for Hakim Ajmal Khan's house requesting Shah Zubair (1888-1930) to continue the committee meeting. He also announced that the session of the AIML would commence at 4:30 p.m.⁶³ He asked Muhammad Yakub, Ali Brothers and their followers to return to the Subject Committee. But found no chance of a compromise. He

56. *MLP.*, Vol.185.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*

59. *IAR.*, Vol.I, Jan-June, 1929, p.368.

60. *MLP.*, Vol.185.

61. *IAR.*, *op.cit.*, p.368.

62. Sharifuddin Pirzada, Vol.III, pp.221-22.

63. *MLP.*, Vol.185.

requested them to attend the open session of the AIML and help him to adjourn it. However, they did not agree.⁶⁴

Meanwhile the Subject Committee under Shah Zubair continued discussion on the resolutions. The pro-Nehru Report group was in an overwhelming majority. The committee meeting concluded at 5 p.m. but the President who was busy in negotiations at Hakim Ajmal Khan's house had not yet arrived. Taking advantage of this Ali Imam proposed and T.A.K. Sherwani (1884-1935) seconded that Dr. Muhammad Alam (1887-1947) should preside over the session. They did not even bother to put the motion to vote and put Dr. Alam in the chair. At this juncture a number of delegates moved their hands or sticks and shouted that they did not want Dr. Alam as President. Dr. Alam asked Abdur Rahman Ghazi to move his resolution which he did without a speech seconded by T.A.K. Sherwani also without a speech, the uproar continued all the time. M. Sadiq wanted to move an amendment but Dr. Alam declared the resolution carried without counting the votes. At the same time he dissolved the meeting. The Secretary AIML Dr. Kitchlew by now a well known pro-Nehru Report informed Jinnah on his arrival that he himself was not satisfied with the manner in which the resolution was declared as passed. When Jinnah returned to the session he was greeted with cheers by the audience and immediately after that there was a pin drop silence. He addressed the audience and then adjourned the session till such a date as the Council of the AIML would decide. Then he returned to Hakim Ajmal Khan's house and continued his discussion with Maulvi Muhammad Yakub and Ali Brothers. Dr. Alam, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and T.A.K. Sherwani proceeded to Dr. Ansari's house.⁶⁵

The next meeting of the Council of the AIML Jinnah Group was held on 1 April 1929. It was chaired by Jinnah and attended by 59 members including those who had walked out of the Subject Committee meeting. In the meeting objection was raised on the constitutional grounds that the meeting was invalid because only the Secretary could call such a meeting who had not done so. The Secretary had failed to give any notice in spite of the president having specifically told him to intimate the members. He did not even inform those who were present at the headquarters.⁶⁶

On 31 October 1929 the Viceroy announced that a Round Table Conference (RTC) would be convened in London to settle the Indian political problems. Prominent Hindu leaders met the Viceroy on 23 December 1929 to clarify certain issues regarding the RTC but it failed because of the INC demand to make the Dominion status as the basis of the proposed RTC. Consequently the INC at its Lahore session passed resolution

64. Sharifuddin Pirzada, *op.cit.*, pp.221-23.

65. *IAR.*, Vol.I, Jan-June, 1929, pp.370-72.

66. *Ibid.*

of complete independence for India and Nehru Report was declared lapsed.⁶⁷ The INC Working Committee on 2 January 1930, declared 26 January 1930, to be celebrated as Independence Day throughout India. Ali Brothers, Shafi Daoodi and Nawab Ismail Khan urged the Muslims not to participate in the INC led Independence Day demonstration on 26 January 1930, in the absence of any settlement on the Hindu Muslim question.⁶⁸ All this was enough to awake the AIML from its slumber from which it had been suffering since April, 1929.

Under the presidentship of Jinnah the Council of the AIML Jinnah Group held its meeting on 9 February 1930 and urged the government to fix and announce a date for the same. It demanded that NWFP be put on the same footing as other provinces. It appointed Moulvi Mohammad Yakub, Deputy President of the Legislative Assembly, as the Honorary Secretary of the AIML temporarily till the next election.⁶⁹

Another meeting of Jinnah Group Council was called for 23 February 1930. The real purpose of calling this Council Meeting was, however, given in the letter of Secretary AIML of 15 February 1930 to the members. It disclosed that Sir Shafi and Jinnah had met and discussed several questions of national importance and both the leaders had agreed to reunite and form a strong Muslim political organization. The two leaders agreed to call the meetings of their respective Councils simultaneously at the AIML office in Delhi on 23 February 1930.⁷⁰ An urgent notice was issued on 20 February 1930, from league office shifting the date of Council Meeting from 23 to 28 February 1930, because of Sir Shafi's unavoidable professional engagements. His presence was extremely necessary to bring about unity between the two sections of the AIML.⁷¹

On 28 February, after the *Jumatul Wida* Prayers, a meeting of the Council of the AIML was held at 3 p. m. in the office of the AIML with Jinnah as President. Members of both the sections of the AIML were present. Jinnah proposed a resolution that the two factions of the AIML are now united. It was cordially seconded by Sir Shafi. The resolution was unanimously adopted. Thus, the two Leagues were united after their separation over two years ago.⁷²

67. *Ibid.*, pp.19, 49-50.

68. *IAR.*, Jan-June, 1930, p.17.

69. *MLP.*, Vol.186.

70. *Ibid.*

71. Incidentally the 28 February to be last Friday of the holy month of Ramadhan, *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*