

In Retrospect

ABUL HASHIM

IN RETROSPECT

ABUL HASHIM



**BANGLADESH CO-OPERATIVE BOOK SOCIETY LTD.
DHAKA - CHITTAGONG.**

IN RETROSPECT

Abul Hashim

Published by:

Md. Nurullah

Director (Publications)

Bangladesh Co-operative Book Society Ltd.

Niaz Manzil, Jubilee Road, Chittagong.

Phone : 637523

DHAKA OFFICE :

125, Motijheel Commercial Area.

Dhaka -1000, Phone : 9569201.

SALES CENTRE :

150-152 New Market

Dhaka - Phone 9663863

79, Jam-e-Masjid Shopping Complex (1st floor)

Chittagong.

PRESS SECTION :

946, Arambagh, Motijheel, Dhaka.

Phone : 9346915

Copy Right :

Badruddin Umar

1st Edition

November 1974

Second Edition

May 1998

COVER DESIGN :

Sabih-ul-Alam

PRINTERS :

Mehran Press

Anderkilla, Chittagong.

Price : Tk. 100.00

\$ 5.00

ISBN : 984-493-029-4

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge with gratitude financial support I received from my friend, Syed Mujibullah, originally of Burdwan. He maintained a number of research scholars and secretaries to help me prepare the manuscript.

I am deeply grateful to Sri Amiyo Kumar Bose, the eldest son of late revered Sarat Chandra Bose, who maintained stubborn resistance to partition of Bengal. He very kindly made available to me valuable documents with photostat copies, where necessary, from personal records of his father, whose contribution to political thinking of Bengal will be recognised and appreciated when the people of Bengal come back to sanity and will fully experience the tragic consequences of the partition of Bengal.

INTRODUCTION

My father, Mr. Abul Hashim, died on October 5, 1974 shortly before this book was published. It could have been published during his lifetime if the cover designer did not take a long time to finish his work. A mistake was also made in writing the name of the book. In this second edition the mistake has been corrected.

The preface written by the author for the book could not be found at the time of printing and I am sure that it was not brought to the notice of the author, and so it was published without that. Later the preface was found after his death and it is now being printed in this edition.

A second edition of this book should have been published long ago but owing to various reasons it could not be done. I thank the Co-operative Book Society and also Mr. Munawwar Ahmad for bringing out this edition.

Badruddin Umar

Rupnagar
Mirpur,
Dhaka.
April 20, 1998.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful

I had known Marhoom Allama Abul Hashim since 1950 when as a school student I came across of his famous philosophical writing, "The Creed of Islam. A voracious reader as I was then, I went through the pages ardently and naturally could not make head and tail out of it. Then came my association with "Tamaddun Majlis" and the language movement, of which Janab Abul Hashim was the co-sponsor with Professor Abul Quasem. During the late 60's he became a relative of mine through matrimonial connections. I saw him as a completely blind man and amazed to find his intellectual depth, which was really difficult to fathom on the part of a person's credence as that of mine.

This volume of Janab Abul Hashim grows out of his reminiscence of the political part he played in undivided India as the General Secretary of Bengal Provincial Muslim League. His Vision to make the Muslim League as grass-root oriented political party and the efforts to prevent the partition of Bengal have been vividly explained in this memoir. An avid reader of this book will find answers to many controversies on issues of partition of India, creation of Pakistan and the independent Bangladesh as it stands today. This volume gives not only the portrayal of inner characters of many of our national and international leaders but also a detailed account of sentiments which prevailed in Bengal from 1936 to 1947. This book was first published in 1974 and had been out of print for quite sometime. Bangladesh Co-operative Book Society is proud to reprint it with kind permission of his illustrious son Janab Badruddin Umar and present to the fact finding readers of Bangladesh.

Munawwar Ahmad

Chairman

Bangladesh Co-operative Book Society Ltd.

Chittagong, Dhaka.

24th of April 1998

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I have given a short sketch of my pedigree, childhood, school and college life, but the book is not patterned as my autobiography. Youths between the age of thirty and thirty five have no direct knowledge of the Pakistan movement. The book is designed to present, as far as humanly possible, an objective narration of events, currents and undercurrents of Muslim politics of Bengal with side lights on All India Political Movements from 1936 to the 15th of August 1947.

It was an irony of fate that immediately after I was elected General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, I came to grips with the leaders of the Parliamentary front of the Muslim League. Three Muslim League journals -- the Morning News, The Star of India and The Azad, in support of the Parliamentary Party, breathed fire on me almost everyday on this or that pretext.

I declared that I would organise the Muslim League of Bengal as a broad-based, democratic and progressive Political Party. The Parliamentary Party made the parent body subservient to its parliamentary front. I wanted the parliamentary front to function under the discipline and supervision of the parent body, the Provincial Muslim League of Bengal.

Declaration of this policy on the one hand antagonised Maulana Akram Khan, the President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League and his patron, Khwaja Nazimuddin, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, and on the other hand inspired the Muslim

youths of Bengal. I received active co-operation of the progressive Muslim youths of Bengal and it was due to their indefatigable and sincere labour that we were able to successfully fight the reactionary elements of the Muslim League and knock them out of power in the general election of 1946.

How far I have succeeded in making my narration factual and objective is for the reader to judge. Publication of the book shall be justified if it be of some use to the future historians in preparing a dependable history of pre-independence Muslim League and its struggle for Pakistan.

Abul Hashim

1974

CONTENTS

Childhood	13
In School and College	19
As a Lawyer	25
Mr. Fazlul Huq leaves the	37
Muslim League	39
Elected General Secretary of	39
Bengal Muslim League	43
The Provincial Muslim League Office	
and the Party House	49
The Financial Policy of the	
Provincial Muslim League	61
Tour Begins	64
Amendment of the Constitution	76
The Battle of Dacca	80
The Battle of Calcutta	87
The Draft Manifesto	92
The Long Tour	98
The Chalakchar Conference	100
The Provincial Parliamentary Board	104
The General Election	110
Suhrawardy Ministry in Bengal	123
The Direct Action Resolution	129
The Riots	133
The Cabinet Mission	138
The Interim Government	141
The Contest for Presidentship of	
Bengal Muslim League	144
Partition of Bengal	152
Appendices	185
Index	209

CHILDHOOD

I was born in the early hours of Friday, the 27th of January, 1905. I was the 7th child of my parents. They had before my birth six daughters; two of them died in infancy. My parents were first cousins. My paternal and maternal grandfathers were full brothers, the elder was my maternal grandfather, Nawab Abdul Jabbar Khan Bhadur, C.I.E and the younger brother, Moulvi Abdul Majeed, was my paternal grandfather. My father, Moulvi Abul Kasem, was the first born of his parents and my mother Mokarrama Khatoon was the youngest daughter of Nawab Abdul Jabbar.

I was born in our family home, Kashiara, in the district of Burdwan. My maternal grandfather lived in his village home after his retirement from Government service. He was a Deputy Magistrate. After retiring from Government service, he was appointed Prime Minister of Bhopal. My paternal grandfather, Moulvi Abdul Majeed, was a class I officer of the Central Government of India. My great grandfather, Khan Bahadur Golam Asgar, was a subordinate Judge under the East India Company. My mother and her children lived with her father till her death. I lost my mother at the age of six. My father also lost his mother in his childhood and was brought up by his uncle Nawab Abdul Jabbar who married his youngest daughter to him when he was a young boy of sixteen. My maternal grandmother, Musammat Sadequa Khatoon, was a noble lady. She brought up my father as her son after his mother's death. My father and

his full sister A'fia Khatoon were the first two children of their father by his first wife. My aunt A'fia Khatoon, after her mother's death, was taken over and brought up by her paternal aunt Musammat Nazrunnessa Khatoon, who was a childless widow.

My family claims descent from a great divine, Makhdoom Shah Badruddin Badr. He lived and worked for some years in Chittagong. He died and was buried in Bihar Sharif, a famous town in Bihar. Shah Hayat Majeed, a descendant of Hadhrat Makhdoom Shah Badruddin Badr, was married to a daughter of the family of a reputed divine, Hamid Danishmund, popularly known as Hamid Bangali. He belonged to a respectable family of Mangalkot, a village in the district of Burdwan. Shah Hayat Majeed settled in Kashiara where he died and was buried in our family graveyard. Hadhrat Ahmed Serhindi, popularly known as Mujaddid Al'fesani lived and worked during the reign of Emperor Akbar and his son Emperor Jahangir. When Emperor Akbar attempted to introduce a new religion, 'Deen-e-Ilahi' Hadhrat Mujaddid Al'fesani resisted Akbar from implementing his design. The Mujaddid also actively protested against un-Islamic behaviour of Emperor Jahangir.

My maternal grandfather died a few months before my mother's death. After my mother's death, my mother's elder sister Naseebah Khatoon took charge of me and I was brought up by her. She was fairly rich and a childless widow. She lived in town of Burdwan. She died at age of 93 in the year 1963.

My father, after his graduation from Presidency College, did not go for any Government service but joined politics. He had neither time nor any necessity to worry about his wife and children. This was a responsibility of my grandfather Nawab Abdul Jabbar and my aunt Musammat Naseebah Khatoon. My father was a devoted follower of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee.

He was actively associated with his movement against Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal. My father was a prominent member of the Indian National Congress and he kept himself attached to Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee and his politics. Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee left the Indian National Congress in 1921 and my father followed him. Eversince the introduction of Montague Chelmsford Reforms my father was a member of Legislature, Provincial or Central, till the end of his life; he died in October 1936.

I was born and bred in feudal environment. The family did not belong to landed aristocracy. They were, however, landlords of their own village and they had a small estate yielding an annual income of 10 to 12 thousand rupees. Their main profession was Government service. Moulvi Mohammad Abdullah, the eldest son of Nawab Abdul Jabbar, was a Deputy Magistrate. Khan Bahadur Abdul Momin, the second son, retired as Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong. Moulvi Mohammad Abdul Hafiz, the eldest son of Moulvi Muhammad Abdullah, retired as Chief Auditor of North West Frontier State Railway; basically he was an Accountant-General in the Indian Finance Service. My eldest sister Masiha Khatoon was married to Moulvi Abdul Hafiz. Some other members of the family held small offices in Bihar. In those days Bengal, Bihar and Orissa constituted one single province. My grandfather Nawab Abdul Jabbar, when a Deputy Magistrate, spent greater part of his service life in Bihar. My paternal grandfather Moulvi Abdul Majeed, who was an officer of the Central Government, was posted in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. The culture of the family was very greatly influenced by the culture of Bihar and U.P. The family did not adopt Urdu as their mother-tongue but they adopted Urdu as medium of instruction in schools and colleges. The family had not much attraction for town and city life. According to them towns and cities were good for working and earning but for living, they preferred their village home. They spent much of

their resources in building comfortable houses in the village. My uncle, Khan Bahadur Abdul Momin, C.I.E. after his retirement lived in Calcutta. My grandfather Nawab Abdul Jabbar died in 1918 when I was a boy of 13. So long as he lived, his children had to spend their holidays with him in the village. Thus from my childhood I had developed attraction for village life. When I entered life as an earning member of the family I also built a descent house with garden and tanks in the village. My grandfather, Nawab Abdul Jabbar, was extremely fond of me and I was equally fond of him. I spent most of my time with my grandfather. According to the then custom, the Governor of the Province summoned for an exclusive interview the dignitaries of the Province at least once in a year by turn. He would often tell me what talks he had with the Governor. Once he narrated to me a very interesting incident. His father Khan Bahadur Gulam Asgar was once summoned to appear before the Governor. My great grandfather took his son Abdul Jabbar with him. Abdul Jabbar was then a small boy. The East India Company's Administration suspected my great grandfather's association with the Sepoy Mutiny. The Governor said, "You are a traitor". My great grandfather immediately replied, "Definitely so or else how could you rule us?" The Governor appreciated his reply and did not take any action against him. My great grandfather was a far sighted man. When English education was introduced in Bengal the Muslims generally boycotted English education, but he admitted his children to English Schools. My grandfather Abdul Jabbar was a class fellow of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the great literature of Bengal. When Abdul Jabbar was in the final year of his Degree Course, he was appointed a Deputy Magistrate. In those days, Government offices were reserved exclusively for members of respectable families. My paternal grand-father Moulvi Abdul Majeed was appointed a senior officer of the Central Government immediately after he passed his Entrance Examination which was equivalent to Matriculation

Examination of our time. My maternal uncle, Nawab Abdul Jabbar's eldest son, Moulvi Mohammad Abdullah was appointed a Deputy Magistrate when he passed his Entrance Examination.

My grandfather Moulvi Abdul Majeed married Musammat Salmah Khatoon, a daughter of a very respectable family of Rasulpur, a village in Kalna Sub-division of the district of Burdwan. He had two children, my father and my aunt A'fia Khatoon by his first wife. My father and my aunt lost their mother in their childhood. My grandfather after the death of his first wife married her younger sister but she did not survive long. After a few months of her marriage she died. My grandfather married for the third time my maternal grandmother's niece, Musammat Tayyieba Khatoon. My grandfather, by his third wife, had seven children--four sons, Abul Barakat, Abul Hayat, Abul Khairat and Abul Hasanat and three daughters, Shafia Khatoon, Rafiah Khatoon and Soyeibah Khatoon. My aunt A'fia Khatoon was adopted by her paternal aunt Musammat Nazrunnessa Khatoon as her daughter. Musammat Nazrunnessa Khatoon was a well to do childless widow. She lived in Mahata, a village three miles south of our village Kashiara. My aunt A'fia Khatoon was married to Khan Bahadur Abdul Momin, the second son of Nawab Abdul Jabbar. Musammat Nazrunnessa Khatoon made a gift of her property to A'fia Khatoon and her husband Abdul Momin. During infancy of my father, my grandfather Abdul Majeed disposed of the property left by his first and second wife. Thus my father did not inherit any property from his mother and from his aunt Nazrunnessa Khatoon. My grandfather Abdul Majeed was a sincere devotee of Islam. He spent a considerable part of his time in prayer and worship of Allah, but he was a man of quick temper. When he lost his temper he also lost his mental balance. He would often mercilessly beat his sons, servants and others who incurred his displeasure. He personally lived a very simple

life but was extremely generous to others. His generosity exceeded limits and consequently he incurred heavy debts. On one occasion, when one of his creditors attached his village house and put it to auction, his elder brother Nawab Abdul Jabbar paid his creditor's dues. My grandfather Abdul Majeed was advised by elders of our family to transfer his property including his home-stead in favour of his third wife. This was meant to be a formal transaction necessitated by extravagant generosity of my grandfather. But after the death of my grandfather his children by his third wife appropriated the whole property depriving my father and his sister A'fia Khatoon. My uncles Abul Khairat and Abul Hasanat were minor children when my grandfather died. My mother died in the lifetime of her father. I, therefore, did not inherit any property from my maternal and paternal ancestors. My maternal grandfather Nawab Abdul Jabbar, however, gave me a nice house on the Grand Trunk Road, Burdwan. When my father died I received a leather portfolio, an eye glass and a fountain pen which he left under his pillow. I do not think I shall leave any property for my children to inherit.

When my maternal grandmother died, my mother was bearing her last child. After my grandmother's death, my mother fell sick. She was taken to Calcutta for her treatment. She did not recover from her illness. She delivered a still born female child and three days after her delivery she died. Her dead body was taken to our village and she was buried in our family graveyard.

IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

After my mother's death, my aunt Musammat Naseebah Khatoon took charge of me. I lived under her care in her house in Burdwan. She was a noble lady. She reared me up as her son. My two sisters Masiha Khatoon and Habiba Khatoon were married in the life-time of my mother. Masiha Khatoon was married to her cousin Mohammad Abdul Hafiz, the eldest son of my uncle Moulvi Muhammad Abdullah. My second sister Habiba Khatoon was married to Syed Hamidullah, a nephew of my aunt Naseebah Khatoon's deceased husband Moulvi Syed Abdus Salam. My sister and her husband lived in my aunt house in Burdwan. I and my two un-married sisters Sufia Khatoon and Hafsah Khatoon lived with our aunt in Burdwan. Besides Moulvi Muhammad Abdullah and Khan Bahadur Abdul Momin, I had two other uncles, sons of Nawab Abdul Jabbar. They were affectionately attached to us. Moulvi Abdul Halim, the youngest son of his father, was a scholar of Arabic and Persian. After completing his study of Arabic and Persian in Calcutta Madrasah, he was also admitted to an English School.

In those days, Muslim boys and girls started their education with reading and writing Arabic. I was put under the charge of Moulvi Giasuddin Ahmed, a thoroughly qualified scholar of Deoband Madrasah; he was a student of the famous divine and scholar Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. Moulvi Giasuddin was Arabic and Persian teacher in the Municipal High English School. He lived in our house as my resident tutor; he belonged

to the district of Burdwan. I started my educational career by learning correct reading of Al 'Quran and how to perform prayers. After that teaching of Bengali started. In those days, Muslim boys and girls had to learn reading of Al 'Quran and how to perform prayers before learning Bengali, English, Arithmetic etc. My resident tutor Moulvi Giasuddin Ahmed never believed that I could tell a lie. It was not a fact that I never told him a lie.

When I entered my seventh year I was sent to School. I was admitted in the Burdwan Municipal High English School. This school had twelve classes, four of them were primary classes. What I learnt in four years in primary classes I could have learnt in two years. Two years of my life were thus wasted. Teaching discipline and good manners was an important part of education. Teachers in schools were not mercenaries, but they were genuinely devoted to learning and teaching. "Spare the rod and spoil the Child" was then the rule of teaching in schools. In the first hour, the school peon placed on the table a piece of chalk, a duster and a cane. To make the student stand upon the bench was another form of punishment.

When I was in the sixth year of my school life, my father started a Hostel for muslim students in a big garden house belonging to a member of the family of the Maharaj Bahadur of Burdwan. In order to encourage others to send their boys to this Hostel, my father sent me to the Hostel along with two of my uncles, Abul Khairat and Abul Hasanat; they were senior to me by four and two years respectively. Moulvi Abul Qasim, the Superintendent of the Hostel, was efficient in Arabic and English. He was a stern task master. He was a good teacher and had fatherly affection for the boys under his charge. He was very severe in using his cane in case of indiscipline and negligence of duty. Besides learning school lessons, regular performance of prayer was mandatory. Moulvi Abul Qasim initiated us to manual

labour in the field. He parcelled out the open land of the Hostel into small pieces and allotted to each of the boys a piece of land for growing vegetables. He collected necessary agricultural implements and taught us how to use them. This strengthened my attraction for village life. After I had built my village home I acquired some agricultural land and when I came to my village for rest I often worked in the field with labourers engaged for cultivation of my land.

I passed my Matriculation Examination from the Burdwan Municipal High English School in 1923, and then joined Calcutta Presidency College. I was placed in the Taylor Hostel. Hostel life of Calcutta was not congenial to me. I preferred home-life and in the second year of my Intermediate Course of study I left Calcutta and joined Burdwan Raj College from where I passed Intermediate Examination in the year 1925. I was again taken to Calcutta and admitted in the B. A. class of the Presidency College. I again left Calcutta and joined Burdwan Raj College from where I passed my B.A. Examination in the year 1928.

I was a man of hobbies. My first hobby was collecting portraits. Naturally enough, I took great interest in photography, From still-photography I drifted to cinematography. I have a small collection of motion pictures of marriage ceremonies, picnic parties, flood relief operations etc. My next hobby was dogs, animal husbandry and poultry. I took much pain to collect available information about my hobbies. When I had interest in dogs I collected standard literature on dogs. When I had an interest in poultry I tried to have a thorough study of poultry keeping. In a book on fecundity of eggs I found a large number of biological terms. I started studying Biology. In Darwin's classic Book "Origin of Species" I came across an idea that 'No creature has escape from influence of inheritance and environment'. This led me to the study of Sociology and all its

branches, Economics, Political Science. History and Law. Study of Sociology led me to the study of Philosophy. From these studies I saw that for proper understanding of 'Quran a fair knowledge of Philosophy, Sociology and Biology was necessary. I then devoted myself to a comparative study of Islam and Communism.

In the formative years of my life I was greatly influenced by my maternal grandfather, Nawab Abdul Jabbar, my father Moulvi Abul Kasem, my aunt Naseebah Khatoon, my mother's maternal uncle Moulvi Abdur Razzaque Ansari and my tutors Moulvi Giasuddin Ahmed and Moulvi Abul Qasim. Nawab Abdul Jabbar was a typical muslim. He never exceeded limits but maintained balance in every sphere of his life. He had a perfect control over his tongue and temper. My father used to say that 'No honest and decent man can have any bank balance.' What he actually meant by this was that a man can have some bank balance if he is honest but indecent. A man can have some bank balance if he is 'decent' but dishonest. By the term indecent he meant stingy. My father earned much but never maintained any bank account. My father, like his father Moulvi Abdul Majeed, was extravagant and generous. My aunt Naseebah Khatoon was known as the generous lady of Burdwan. She lived a very simple life and spent her fortune generously for others. She would often tell me, "You may earn money for spending but not for hoarding". She was extremely fond of me and she never believed I could do any wrong. Even when I made a confession of anything wrong I committed, she would say, "I don't believe it". She adopted my sister Habiba Khatoon as her child.

My aunt made a gift of her house and property to my sister Habiba Khatoon. Moulvi Abdur Razzaque Ansari was a bachelor and lived a saintly life. He retired from government service as District Sub-Registrar of Burdwan. He generously

contributed for maintenance of his indigent friends and relations. My tutor Moulvi Abul Qasim was Head Moulvi of my school and first Superintendent of the Mohammadan Hostel, set up by my father. Moulvi Abul Qasim was not an efficient teacher of English and Arabic but he taught us dignity of manual labour.

On the 7th September of 1928 I was married to Mahmoodah Akhter Meher Banu Begum, daughter of Shah Syed Ziauddin, who died before my marriage. Shah Syed Ziauddin was a descendant of the famous divine Shah Golam Ali of the village Shah Bazar, district of Hoogly. My wife was the youngest child of her parents. Her mother, Syeda Aziza Akhter Banu was the daughter of Moulana Obaidullah Obaidee, a reputed scholar of Arabic and Islamics. Of his sons Dr. Abdullah Suhrawardy, Lieutenant Colonel Hasan Suhrawardy and Professor Ameen Suhrawardy were well known personalities of Bengal, Professor Ameen Suhrawardy was a famous magician. Moulana Obaidee's daughter Khojistah Akhter Banu was the mother of Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy. After the death of Moulana Obaidullah Obaidee, the family adopted Suhrawardy as their new family name. Moulana Obaidullah Obaidee belonged to the town of Midnapur but he lived and worked at Dacca where he died; he was buried at Lalbagh.

Immediately after my marriage I left Burdwan for Aligarh and there joined Law and M. A. classes of the Muslim University of Aligarh. Here again I did not find the atmosphere congenial to me. After a few weeks I left Aligarh for Agra with my friend Wahajur Rasul of Burdwan. At Agra I saw the Taj Mahal, the Moghal Fort and the tomb of Emperor Akbar. From Agra I came straight to Burdwan and then I got myself admitted in the Law College of the University of Calcutta. In Calcutta I and a friend of mine, Syed Ali Hussain of Burdwan, stayed with my father at his Calcutta residence. Syed Ali Hussain was a student of the University Law College. After finishing my first year course I

shifted my name from the evening to the morning class and left Calcutta. I studied very carefully the prescribed books on Law. On 19th December, 1931, I finished my Final Law Examination and the following day, 20th of December, I received the news of the birth of my first child, Badruddin Mohammad Umar.

An Anglo-Indian gentleman, Mr. Chependal, who was my father's class fellow in the Presidency College, took our class on Mohammedan Law. One evening when he was lecturing on the law of inheritance I remarked, "Sir, orphaned grand-children, in Mohammedan Law, are dis-inherited. This seems to me unjust". Mr. Chependal said, "My dear youngman, this is the present law and my job is to teach you Law as it is. You may try to change the Law in future if you can." As Providence would have it I was appointed a member of the Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology in Pakistan in 1960. When this Council discussed President Ayub Khan's Muslim Family Law Ordinance I submitted a proposal on the right of inheritance of orphaned grand-children. My proposal was eventually accepted. An Act was passed in 1969 giving the right of inheritance to orphaned grand-children. After passing my Final Law Examination I had to work as an apprentice attached to Mr. Golam Murtaza, an efficient lawyer of Burdwan. I was admitted to the District Bar of Burdwan.

AS A LAWYER

My first brief was a case under section-304 of the Indian Penal Code. Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmed was then Public Prosecutor of Burdwan. Mr. Azizul Huq Chowdhury, the Superintendent of Police, Burdwan and the elder brother of Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, was very much interested in the conviction of my client; the person killed was a close relation of a police officer. The trying Judge Sree Noronarayan Mukherjee told me, "Youngman, what can I do? Azizul Huq is pressing me very hard for the conviction of your client". In those days, promotion of the gentlemen of the judiciary depended on police report. However, on the first of Ramadan, the public part of the case was completed and a little before sunset, the gentlemen of the Jury retired for consultation. My wife sent my Iftar (or breakfast) to the Court. After sunset, I broke my fast. The gentlemen of the Jury came out from their chamber and pronounced a unanimous verdict of 'Not guilty'. My client was honourably acquitted. Thus my career as a lawyer had a very good start.

I was the first of my age group of junior lawyers who conducted independently a Session's Case. In quick succession I was briefed for a number of sensational cases committed for trial in the Session's Court.

My third sister Sufia Khatoon was married during the life time of my grandfathers. My father negotiated and settled her marriage with a youngman Mohammad Qasim Chowdhury of

Village Kulut in the district of Burdwan. This was an ill-fated marriage. My two grandfathers, maternal and paternal, and all other senior members the family persistently disagreed with my father's decision but ultimately my father's will in this respect prevailed. His younger brother died of tuberculosis. The youngman was a suspected patient of tuberculosis. My father did not believe this. Three months after my sister's marriage, her husband fell sick and after a few months of suffering he died of tuberculosis and my sister became a widow. She did not marry again and remained with the family of her deceased husband.

My fourth sister Hafsa Khatoon was married a few years later after the death of my grand parents. Her husband Mr. Shukurul Hussain was a Sub-Inspector of Calcutta Police. My sister died leaving her husband and three sons. My brother in-Law Mr. Shukurul Hussain belonged to a family of village Salar in the district of Murshidabad.

Landlords of the village Kulut were extremely oppressive, cruel and unyielding money lenders. The landlords were three brothers. The second brother was mainly responsible for all the crimes committed by the landlords. This man was murdered. The police arrested a number of leading tenants of the village and charged them under Section 301/120 B i.e. murder and conspiracy for murder. This case was tried in the District Judge's Court. I was engaged in this case as a junior lawyer, working under the leadership of two senior Advocates, Syed Golam Mohiuddin and Syed Golam Murtaza.

One of the accused, Abdul Khan, after his arrest made a confession and became an Approver. Subsequently he retracted his confession. In the trial of the rest of the accused, Abdul Khan was put up as a hostile witness and was cross-examined by the Public Prosecutor. In the trial of the main body of the accused, they were convicted in the Judge's Court but were acquitted by the High Court of Calcutta. Abdul Khan was tried

separately and I independently conducted his defence. In Judge's Court, he was convicted but was later acquitted by the Judges of the High Court of Calcutta.

I practised as a Lawyer for five years. I had a good beginning and during five years of legal profession I worked as a defence lawyer in the Judge's Court and conducted a number of sensational Session's Cases. By the end of 1936 I took politics as my career.

Our Burdwan residence at 2, Parker Road was the centre of politics of the district. Among my relations were leaders and workers of all political parties except the Hindu Mahashaba. After my father had left the Congress, my paternal uncle Moulvi Abul Hayat joined the Congress Party and was one of the leaders of the Burdwan district Congress Committee. I did not take any active interest in politics in my student life and during the period of my profession as a lawyer. I kept myself busy with my books and my hobbies. I, however, took great interest in social service. I organised flood relief operations; my district frequently suffered from floods of the river Damuder. The Christian Missionary High English School for girls was set up in Burdwan. I persuaded muslims of the town to send their girls to this school and after my marriage I admitted my wife to this school. I organised Youngmen's Muslim Association in 1928. I organised the first Provincial Conference of Y.M.A. The Conference was inaugurated by Sir Abdur Rahim and was presided over by Moulvi Mujibur Rahman, the Editor of the 'Musalman', the only English weekly of the muslims of Bengal. Ever-since my school days, I had been persistently opposed to the social custom of seclusion of muslim women within the four corners of their houses. In the first Conference of the Y.M.A. a resolution was adopted for abolition of the practice of seclusion of muslim women.

My father had been suffering from hyper-tension since 1921. This was detected in England when he visited that country as a member of the Khilafat Deputation under the leadership of Moulana Mohammad Ali. He never used to take much care of his health. He disregarded the advice of his physicians both in respect of diet and use of medicines. From 1932 to 1936 he frequently suffered from internal haemorrhage and bleeding trouble. In spite of his ailments he continued his normal active life. By the middle of 1936 due to very frequent haemorrhage and severe bleeding trouble, he became bed ridden and was shifted to Burdwan. We could see that he was nearing his end. He breathed his last while all his children, sisters, cousins and other near relatives were standing round his death-bed. The same evening funeral prayer was performed at the Camping Ground at Burdwan. His body was taken to our village where he was buried the following afternoon in our family burial ground. For the second time, funeral prayer was performed in the village immediately before his burial. Thousands of people came to the village to attend his funeral prayer. Immediately after the burial of my father they had a condolence meeting and, there they resolved that I should, in place of my father, assume responsibility of leadership of the muslims of Burdwan and that they would elect me their representative for the Bengal Legislative Assembly. When I came to Burdwan I found that the muslims of the town also made the same decision and they communicated their decision to me. I decided to contest in the general election from Burdwan Mohammaden Constituency. The general election was held in November. This was the first general election under the Macdonald Award. Under Morley-Minto Award, one single seat was allotted to the muslims of three districts Burdwan, Birbhum and Bankura. Under the 'Macdonald-Award' the muslims got one seat for each district. I was elected from Burdwan and my cousin Mohammad Abdur Rashid, the eldest son of my uncle Khan Bahadur Mohammed

Abdul Momin was elected from the district of Birbhum to the Bengal Legislative Assembly. In fact, the People cast their votes in our favour in grateful recognition of my father's life-long services for the welfare of the people. Thus in November, 1936, I entered politics and gave up my legal profession for I realised that both politics and law demanded whole-time service. I realised that if I took active interest both in politics and in law I would not be able to do justice to either of them. So I had to choose between the two. I chose politics.

I was elected to the Legislature as an independent candidate, Khwaja Nazimuddin sought election from Patuakhali in the district of Barisal. Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq, leader of the Krishak Praja Party, contested Khwaja Nazimuddin. Governor of Bengal, Sir John Anderson, appealed to the people to support Khwaja Nazimuddin and issued a directive to Government officials to actively support the Khwaja. The constituency concerned was within the estate of the Nawab family of Dacca. The whole of Bengal focussed its attention on this election contest. Mr. Fazlul Huq defeated Khwaja Nazimuddin. Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy was elected to the Legislature from two constituencies. He vacated one seat and in the by-election Khwaja Nazimuddin was elected. It was obvious that Muslim League was not in a position to command majority in the Legislative Assembly. On the otherhand Mr. Fazlul Huq's Party had the same difficulty. A coalition between the Muslim League and Mr. Fazlul Huq's Party became inevitable. A joint meeting of the Parliamentary Party of the Muslim League and the Krishak Proja Party of Mr. Fazlul Huq was held at the house of Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, Khwaja Habibullah. Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq was elected President. Mr. Fazlul Huq's victory now became complete and he and his party formally joined the Muslim League. So the first Government under the 'Macdonald-Award' was formed headed by Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq.

In 1937 I saw Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah at the house of Mr. M.A. Ispahani in Calcutta. Mr. Jinnah said, 'Youngman, come under my banner'. In reply I said, 'Why me alone, Sir, every man and woman will come under your banner if you can provide sufficient cause for that. Youths want thrill, sensation and romance. Congress, by its anti-imperialist movement, proves sufficient thrill and romance; there is much romance behind prison-bars'. Mr. Jinnah said, 'Come, let us organise ourselves in such a way that we can give 24 hours' notice to the job-hunters of Bengal and the Punjab. I thought by job-hunters of Bengal and the Punjab, Mr. Jinnah meant Khwaja Nazimuddin and Sir Sikander Hayat Khan. I left him with the impression that Mr. Jinnah wanted to organise the Muslim League as a broad-based democratic and progressive political party. Believing in what Mr. Jinnah said, I joined the Muslim League. But I was deceived. Later I found that to Mr. Jinnah, persons other than Nawabs, Knights and business magnets were of no consequence.

The same year, a conference of the peasantry of Burdwan and a conference of the Muslim leaders of the district was convened at my village, Kashiara. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy and Sir Bijoy Prashad Sinha Roy attended the Conference. By this time, construction of the Damodar Canal Project was completed and the previous Government imposed Canal Tax in the area benefitted by Canal water in the district of Burdwan. A young pleader Kiron Chandra Dutta, representing the peasantry insisted that under the terms of the permanent settlement of Lord Cornwallis, the landlords were responsible for constructing embankments and providing irrigation facilities and as such canal tax should be imposed on the landlords and not on the people who paid annual rent for their lands to the landlords. Sir Bijoy Prashad Sinha Roy, the then Minister for Revenue, did not accept the

proposition but promised to minimise the burden of taxation; this was done.

In Burdwan, my father organised the Burdwan Mohammadan Association, a representative political organisation of the muslims of Burdwan and he was its President. In the meeting of the Muslim leaders of Burdwan who came to my village, the Mohammadan Association was converted into the Burdwan District Muslim League and I was elected its President.

In 1938 there was a rift in the leadership of the Burdwan District Muslim League and this was due to a serious mistake I had committed. A new Government Pleader of Burdwan had to be appointed. Mr.A.K. Fazlul Huq offered me that job. In all fairness I should have refused the offer with thanks and should have supported for the job one of the senior and efficient Muslim Leaguers of Burdwan who gave their unqualified support to me in the General Election of 1937. I antagonised the senior Muslim Leaders of Burdwan including Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmed, who was then the Public Prosecutor of Burdwan. I did not make any positive effort to secure the job for me. Mr. Syed Gholam Murtaza was really the most competent man for this job. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq was very generous in making promises but was not very particular about implementing his promises. It was justifiably difficult for the District Authoritis to recommend a junior lawyer like me for the office of the Government Pleader. The file lay undisposed for some time and I remained indifferent to the matter. Mr. Syed Gholam Murtaza recommended to me that a Hindu lawyer Shree Bhudev Mukherjee should have the office. I accepted his recommendation and saw that Shree Bhudev Mukherjee was appointed Government Pleader of Burdwan. But this was too late. I had already antagonised senior Muslim leaders of Burdwan--lawyers, doctors and landlords.

Mr. Syed Abdul Gani, a senior lawyer of the district was the Secretary of the Burdwan District Muslim League. The Bengal

Legislative Assembly had a long session of five months for consideration of the Bengal Tenancy Act. All these months I was practically absent from Burdwan and the task of organising the District Muslim League for the year 1938 rested with the Secretary, Syed Abdul Gani. Mr. Syed Abdul Gani organised my opposition within the League under the leadership of Khan Bahadur Naziruddin Ahmed, the Public Prosecutor of Burdwan. He fixed the date and time of the annual General Meeting of the District Muslim League for the election of office bearers and members of the Executive Committee. I came to Burdwan from Calcutta in the evening before the date of election. The following day the meeting was held at the Burdwan Town Hall at 2 p.m. Votes were cast by ballot. I won the election by a majority of three votes and was elected President of the Burdwan District Muslim League. Mr. Syed Abdul Gani offered himself as a candidate for the office of the Secretary and was defeated by eleven votes. Mr. Syed Abdul Gani was the guide and philosopher of my opposition in the district. They continued their opposition for the next two years. In the third year of their opposition, they were miserably defeated. They walked out of the meeting of the District Muslim League. They remained my ineffective political adversaries till partition of Bengal and achievement of independence.

Moulvi Mohammad Yasin advocate was the leading criminal lawyer of Burdwan. His son Mr. Mohammad Azam is now one of the leading criminal lawyers of Dacca. Moulvi Mohammad Yasin was in a way related to us. He and my father were the two most prominent muslim leaders of the district. When my father left the Congress and joined Sir Surendra Nath Benerjee, Moulvi Mohammad Yasin, as before, remained in the Congress and was elected President of the Burdwan District Congress Committee. In 1921 General Election, Moulvi Mohammad Yasin contested my father. My father was defeated and he was nominated a member of the Central Legislature of India. In the election of

1937, Moulvi Mohammad Yasin contested me. I succeeded and he was defeated. In fact, in this election, the people did not vote for me and they did not vote against Moulvi Mohammad Yasin. They voted for my deceased father.

For the first time in 1938, I attended the annual Session of the All India Muslim League held at Allahabad. Mr. Jinnah, the President of the All India Muslim League, placed a resolution from the chair. Mr. Jinnah was opposed by Moulana Hasrat Mohani. Moulana Hasrat Mohani contended that Mr. Jinnah's resolution was inconsistent with the ideals of Islam. With the permission of the President I addressed the Council of the All India Muslim League. I supported the official resolution. I argued that Mr. Jinnah was in perfect harmony with the principles of Islam and that Moulana Hasrat Mohani's contention was not consistent with the ideals of Islam. I carried the house and the official resolution was accepted. Since that day Mr. Jinnah used to call me 'Moulana Saheb'.

Outside the Legislative Assembly, my political activities were confined within the district of Burdwan. I never visited any other district of Bengal or addressed any public meeting outside Burdwan. The Burdwan District Muslim League was thoroughly organised. When Mr. Gandhi launched a 'No-Tax' Campaign with a view to financially paralyse the British Government, Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel won the trophy. The whole of India recognised his abilities and he was elected President of the All India Congress. This taught me a lesson. One may get recognition in wider spheres if one can prove his ability in his own sphere, however limited and small. In 1942 in the Serajganj conference of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League I was elected a member of the working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League.

I attended the annual session of the All India Muslim League held at Lahore on 23rd of March, 1940. The previous day, there

was a violent conflict with the police and Khaksars. The police opened fire and a large number of Khaksars were killed and injured. The streets of Lahore were strewn with the fresh blood of Khaksars on the eve of the Muslim League's session of 1940. Khaksars were a militant organisation of Allama Enayatullah Mashrequi. Allama Mashrequi and his Party had no faith and confidence in Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League. According to them Mr. Jinnah and his lieutenants, mostly composed of Nawabs and Knights, were henchmen of British Imperialism. Their ideal was to establish in India in word and in deeds an Islamic State like the Caliphate of Medina.

A magnificent pandal was erected for the conference. On the dias was placed a throne for the President brought from some native State of India. The dias was erected at a distance of a few hundred feet from the main-entrance. Visitors' galleries accommodated more than one hundred thousand visitors. As soon as Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq was seen at the entrance, he was greeted from all sides with the slogan 'Shere-e-Bangla Zindabad' 'Long live the Bengal Tiger'. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq walked along the passage leading to the dias in measured and majestic steps leaning slightly to his left and right like the Royal Bengal Tiger of Sundarban. He took 10 to 15 minutes to reach the dias. Shouts of greetings continued till Mr. Fazlul Huq took his seat. Mr. Jinnah said, Order, Order, the Tiger is now caged', Amidst thundering applause Mr. Fazlul Huq came to the dias and moved the famous resolution of 1940, which is known in history as the Pakistan Resolution. The leaders of the Muslim League from all parts of India came to the microphone one by one and supported the resolution moved by Mr. Fazlul Huq. After the presidential address of Mr. Jinnah, the Resolution was carried unanimously. Thus the foundation of Pakistan Movement was laid at Lahore on 23rd of March, 1940. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 was adopted as the creed of the All

India Muslim League at its Madras session in 1941. The following is the text of the Lahore Resolution of 1940:

"Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All India Muslim League that no Constitutional Plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles; viz, that geographically contiguous Units are demarcated into Regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which Constituent Units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

"That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the Constitution for minorities in these Units and in these Regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them; and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the Constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them".

The Lahore Resolution was the basis of our movement for carving out of India, independent and sovereign states as homelands for the muslims of India. It did not contemplate creation of a single Pakistan State but it contemplated two independent sovereign States as homelands for the muslims of India. One in North-West India consisting of the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province and Kashmir and the other in North-East India consisting of Bengal and Assam. In the Lahore Resolution I saw my complete independence as a Muslim and as a Bengali and for this I supported the movement

based on Lahore Resolution of 1940. Mr. Jinnah preached the two-nation theory and this was the burden of his song. I never believed in Mr. Jinnah's two-nation theory and I never preached this in Bengal. I preached the multi-nation theory. I maintain that India is a Sub-continent and not a country. India consists of many countries and many nations. To me India conveys the same sense as the term Europe does. When a citizen of France says that he is a Frenchman he is correct and when he says that he is an European he is also correct. So it is with India. When a citizen of Bengal says that he is a Bengali he is correct and if he says that he is an Indian he is also correct. Muslim League which represented the muslims of India demanded homelands for the Muslims in countries of India which were already known to the world as Muslim dominated countries. In consideration of the peculiar geographical condition of Assam the Muslim League demanded independence of Assam with its demand for independence of Bengal. The Muslim League did not contemplate partition of any country of India or partition of the Punjab or of the Punjabis and partition of Bengal or of the Bengalis. Thus there was nothing communal in the Lahore Resolution of 1940.

MR. FAZLUL HUQ LEAVES THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

In 1942 Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq left the Muslim League and formed a new Ministry under his leadership in coalition with the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was included in the Ministry and this Ministry was known as 'Shyama-Huq Ministry'. To protest against Mr. Fazlul Huq's deserting the Muslim League and joining the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha, a mammoth meeting was held in Calcutta Monument Maidan under the presidency of my uncle Khan Bahadur Abdul Momin. I addressed this meeting and this was my first appearance in a public meeting outside my own district. Khwaja Nazimuddin after the fall of the Muslim League Ministry acted in the Legislative Assembly as the leader of the opposition. One by one Muslim League members of the Assembly left the Muslim League and joined Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq's Coalition Party. Only forty of the Muslim League members of the Legislative Assembly remained loyal to the Muslim League. These forty were known as the gallant forty. Mr. Fazlul Huq was acclaimed as 'Sher-e-Bangla' or the 'Bengal Tiger' in the Lucknow Session of All India Muslim League in 1937, where he said that he would, as a Chief Minister of Bengal, take vengeance upon the Hindus of Bengal if the Congress dealt unjustly with the Muslims in the rest of India. But now he was acclaimed by the leaders and supporters of the Muslim League as 'Gaddar' or 'Traitor' and he was also called 'Geedar-e-Bengal' or the 'Bengal Jackal'.

A few weeks before the fall of the Muslim League Government in Bengal, election of the members of the District Board of Burdwan was completed. Amongst the elected members of the Board the Congress Party was a minority. The District Muslim League secured five seats. Immediately after the 'Shyama-Huq Ministry' was formed, the Government nominated five members to the Board from the Congress Party. Even then the Congress Party remained a minority. Five Muslim League members held the balance. The Congress started negotiation with the Muslim League. I agreed to support the Congress on condition that the Congress would accept the five Muslim League members as an integral part of the party-in-Power in the District Board Administration. The Congress agreed. A document was drafted and solemnly signed by Sree Jitendra Nath Mitra, the leader of the Congress, and by me on behalf of the Muslim League. It was agreed that Sree Jitendra Nath Mitra and Moulvi Abul Hayat would be elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the District Board respectively; my uncle Abul Hayat was also a Congressman. A date and time was fixed for the election of the office bearers. Sree Jitendra Nath Mitra was elected Chairman but the Hindu members of the Board expressed their unwillingness to vote for Moulvi Abul Hayat. The election of the Vice-President was held up for a while. Sree Pronobeshwer Sarkar popularly known as Togo Sarkar rushed to my place from the District Board office and picked me up in his car and rushed back to the District Board office. The Hindu conspiracy ended and they quietly elected Moulvi Abul Hayat Vice-Chairman of the Board. The following day a meeting was convened to celebrate the victory of the Congress in the District Board Election of office bearers. One of the big guns of the Burdwan District Congress Sree Bijoy Bhattacharya declared that a coalition between the Congress and the Muslim League was against the principles of the Congress because the Muslim League was against the principles of the Congress, and so he objected to the presence of the Muslim League members of the District Board in the meeting. The document signed by the Muslim League and the Congress was thrown into the waste-

paper basket as a scrap of paper. Thus ended the Congress-Muslim League coalition. My uncle Moulvi Abul Hayat always complained that the five Muslim League members of the Board had been a perennial source of trouble. In order to uphold the prestige of the Muslim League I resolved to teach the Congress a very good lesson at the earliest opportunity.

Some months after, the office of the Vice-President of the District School Board fell vacant. The Congress set up my uncle Moulvi Abul Hayat for the election of the Vice-President of the District School Board. The District Magistrate was ex-officio President of the Board. My friend Togo Sarkar contested the election. I supported Togo Sarkar. My uncle, the Congress nominee, was defeated. Members of my family resented my attitude. But I never allowed my personal sentiments, emotions, my relations and personal friends to interfere with my political decisions. On one occasion I opposed my father and supported my father's political adversary in election of the President of the Burdwan Mohamman Association in order to dissolve a serious rift in the Mohamman Association. Moulvi Mohammad Yasin was elected President and Mr. Gholam Murtaza was elected Secretary. The following year my father was elected President and Syed Gholam Murtaza was elected Secretary. Syed Gholam Murtaza was a follower of Moulvi Mohammad Yasin.

Togo Sarkar was one of the leaders of the Hindus of Burdwan. He was a hero of the Hindu youths of the district. He was fairly well-to-do. He was one of the leading members of the District Bar and a powerful public speaker. I saw that if he leaned towards Hindu communalism it would be a menace for the Muslims. Togo Sarkar was interested in Municipal politics. He needed support of the Muslims of the municipal town of Burdwan. I gave him that support and thus I succeeded in securing co-operation of Togo Sarkar and his party with the Muslim League of Burdwan. He was elected Chairman of the Burdwan Municipality.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq was born and spent the best part of his career as a politician in a socio-political environment in which leadership of the people lay in one's personal merits and personal service to the people who needed sympathy and support of reputed politicians for securing job and similar other favours. In this respect, Mr. Fazlul Huq was fairly generous and efficient. Every outstanding leader was then an institution by himself. Parliamentary party politics was in the making but was not strong enough to compel obedience of members to their Party. This is one of the reasons why Mr. Fazlul Huq was not loyal to any party.

Mr. Fazlul Huq was a typical Bengali. He knew that the rest of India did not very much like the people of Bengal. For a long time during the British occupation Bengal had been a grazing ground of the rest of India. Mr. Fazlul Huq never submitted himself to the discipline of non-Bengali leadership. Mr. Suhrawardy and Khwaja Nazimuddin were tied to the apron of Mr. Jinnah. This made Mr. Fazlul Huq uncomfortable as the head of the Government of Bengal. This is the second reason why he could not long remain loyal to the Muslim League.

Eleven months after the formation of the Shyama-Huq Ministry and his Progressive Coalition Party. Mr. Fazlul Huq started correspondence with Mr. Jinnah expressing his desire to rejoin the Muslim League. Letters which passed between Mr. Fazlul Huq and Mr. Jinnah were released to the Press by Mr. Jinnah. Mr. Fazlul Huq in his last letter to Mr. Jinnah dated 17th of February, 1943, wrote, 'The Progressive Coalition Party can be most effectively liquidated by me with the resignation from the office of the Premier. This I had contended to do not as a betrayal of the present Party but with a view to securing in the first place, Muslim solidarity and secondly a completely national Government in which all parties should be fully represented during the present crisis'. The idea of a National Government in Bengal under the leadership of a Muslim League Chief Minister was not congenial to Mr. Jinnah's political outlook. So Mr. Fazlul Huq's plan failed. Mr. Fazlul Huq had never been

consistent in his political thinking, but it must be admitted that his decision to constitute a National Government under his leadership after his re-entry into the Muslim League fold was perfectly correct. If Mr. Fazlul Huq succeeded in implementing his plan, partition of Bengal could be avoided. Shyama-Huq Ministry was formed on 11th of October, 1941 and his Cabinet resigned on 27th of March, 1943.

After the Muslim League was thrown out of power and Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq formed a new ministry in coalition with the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha, a meeting of the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League was convened at Khwaja Nazimuddin's residence. I came to Calcutta to attend the meeting. The time fixed for the meeting was 7 P.M. Before noon I saw Mr. Suhrawardy at his 40, Theatre Road residence. When I came out of his house I saw on the opposite foot-path three gentlemen of the Communist Party--Bankim Mukherjee, a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, Abdur Razzaque, son-in-law of Moulana Akram Khan and Bhupesh Gupta, a young Barrister-at-law. I knew Bankim Mukherjee. They told me that they were going to Khwaja Nazimuddin. They took me with them. When we entered Khwaja Nazimuddin's room I felt that he was surprised to see me. They discussed a document of agreement between the Muslim League and the Communist Party for a joint opposition to Mr. Fazlul Huq's Ministry. Khwaja Nazimuddin said that he would place the document before the Working Committee for their consideration. Mr. Bankim Mukherjee said that Mr. Adhikari, the then theorist of the Communist Party, was at Calcutta and that he would be available to clarify the terms of the agreement if necessary. It was decided that my nephew, Syed Shahidullah, would accompany me to the meeting of the Working Committee and would be waiting in the balcony adjacent to the meeting room and if necessary he would bring Adhikari to the Muslim League Working Committee meeting to explain the points of agreement. I expected that Khwaja Nazimuddin would place the document before the Committee but

this he did not do. To my utter surprise Mr. Suhrawardy said, 'Mr. President. Mr. Abul Hashim has something to say about the Communist Party'. Foolishly enough I proposed what was agreed by Khwaja Nazimuddin and the Communist Party in my presence. To my bewilderment Khwaja Nazimuddin and Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy opposed the proposal vehemently. Since I had nothing to do with the proposed agreement I did not pursue the matter. The proposal was dropped. Perhaps Khwaja Nazimuddin forgot that a representative of the Communist Party, Syed Shahidullah, was sitting in the balcony. After the meeting Khwaja Nazimuddin saw him. I pitied the Khwaja Saheb for the exposure of his unexpected behaviour. This was my first contact with the Communist Party.

The leaders of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party adopted an effective *modus operandi*. They organised public meetings, in the constituencies of the renegades. The muslims of Bengal were deeply attached to the Muslim League. The campaign had the desired effect. Under the pressure of public opinion, the deserters rejoined the Muslim League Parliamentary Party and the Muslim League Parliamentary Party regained its original strength. The followers of Mr. Fazlul Huq gradually dwindled away. John Herbert, the then Governor of Bengal, called Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq and requested him to tender his resignation. Mr. Fazlul Huq resigned and under the leadership of Khwaja Nazimuddin, Muslim League Government was re-established on 24th of April, 1943.

ELECTED GENERAL SECRETARY OF BENGAL MUSLIM LEAGUE

In 1943 the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League adopted a resolution to the effect that persons holding parliamentary office like ministers, parliamentary secretaries etc. would not hold any office of the Muslim League Party Organisation. In Bengal Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy was the General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League and Minister for Civil Supplies. He had to decide whether he would remain a Minister or continue his office as the General Secretary of the Muslim League Party. He decided to remain a Minister and thus the office of the General Secretary of the Party fell vacant.

In October, 1943, Moulana Azad Subhani visited Burdwan and put up with me. The Moulana told me that he had come to me with a mission. He said, 'You must be elected General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League and utilise the Muslim League platform in Bengal for preaching pragmatic values of Islam'. This suggestion of the Moulana appeared to me fantastic. I participated in the discussions in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the reports of which were published in newspapers of Calcutta. From newspaper reports I might have been known to some outside my own district. It was, therefore, unthinkable that the members of the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, with whom I had no personal contact, would vote for me. As to preaching pragmatic values of Islam, I did not

consider myself competent for that, I had no respect for my private life and I was fully conscious of my limitation. I frankly conveyed this to the Moulana. After a little pause, the Moulana said, 'In spite of that I repeat, you must be elected General Secretary and preach Islam from the platform of the Muslim League. If due to circumstances over which you may not have any control you fail to transcend what you call your limitation, you must not behave in a manner which may amount to a public scandal. I know something of Islam and I can tell you this much that I am not backing a wrong horse'.

Moulana Azad Subhani belonged to the District of Gorakhpur. The great Moulana was a philosopher and an analytical thinker of repute. His scholarship in Islamics was profound and his approach was rational. My personal contact with this great intellectual helped me considerably organise and consolidate my thoughts about Islam. I met him first in 1942 at Asansol Dak Banglow where he was discussing the necessity of reconstructing Islamic thought in the context of accumulated knowledge of man in various spheres of man's being and becoming. Mr. Raghieb Ahsan, guide and philosopher of the Calcutta Muslim League Mr. Othman, the then Secretary of Calcutta Muslim League and Moulana Abdul Jabbar Waheedi, Editor of the Urdu daily 'Asre-e-Jadeed' were asking questions and the Moulana was answering them. In that first meeting we were deeply attracted towards each other. Whenever the Moulana visited Bengal, he would spend a few days with me. If he did not find me in Calcutta or Burdwan, he would go to my village home to meet me. As General Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League, I used to tour around the districts of Bengal. If the Moulana did not find me in Calcutta, he would find my tour programme where he could meet me. He never left Bengal without seeing me. We used to spend nights discussing the Islamic way of life.

He Initiated me to the philosophy of 'Rabbaniyat' or 'Rabbanism'. The term 'Rabbaniyat' is derived from the divine attribute 'Rab' which means Creator, Sustainer and Evolver of the universe. Rabbaniyat in concrete term means physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual development of man according to divine way of creation, sustenance and evolution of the universe visible in nature, in Al-Quran and in the life of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be on him). Al-Quran and the prophet did not teach a newfangled way of life but confirmed what was taught by other prophets, sages and philosophers of the world. 'Rabbaniyat' is the first principle of Islamic values. 'Rab' is the greatest attributive name of Allah and other attributes are contributory and complementary to this basic attribute. One who in theory and practice adopts 'Rabbaniyat' is called a 'Rabbani'. People talk glibly about Islamic state without the slightest idea as to what it actually means. A state which faithfully implements 'Rabbaniyat' in individual and collective life of the citizens is an Islamic State. Today, there is nowhere in the world a living Islamic social organism.

In the last week of October, 1943, I went to Calcutta and saw Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy; he was then a Minister for civil supplies. I told him that I would offer myself as a candidate for the election of the General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. He said, 'How can it be? You have a very much defective vision'. I said, 'Do you think that politics is duck shooting and for that a powerful vision is necessary?' He said, 'Alright, let me think'. Eventually Mr. Suhrawardy supported my candidature. In 1943 I was not completely blind; I could see things, read and write but I could not freely move about at night without a helper.

I was not acceptable to the Khwaja brothers, Nazimuddin and Shahabuddin, and their close associates Moulana Akram Khan, Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury and others. When Nawabzadah

Liaquat Ali Khan, Secretary General of All India Muslim League, visited Calcutta, Khwaja Nazimuddin did his best to persuade Nawabzadah Liaquat Ali Khan to select some one for the office of the General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. The Khwaja argued that in case, there was an election, the happy family of Bengal Muslim League might be divided. Nazimuddin was in fact, the leader of the happy family of the pocket Muslim League of Bengal. Nawabzadah Liaquat Ali Khan refused to interfere with the internal affairs of the Bengal Muslim League. During those days Bengal was passing through a severe famine.

I invited Nawabzadah Liaquat Ali Khan to visit Burdwan and the Nawabzadah accepted my invitation. I also invited Khwaja Nazimuddin and Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy; the Khwaja was then the Chief Minister of Bengal. They visited Burdwan on first of November. They spent the day as my guests. The party inspected some of the gruel kitchens. At lunch I invited the elites of Burdwan irrespective of caste, creed and political affiliation representing all local self-governing institutions and political parties. I introduced them to the Nawabzadah. Leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha were also invited. After lunch, the Nawabzadah addressed a meeting of the intelligentsia at the Burdwan Town Hall. Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr, H. S. Suhrawardy and their Party left Calcutta in the evening and Liaquat Ali left Burdwan for Delhi after dinner. News of the Nawabzadah's visit to Burdwan was reported in details in the Morning News of the 2nd of November.

7th of November, 1943 was fixed for the election of the General Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League. The following day I came back to Calcutta and put up at the residence of a friend of mine, Qazi Fazlul Karim, at Jhao Talla Road in Park Circus. Dr. A. M. Mallick invited me to tea at his place. There I found Mr. Nurul Amin. They requested me to offer myself as a candidate

for the office of the General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. Mr. Nurul Amin's district Mymensingh constituted the largest group in the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. In the afternoon of 3rd of November, Moulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish, Mr. Habibullah Bahar and Mr. M. S. Ali of Kushtia saw me and assured me of their whole-hearted support. Later Moulana Tarkabagish told me that Mr. Suhrawardy advised them to see me.

Khwaja Nazimuddin offered my uncle Khan Bahadur Abdul Momin Presidentship of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League in the expectation that the Council of the Muslim League would not agree to elect the uncle and the nephew President and General Secretary respectively. This was a clever move on the political chess-board obviously under the advice of Khwaja Shahabuddin. But Nazimuddin was disappointed. For when uncle Momin knew that I was a candidate for the office of the General Secretary, he declined the Khwaja's offer. Nazimuddin then decided to set up Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury against me. Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury was one of the politicians of Bengal who knew the art of making himself unpopular. Feeling the pulse of the young leaders of the Muslim League, the Khwaja dropped the idea and selected Mr. Abul Qasim of Sathkhira. Just a couple of hours before the meeting of the Council, Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury (Mohan Mia) and Mr. Abdullah-Al-Mahmood of Pabna came to me and informed me that they had decided to support me.

In the afternoon I went to the Muslim Institute of Calcutta where the meeting was held. Khan Bahadur Abdul Momin presided over the election meeting. Moulana Akram Khan was elected President without any opposition. The election of the General Secretary was contested by me and Mr. Abul Qasim, the nominee of the Khwajas. All praise is due to Allah. Mr. Abul

Qasim got only eleven votes and I was elected by an overwhelming majority. I was not personally known to most of the members of the Council who voted for me. I was sitting on the dias in one of the back-chairs. They wanted to see the man they elected General Secretary. Khwaja Nasrullah, brother of Nawab Habibullah, brought me to the microphone. I offered thanks to the gentlemen of the Council and in a short speech I declared that I would do my best to organise the Muslim League as a broadbased democratic and progressive political party of Bengal. Nazimuddin and his satellites had no difficulty in realising that my speech was a signal for liquidation of the pocket League of the Khwaja. My success in the election was a miracle.

THE PROVINCIAL MUSLIM LEAGUE OFFICE AND THE PARTY HOUSE

After my election to the office of the General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, I shifted my headquarters to Calcutta but my family remained in Burdwan as before. I took a room at the ground floor of 64, Lower Circular Road, Calcutta, on rent. This house belonged to my eldest sister and her children. A friend of mine, Mr. Abdus Samad, who was also related to me in a way, volunteered his services to me and he stayed with me in my room and acted as my honorary personal assistant. I lived in Calcutta on my own and did not take any remuneration or subsistence allowance from the Muslim League Fund. I took from the Muslim League only the exact expenditure incurred during my tours. Mr. Abdus Samad was extremely devoted to me and he found pleasure in making my stay in Calcutta comfortable. He belonged to the village Shekorton in the district of Burdwan. I was then not blind but my vision had very much deteriorated and I needed an assistant for my movements. By the middle of 1943 I lost the power of reading and writing and since then I needed others to read and write for me. I consulted Colonel Kirman a reputed eye surgeon. He said that I suffered from retinitis pigmentosa, an incurable disease of optic nerves. He advised me not to read and write but to keep a secretary for reading and writing for me.

The Provincial Muslim League office was located at No. 3, Wellesly First Lane. Formerly, it was the family residence of Mr. Suhrawardy. His father Mr. Justice Zahedur Rahim Zahid Suhrawardy lived in this house. When Mr. Suhrawardy became

a member of Mr. Fazlul Huq's Ministry in 1937 he shifted to No. 40, Theatre Road and the Provincial Muslim League office was located at No. 3, Wellesly First Lane. This was a two storied building.

When I visited the Muslim League office I found that the office of the Muslim League was in a room on the ground floor and the office Secretary Mr. Farmuzul Huq lived in a room on the first floor with his family. The remaining eight rooms were occupied by some members of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party. These gentlemen used the big hall on the first floor as their Dining Room. In the office-room on the ground floor. I saw two tables, a few chairs, a type-writer and one almirah for keeping files and records. The Office-Secretary was assisted by one clerk and one typist. This was the office of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, the political organisation of the party-in-power. Mr. Farmuzul Huq was a fairly educated young gentleman. He belonged to Bhola in the district of Barisal.

The Provincial Muslim League had a Treasurer, Mirza Hasan Ispahani, younger brother of Mirza Ahmed Ispahani. Mirza Hasan Ispahani was a member of the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly. There was a Treasurer but no Treasury. There was no such thing as a Muslim League Fund. The Muslim League Parliamentary leaders like Khwaja Nazimuddin, his brother Khwaja Shahabuddin, Mr. Suhrawardy and Mr. Fazlur Rahman individually collected funds in the name of Muslim League and they were custodians of the Fund they collected. They utilised what they collected as they liked. On the first of every month, the Office-Secretary Mr. Farmuzul Huq went to Mr. Suhrawardy with a begger's bowl for begging money for his subsistence allowance and for payment of telephone and electric bills, salary for the typist and clerk and for meeting small and sundry expenses. My predecessor-in-office, Mr. Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy, had to find money for maintaining the Muslim League office. This was the actual state of affairs of the provincial Muslim League when I assumed the responsibility of the office of General Secretary.

Boarders of the Taylor Hostel arranged a reception in my honour, Khwaja Nazimuddin and Poet Golam Mustafa were present in the reception. Moulana Abdul Khalique, the Superintendent of the Hostel, presided over the function. Mr. Justice Abdul Hakeem, then a student and a Boarder of the Taylor Hostel, formally invited me to the reception on behalf of the boarders of the Hostel. In a meeting held at the Burdwan Town Hall on the 18th of November, 1943, the Muslims of Burdwan presented several addresses of welcome to me. In reply I said in all seriousness that the Muslim League was an organisation of the Muslims but it stood for the safeguarding of the rights and privileges of all irrespective of caste, creed and political opinion. Urging upon the muslims I said, "Run about in cities, towns and villages and organise your brothers and sisters and infuse into their heads and hearts the fundamentals of Islam and build up your thrones in the heart of every man and woman by your service to humanity and your devotion to truth and sacrifice all you have in the way of God". The report of the function was published in the 'Morning News' of 19th of November, 1943.

In none of the districts of Bengal there was any office of the Muslim League. Mr. Raghbir Ahsan was the guide and philosopher of the Calcutta Muslim League and Mr. Usman was its General Secretary. Later, Mr. Usman became the Mayor of Calcutta Corporation. Mr. Syed Ali Hossain, B.L. was the General Secretary of Burdwan District Muslim League and my maternal uncle Moulvi Abdus Samad's second son Mr. M. A. Basit was an Assistant Secretary and I was the President. In Asansol, there was a very good Muslim League office with Moulvi Mohammad Yasin as its Secretary and Moulana Abdus Sattar as its President. Office bearers and members of the Executive Committee of other districts and sub-divisions were elected or selected in the drawing rooms of local leaders.

Khwaja Shahabuddin was the President of the Dacca District Muslim League and his cousin Syed Abdus Selim was the Secretary. The Dacca district Muslim League was, in fact, a

prisoner within the four walls of Ahsan Manzil, the family headquarters of the Nawab family of Dacca. To be more correct, the Bengal Provincial Muslim League was in the pocket of the Khwajas of Ahsan Manzil. Nine members of the Dacca Nawab family were members of the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly. They were Nawab Habibullah, his brother Khwaja Nasrullah, Khwaja Nazimuddin, Khwaja Shahabuddin, his wife Farhad Banu, Khwaja Nooruddin, Syed Abdul Hafeez, Syed Abdus Selim and Syed Saheb-e-Alam. The Nawab family of Dacca enjoyed a unique prestige in East Bengal.

Mr. Suhrawardy was by far the most efficient leader of the Muslim League. Nevertheless, he had to work under circumstances which compelled him to maintain political allegiance to the Khwajas. Khwaja Shahabuddin was the cleverest member of the Khwaja family. After the fall of Shyama-Huq Ministry, the Muslim League Government was restored under the leadership of Khwaja Nazimuddin who included his younger brother Shahabuddin in his Cabinet. I requested Mr. Suhrawardy to use his influence to persuade Khwaja Nazimuddin not to include his brother in his Cabinet. I was shocked and surprised when Mr. Suhrawardy said, 'Hashim what do you say. I cannot think of parliamentary politics without Khwaja Shahabuddin' That very moment I decided to test Shahabuddin's so-called genius if and when I got an opportunity for that.

One day I was reading Machiavelli's 'Prince' in the Chamber of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. Khwaja Shahabuddin asked me what book I was reading. When I told him it was Machiavelli's 'Prince' he said, 'How can you be interested in Machiavelli?' I at once guessed, and I did correctly guess, that Machiavelli's 'Prince' was Al-Quran of the Khwaja and that the Khwaja adopted Machiavelli as his guide and philosopher. This was some time before I was elected General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. I thoroughly studied Machiavelli and this helped me later to anticipate what tactics the

Khwaja would adopt when a conflict with his political opponents arose.

I applied myself to the task of organising the Muslim League from the grass-roots in all earnestness. To begin with, I started issuing periodical circulars and bulletins giving instructions to the leaders of the districts as to how the Muslim League should be organised in their districts. I directed the leaders of every district to set up Muslim League office and party house in the district and sub-divisional headquarters. I warned in clear terms that no district Muslim League would get affiliation from the Provincial Muslim League if it did not comply with my instructions.

In those days, there was very much shortage of paper. The Ministry did not give me permit for securing paper for printing membership receipt books. A Communist friend of mine helped me purchase the quantity of papers I needed at black-market price from the daily Azad; the daily Azad had permit for securing sufficient paper for 20,000 copies of the Azad per day. Actual circulation of the Azad was around 5,000 and the surplus quantity of the paper was sold in the black-market. Over half a million receipts were printed and distributed throughout Bengal. Receipt books were available to every individual Muslim League worker from the office of the Provincial Muslim League for enrolment of members. The district Muslim League in every district was duly informed of names of persons who collected Muslim League receipt books from provincial office. All had to take receipt books from the provincial office after payment of the provincial quota of the membership fee.

I requested Khwaja Nazimuddin, the leader of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party, to withdraw all the Muslim League members of the Legislature who resided at Provincial Muslim League office. I needed all the rooms for the Muslim League office and party house. They-complied with my request and the Muslim League office was vacated by the gentlemen of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party.

One evening in January 1944, Moulana Akram Khan and his son Mr. Khairul Anam came to my residence and took me in their car to the provincial office of the Communist Party of India. There I saw for the first time Mr. P. C. Joshi, the then General Secretary of C.P.I. The Moulana had a friendly discussion with the leader of the Communist Party. This was my second contact with the Communist Party. The leaders of the Communist Party of Bengal offered their services to us for organising the Bengal Muslim League as a broad based, democratic and progressive political party. We thankfully accepted their offer. Thus began my association with the Communist Party. Later, the same year an editorial under the caption 'Abul Hashim' written by the hand of Moulana Akram Khan appeared in daily Azad in which the Moulana called me a Communist and a Qudiyani.

Khwaja Nazimuddin and his sycophants persistently conducted malicious propaganda against me and the three Muslim League papers the Azad, the Morning News and the Star of India breathed fire on me every day. This was an irony of fate. The Muslim League Government and the Muslim League newspapers opposed the General Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League in his sincere and earnest endeavour to organise the Muslim League as a powerful political party. Mr. Suhrawardy did not, however, actively associate himself with the conspiracy of Khwaja Nazimuddin and his team to resist me from organising the Muslim League according to the policy I declared immediately after my election as General Secretary on the 7th of November, 1943.

The Khwaja and his chief adviser, Khwaja Shahabuddin, did not like a party Government. In other words, they did not like to have a Government subject to the discipline of the party. They wanted a government party i. e. a party subservient to parliamentary leadership for their purpose, for they wanted to manipulate muslim public opinion in favour of the Muslim League Government by political demagoguery but they did not like to have a properly organised Muslim League party. This was the

basis of the conflict between me and the Khwajas. When this internal contradiction appeared on the surface Dr. A. M. Mallick, Mr. Fazlur Rahman and Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury of Faridpur left me and joined the Chief Minister of Bengal, Khwaja Nazimuddin, and his team. I decided to conduct my struggle against the reactionary elements of the Muslim League in a manner which instead of weakening the Muslim League would tremendously strengthen it. By the grace of Allah I succeeded.

I was not at all interested in parliamentary power politics and I never interfered with parliamentary leadership of Khwaja Nazimuddin. At the beginning of every session of Bengal Legislative Assembly there was intrigue and conspiracy for reshuffling the Ministry. Some members of the Government Party all the time kept themselves busy in whispering campaigns for shuffling and re-shuffling the Ministry in favour of this man or that man, Some members of the Government Party had to be regularly bribed in cash and some had to be patronised in various other ways. Favouritism and nepotism were the modus operandi of Khwaja Nazimuddin's power politics. Eighty members of the Congress Party sitting in the opposition benches keenly watched the situation and waited for an opportunity to break the solidarity of the Government Party. In whispering campaigns Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury had no equal. He, however, utilised his talent in favour of Khwaja Nazimuddin and his team. Khwaja Shahabuddin and Mr. Fazlur Rahman were incharge of distributing favours to recalcitrant and unscrupulous members of the Parliamentary Party for securing their support for the Government. Of the leaders of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party Khwaja Shahabuddin, Messrs. Fazlur Rahman, Yousuf Ali Chowdhury and Hamidul Huq Chowdhury of Noakhali had no contact with the people but they kept themselves in power by rendering conspiratorial services to Khwaja Nazimuddin and functioning as the Khwaja Saheb's brain-trust and guides and philosophers in the black art of maintaining party solidarity by corrupt practices. I kept myself absolutely disinterested in this unholy game of power politics.

Within the Assembly Chamber I quietly supported Khwaja Nazimuddin and his Ministry. In Khwaja Nazimuddin's Parliamentary power politics he had no cause for apprehending any trouble from my side.

My job was to organise and strengthen the parent body, the Muslim League. In my public speeches or statements issued to the Press I never exposed our internal conflict. My opponents also followed the same principle. The result was that our internal conflict in Muslim League Party politics never amounted to a public scandal and personal relation remained un-affected. In public I preached soundness and justice of the contents of the Lahore Resolution of 1940 and I urged upon the people to do their best to build up the Muslim League as a democratic and progressive political party. My approach to the Lahore Resolution had no smell of communalism. As a zealous missionary of Islam I also preached from the Muslim League platform social, political, economic and cultural fundamentals of Islam and how they were implemented in individual and collective life under the leadership of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) and the Caliphate of Islam. This inspired the Muslim youths of Bengal and they succeeded in formally enrolling more than half a million two-anna members of the Bengal Muslim League in 1944. This year the Provincial Muslim League received from the people more than fifteen thousand rupees as its share of membership fee.

Meetings of the Working Committee of Provincial Muslim League used to be called and held at the residence of Khwaja Nazimuddin. After I was elected General Secretary of the Muslim League I convened for the first time a meeting of the Working committee at the Muslim League office at No. 3 Wellesly first lane.

Now let us have a look into the big hall on the first floor of the Muslim League office. As I mentioned before, there was in the hall a table and half a dozen folding chairs. A fifteen candle power electric bulb hang from the ceiling in one corner of the room. This room was used as the dining room of the Muslim

League members of the Legislature who stayed in the Muslim League office. They used back numbers of the daily 'Azad' as their table cloth. Now this room was used as the Committee Room where meetings of the Working Committee were held. There were twenty seven members of the Working Committee. For providing sitting accommodation for the gentlemen of the Working Committee, the Office-Secretary Mr. Farmuzul Huq would borrow chairs from our neighbours. When any paper or document had to be read out to the members Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury would carry that under the fifteen candle power electric bulb to read that out.

Mr. Matharul Huq of Bagerhat who was in a way related to me was then Sub-divisional officer of Rangpur. I requested him to collect some money for furnishing the Committee room of the Muslim League office. He collected three thousand rupees. With this money, we had three nicely polished seasoned teak wood tables, twenty seven chairs and two almirahs for keeping books. Mr. Benazir Ahmed popularly known as Poet Benazir contributed a chandelier holding half a dozen nicely shaded electric bulbs. The Office-Secretary Mr. Farmuzul Huq contributed one clock. Standard books on Islamics, History of Caliphate and History of Muslim Arabs were collected and kept in the room. For the President of the Muslim League who presided over the meetings of the Working Committee we had one nicely made high-back chair. The Committee Room now looked quite dignified. We also bought a number of plain wooden bedsteads, beside tables and chairs which were kept in rooms previously occupied by some members of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party. These rooms were kept open for the Muslim League workers who came to Calcutta from the districts. Thus we now had a fairly equipped Muslim League office and party house. It may be noted here that ever since I took charge of the Muslim League Organisation I did not realise for the Muslim League any money from the parliamentary leaders or through them. For making the Muslim League Party really

democratic, the party had to be made financially independent of parliamentary leaders.

Since my school days I had never been associated with student politics as such. As General Secretary of the Muslim League I maintained the same attitude. Muslim students had an organisation the Muslim Students' League. I appealed to the Muslim youths of Bengal for helping me in organising the Muslims under the banner of the Muslim League. This was a general appeal to the educated youths and not to the students as such. In course of time, thousands of muslim youths joined the army of Muslim League workers and most of them were students. There were several groups in the Muslim Students' League and they were in conflict with each other for capturing offices of the organisation. On principle I kept myself absolutely aloof from internal conflicts of the Muslim Students League.

The University of Calcutta and the University of Dacca were then the only two universities of Bengal. Quite naturally, Calcutta and Dacca were the two centres of cultural life of Bengal. Muslim youths who were in Calcutta either in connection with their studies or in connection with some other vocation wielded considerable influence over politically conscious muslim youths of West and North Bengal. Muslim youths who were in Dacca wielded influence over muslim youths of East Bengal. The Provincial Muslim League office and Party House at Calcutta was the Centre where met leaders of muslim youths of Bengal who joined my army of workers. Leaders and workers of the Muslim League who accepted my policy of mass-orientation of Muslim League stayed at the Party House when they came to Calcutta from the districts.

Nooruddin Ahmed, Saleh Ahmed, Abdur Rahman of Barisal, Mohammad Ikramul Huq and Sheikh Abdul Aziz of Khulna, Abdul Hai and Mosharraf Hossain Khan of Jessore, Abul Hasnat Mohammad Qumruzzaman, Mohammad Aatur Rahman, Muzammil Huq, Mohammad Mahboobul Huq and Abdur Rashid Khan of Rajshahi, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Faridpur, B. M. Ilyas and Shah Abdul Bari of Bogra, M. A. Mohsin and

Abul Hussain of Rangpur, Mohammad Abdur Rafique Chowdhury of Pabna, Mohammad Sulaiman Khan and Faqir Mohammad of Nadiya, Mohammad Dabirul Islam of Dinajpur, Mahboob Anwar of Chittagong, Shahabuddin, Vice-President of Islamia College Union and Zahiruddin of Calcutta were leaders of young Muslim workers of Calcutta Centre.

Qamruddin Ahmed, Shamsul Huq of Tangail, Qazi Mohammad Bashir, Yar Mohammad, Shamshuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Shaukat Ali, A.K.R. Ahmed, Masihuddin Ahmed (Raja Mia), Almas Ali, Awwal and Tajuddin Ahmed of Dacca, Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed and Oli Ahad of Comilla, Mohammad Toaha of Noakhali and Najmul Karim were leaders of the Dacca Centre. Qamruddin Ahmed was a teacher in Armanitola Government High English School. He was, in fact, the leader of the Dacca group of Muslim youths.

Under the leadership of Mr. Hamidur Rahman, now Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Anwarul Huq of 24 Parganas and Shah Azizur Rahman and some reactionary and opportunist Muslim youths of Bengal supported Khwaja Nazimuddin and his coterie. Those youngmen were patronised by the Muslim League Government of Khwaja Nazimuddin. Shah Azizur Rahman was a student of the University of Dacca. I saw him for the first time at Dr. Moizuddin's house at Dacca in February, 1944. After finishing his studies at Dacca he took politics as his career and shifted his headquarters to Calcutta. In his whispering campaign he tabooed me as a 'Communist' but in private talks with me he always pledged allegiance to me and to my ideology. Abdus Sabur Khan of Khulna belonged to this group of youths and he was one of the patrons of Shah Azizur Rahman. Nevertheless, Mr. Abdus Sabur Khan was one of the favourites of Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy. According to Mr. Abdus Sabur Khan I was a Communist and I had secret association with the terrorists of Bengal. Khwaja Nazimuddin believed that I preached communism under the cover of Islam. Mr. Suhrawardy had no affinity with my ideology. On one occasion he said, 'Hashim, I don't appreciate your insistence on ideology. Ideology has never

been of any use to me in public life'. On another occasion he said, 'Hashim, you are fortunate. You believe in some ideology but I believe in none'. Exigencies of power politics was the guiding principle of Mr. Suhrawardy's political decisions. Unlike Khwaza Nazimuddin Mr. Suhrawardy was not vindictive. He was very liberal in his general and he was not intolerant of others' views. Khwaja Nazimuddin was a perfect gentleman but very unfortunately he did not carry a head over his shoulder and a heart within his breast. Khwaja Shahabuddin was his conscience-keeper, guide and philosopher. Mr. Fazlur Rahman was in charge of youths and students who supported Khwaja Nazimuddin's coterie and opposed the movement for making the Muslim League a people's party.

THE FINANCIAL POLICY OF THE PROVINCIAL MUSLIM LEAGUE

In my periodical circulars and bulletins I issued instructions to the effect that every tier of the Muslim League hierarchy must be financially independent of its higher tiers. The union League must collect necessary funds and equipments locally from members, supporters and friends of the Muslim League. Sub-Divisional and District Muslim League Units must do the same. They must not look forward to the Provincial Muslim League for funds. In collecting funds care must be taken not to depend solely on any individual or group of individuals belonging to any particular class.

The Provincial Muslim League adopted the same policy. According to rules every member of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party was to pay a monthly subscription of Rupees 5. only. They were ex-officio members of the Council of Provincial Muslim League. The gentlemen of the Parliamentary Party never cared to honour their obligation. According to rules the defaulters were not entitled to attend meetings of the Council. I did not receive any contribution from the members besides their monthly contribution as members of the Parliamentary Party. Periodically I reminded every member of the Parliamentary Party of his dues to the Muslim League. Whenever a meeting of the Council was called I posted Mr. Shamsul Huq of Tangail with a few assistants for collecting arrears of monthly subscription from the members of the

Council. Admit Cards for attending the meeting were not given to defaulters. Mr. Shamshul Huq and his assistants sat just in front of the Passage leading to the meeting hall with a list of defaulters and Admit Cards.

On the occasion a few hours before the meeting of the Council of the Provincial Muslim League, Khwaja Nazimuddin the Chief Minister of Bengal paid to me his arrears in full in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly. I came to the Muslim Institute where the meeting of the Council began a bit earlier and entered the hall forgetting to pay to Mr. Shamshul Huq the amount paid to me by Khwaja Nazimuddin. When the Khwaja came to attend the meeting he was stopped at the entrance. As was reported to me, Mr. Shamshul Huq said, 'Sir, you are a defaulter'. The Khwaja said, 'No, No, I have paid my arrear subscription to Mr. Hashim'. Mr. Huq said with folded hands, "Sir, there is nothing on record to show you have paid your outstanding subscription". When it was reported to me I hurriedly came out of the Hall and deposited the money I received from Khwaja Nazimuddin and then Admit Card was issued to him. In this way I realised several years' arrears from Khwaja Habibullah, the Nawab of Dacca. I did not take any big donation from any individual of the commercial world. Sometime in 1945 a Finance Committee of leaders of Muslim Chamber of Commerce was constituted under the leadership of Adamjee. Mirza Ahmed Ispahani was the Treasurer of this Committee. In the Committee I represented the Muslim League.

As and when money was necessary for special purposes a meeting of this Committee was convened somewhere outside of the Muslim League office. In the meeting I used to submit a scheme for which money was needed. If and when a scheme was adopted by the Committee, the Treasurer Mirza Ahmed Ispahani gave me a cheque in favour of the Muslim League and the cheque was immediately deposited to Mirza Hassan

Ispahani, the Treasurer of the Provincial Muslim League. I submitted to the Committee a report showing how the money received from the Committee was utilised. Any money received by the Provincial Muslim League was immediately sent to the Treasurer. As and when necessary, I demanded money from the Treasurer. The Treasurer examined the annual budget of the Muslim League and paid the money for the purpose it was necessary, if such expenditure was provided in the Budget. Every year I placed a formal budget before the Working Committee. The Working Committee approved the budget after such additions and alterations as they considered necessary.

General convention is that political parties do not publish accounts of their funds but I did not observe this convention. In six-monthly meetings of the Council of the Muslim League I submitted before the Council an account of administration of the Muslim League fund showing major heads of income and expenditure duly audited. In an exclusive interview with Mr. Jinnah I explained to him the financial policy and scheme of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah was very happy with this and he said, 'Moulana Saheb I fully approve your method of collecting and spending funds of the Muslim League.' Previously the Provincial Muslim League solely depended on Mr. Suhrawardy, the then General Secretary of Bengal Provincial Muslim League. Mr. Suhrawardy collected money in the name of the Muslim League and he administered the money so collected as he liked.

TOUR BEGINS

All the preliminaries of organising the Muslim League were completed by the end of January, 1944. Now an extensive tour around the districts was necessary for personal contact with the leaders and the people of the country. I started with Dacca, the Headquarters of the reactionary leadership of the Muslim League. Mr. Nuruddin Ahmed of Barisal prepared my tour programme. Mr. Mahboob Anwar of Chittagong worked as my honorary private secretary. My tour programmes were published in Muslim League diary. One copy of the programme was kept in the Muslim League office, I took with me one copy and I sent one copy to my wife at Burdwan. In course of my long and continuous tour I never missed any engagement. So, when I was on tour, persons interested could find with precision my where abouts. On one occasion, Moulana Azad Subhani came to Calcutta to see me but he found that I was on tour. He consulted my tour programme and left Calcutta for Chittagong where he found me busy in the Muslim League office at Chittagong. My tour programme was also circulated to the leaders of the Muslim League of the areas I proposed to visit.

I left Calcutta on the 3rd of February and reached Narayanganj in the afternoon of 4th February. On my way to Narayanganj two youngmen, Mr. Shamsul Huq of Tangail and Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed of Munshiganj, boarded the steamer at Tarpasha and met me. We had our lunch in the steamer. In this tour, Mr. Moazzum Hussain Chowdhury (Lal Mia) of Faridpur and Poet Benazir Ahmed of Dacca accompanied me. Mr.

Moazzum Hussain Chowdhury, after partition of Bengal adopted a new name Abd-Allah-Zahiruddin. Shamsul Huq and Shamsuddin were students. I found in them qualities of leadership and I marked them well. At Narayanganj steamer station we were received by Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed of Dacca and Messrs. Almas Ali, Abdul Awwal and Shamsuzzoha of Narayanganj.

At Narayanganj we were guests of Khan Saheb Osman Ali. Khan Saheb Osman Ali was an exceptionally good and generous man. He was a leftist in his political out-look. In the evening we addressed a meeting of Muslim League leaders and workers at the Muslim Institute. At Khan Saheb Osman Ali's place we had a sumptuous dinner. In the meeting at the Muslim Institute I explained my ideology and my scheme for organising the Muslim League as a party free from domination of reactionary elements of the Muslim League who utilised the party as a ladder of their ambition. After dinner we sat for hours with prominent Muslim youths of Narayanganj and discussed with them the details of my policy and programme. In the afternoon of 5th of February we started for Dacca by train.

When my tour programme was published in the press the Khwajas sent instruction from Calcutta to their friends at Dacca not to give any importance to my visit to Dacca. When we reached Dacca we found no one to receive us at the railway station. From the railway station we walked to Dr. Moizuddin's house at Zindabahr where I stayed as his guest during my sojourn in Dacca. Possibly this was arranged by Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed. Lal Miah and Poet Benazir put up with some of his friends. Dr. Moizuddin was a physician. He put up for me a bed in one corner of his consultation chamber. On the 6th of February Mr. Syed Abdus Selim, the Secretary of the so-called Muslim League of the District of Dacca, saw me at Dr. Moizuddin's place. This was a formal visit. He did not discuss

with me anything concerning the Muslim League organisation of his district. In the evening of 6th February a young man with bobbed hair saw me. He was a student of the University of Dacca. This young man was Shah Azizur Rahman. He did not inspire confidence. During the few days of my stay at Dacca I came into contact with a fairly good number of youths of Dacca and Narayanganj. They discussed with me in details the ideology of Islam as I comprehended it. They also discussed with me how to begin their enterprise of democratization of the Muslim League in their district under the teeth of opposition of the Khwajas. I advised them to find out in any suitable locality a house for Muslim League office and party house. They organised a public meeting at Serajuddoula Park which I addressed. During my stay at Dacca I was thus able to organise a small army of honest and efficient Muslim League workers. By the end of the week I left for Calcutta.

For two years, 1944 and 1945, I worked very hard and almost continuously toured around the country in East and North Bengal. I visited not only district and sub-divisional headquarters but also important places in rural areas. I could not visit the district of Bankura in West Bengal and the off-shore Islands of Sandwip, Hatiya and Ramgoti in the district of Noakhali.

In 1942-43 World War the second was in full swing. The Japanese bombed Calcutta. All who could find shelter at a safe distance from Calcutta left the city. The crowded city of Calcutta looked like a deserted city. People in thousands moved out of the city with all their belongings along the Grand Trunk Road like a retreating army. During this period Bengal suffered from a severe famine. Unable to feed themselves and their children people in rural areas sold their sons and daughters. Thousands of men, women and children died of starvation. To meet the situation a Ministry of Civil Supplies was set up. Mr. Hussain

Shaheed Suhrawardy was the Minister for Civil Supplies. World-War the second irreparably damaged human values and lust for immediate material values was let loose. A famine condition was artificially created by blood suckers, hoarders, profiteers and black-marketeers. The army had priority of all means of communication for carrying army and war materials. Free movement of food became almost impossible. The Government organised gruel kitchens all over the country. This was all that a Government having no control over the resources of the country could do. For proper sustenance of the people the state must have supreme right to administer the wealth when the state is independent and sovereign and this was a great lesson I learnt from the famine. In our struggle for freedom I preached this with all the emphasis that I could command.

After assumption of responsibility of governance of India. Queen Victoria in her proclamation guaranteed non-interference with faith and practices of all religious communities. British Government of India honoured the commitment made in Queen Victoria's proclamation only so far as it concerned the functional part of religion and personal law of religious communities. It was not difficult to realise that no religious community could mould its life in social, political and cultural spheres of its existence according to fundamentals of its religion under British hegemony.

At the age of eighteen I developed a passionate attraction for a girl of twelve. I wanted to marry her but this was not possible. When a baby of a few months she sucked a few drops of milk from the breast of my sister who was in her sleep. According to orthodox school of Muslim Jurists my sister became her foster-mother. This verdict of Muslim Jurists appeared to me irrational. Islam observed such pre-Islamic customs of the Arabs as were not inconsistent with or repugnant to the teachings of Islam. When a child was born in the family of a Quraish, the Brahmins

of pre-Islamic Arab Society, the child would be given to some Beduine woman for rearing and nourishing in her desert home for a few years and the Beduine Woman became the child's foster-mother. Marriage with a foster-mother's children, brothers, sisters, etc. was unlawful. In pursuance of this custom the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was reared up in the desert by his foster mother Halima who is now held in high esteem in the Muslim world. If a child in her sleep sucks a few drops of milk from the breast of a woman she cannot have the status of a foster-mother. The opinion of the Jurists in this respect is based on an irrational analogy. My frustration in this respect generated in me a zeal for study and understanding of the religion of Islam and it eventually moulded my thought and behaviour.

I was invited by the Provost of the Salimullah Hall of the University of Dacca to give a talk on economic fundamentals of Islam. In the evening, Munir Chowdhury, Sardar Fazlul Karim and a few other young men saw me at the Party House. They introduced themselves as post-graduate students of the University. They wanted to discuss with me in details the points I made in my lecture at the Salimullah Hall. They insisted that in my talk I must not cite any example. According to them, examples I cited in my talk were so much to the point that they did not admit of any argument. Before dealing with economics of Islam I discussed with them the value of citing examples. I cited a few verses of Al'-Quran which were revealed in reply to the critics of Islam who ridiculed examples cited in Al'-Quran. I did not know that these boys were members of the Communist Party, but I found them very much influenced by communism. I knew with precision where Islam agreed with communism and where it differed from it. I was quite friendly with the Communists. As a Muslim I could not be intolerant of other views. My attitude towards communism was 'support where you can and oppose where you must'.

From Dacca I went to Chittagong. Mr. Farmuzul Huq came to Dacca from Calcutta and accompanied me in my tour of Chittagong. On our way to Chittagong we stopped at Brahmanbaria for a day. Mr. Abdur Rouf was the General Secretary of the Muslim League of the Brahmanbaria Sub-Division. I spent the day with Muslim League workers and discussed with them matters concerning organisation of the Muslim League in the Sub-Division and I explained to them the contents of the Lahore Resolution of 1940. At mid-night we went of the railway station. Dacca mail reached Brahmanbaria at mid-night. A first class compartment in which our seats were reserved was occupied by two Army officers. One of them was an American and the other was a Sikh. The doors of the compartment were bolted from within. They refused to open the door for me. Addressing the American I said, 'Don't you feel that by your behaviour you are discrediting your country and your nation.' The American at once opened the door. The train reached Feni at dawn. At Feni a number of young students got into the compartment and started shouting slogans. This disturbed the American and the Sikh very much. The Sikh as an Indian had experience of this phenomena. He quietly left the compartment to find a place in some other compartment. The American shouted in angry voice and addressing the boys he said, 'Why are you shouting like this.' The boys said, 'We are here to pay our respects to our leader.' The American said angrily, 'We have also our leaders but we don't shout like this.'

The train reached Chittagong. We expected that some Muslim League leaders of Chittagong would receive us at the railway station but there we found none. When we came down from the train we saw a tall youngman coming towards us. He was Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury. I saw him for the first time at the railway station.

Mr. Rafiuddin Siddiqui was the President and Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury was the Secretary of the District Muslim League of Chittagong. Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy, as General Secretary of Bengal Provincial Muslim League, suspended the Muslim League of Chittagong, immediately before I was elected General Secretary of Bengal Provincial Muslim League. This order of suspension was issued due to serious conflict between the President and Secretary which resulted in a dead-lock. We came to Chittagong on inspection tour to find the actual state of affairs. Before I left Calcutta I sent to Chittagong a youngman, Najmul Huq of Chittagong, to prepare a programme in consultation with the leaders of the two contending factions. Mr. Fazlul Qadir took us in a car to a house near the Muslim Institute. This was a messhouse of some students of the Medical School of Chittagong. We were taken to a room in the first floor where we found a few wooden bed-steads, a table and two chairs. We occupied this room during our stay at Chittagong. Najmul Huq, the youngman I sent to Chittagong ahead of me, came to this house and met me there. Fifteen minutes my arrival at the mess Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury started exhibiting his strength. He presented to me members of the District Board, the Municipality, the School Board and Muslim Students' League of Chittagong.

They all demanded that Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury should be restored to his previous position as the Secretary of Chittagong District Muslim League. I gave them all patient hearing but did not make any commitment. In the evening I addressed a meeting organised by Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury at the Muslim Institute. When I entered the Muslim Institute all assembled there shouted slogans in support of Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Abdus Sattar, a senior lawyer of Chittagong. In my speech I did not deal with the internal conflict of the League leaders of Chittagong and made no commitment in this respect. Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury was very much disappointed and he realised that he could

achieve nothing by a show of strength. Mr. Fazlul Qadir's opponents watched the situation very carefully and were satisfied to find that I did not come to Chittagong with any pre-conceived idea. I stayed at Chittagong for two days more. These two days I spent attending tea, lunch and dinner parties organised by the two contending groups. When I came to Chittagong Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury alone came to the station to receive me. When I left Chittagong after three days a big crowd of Muslim gentry of Chittagong came to the railway station to see me off. I was satisfied that it was not possible to organise properly the Muslim League of Chittagong without active support of Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury. When the train moved, I called Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury and asked him to see me at Dacca the following day. He saw me at the Party House at Dacca. I handed over to him a typed copy of my judgment. I vacated the order of suspension of the District Muslim League of Chittagong and restored it to its previous position. Next day we left Dacca for Calcutta.

In the third week of April, 1944, Muslim League Civil Defence Training Centre was organised at Faridpur Muslim League workers from neighbouring districts assembled there. Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury (Mohan Mia) was the President of the District Muslim League of Faridpur and the Public Prosecutor of Faridpur, Mr. Abdus Salam Khan, was the Secretary. Both these gentlemen, belonged to the Khwaja group of Muslim League. I visited Faridpur towards the end of the third week of April. Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury left before my arrival there. This time Mr. Abdus Samad of Burdwan accompanied me to Faridpur. At the railway station the Vice-President of the District Board of Faridpur received us and took us to the District Board Dak-Banglow where we were accommodated in a small room. Mr. Abdus Salam Khan, the Secretary of the District League, did not meet us there. I met him every evening at the Training Centre. Every day a man brought at the Dak-Banglow our lunch and dinner which consisted of coarse rice and fish-curry in an earthen pot. We somehow swallowed the food offered to us.

Every morning I studied Al'-Quran and prepared my lecture for the evening. Mr. Abdus Samad read out to me selected passages from Al'-Quran. I stayed there for a week and delivered seven lectures on the pragmatic values of Islam. After completing my one week programme I left Faridpur for Calcutta.

In May, June, July and August I frequently went out of Calcutta on lecture tours in the districts of East and North Bengal. By this time, young Muslim League workers were fairly organised in East and North Bengal, With the exception of the district of Faridpur and Comilla the leftist workers of the Muslim League had full support of people in their campaign for democratization of the Muslim League. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury, Abdus Salam Khan and Wahiduzzaman of Faridpur were active agents of the reactionary Khwaja group in Faridpur. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was deputed to organise a strong leftist group of the Muslim League in the district of Faridpur. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had a very difficult task to perform. He had to work against hard opposition of the three gentlemen mentioned above who had full support of Khwaja Nazimuddin, the Chief Minister of the Muslim League Government of Bengal. In Comilla, Khan Bahadur Abid Reza Chowdhury, Chairman of the District Board of Comilla, Khan Bahadur Abdul Gani, Public Prosecutor of Comilla, Khan Bahadur Fariduddin Ahmed and Mr. Mofizuddin Ahmed were the leaders of the Khwaja Group. Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed, then a student, was the leader of the leftists of the district of Comilla. The rightists in Comilla conducted their opposition to the leftists in peaceful and constitutional method but in Faridpur under the leadership of Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Abdus Salam Khan and Mr. Wahiduzzaman the reactionaries indulged in un-constitutional and violent methods. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had of necessity to meet violence with violence.

Mr. Nurul Amin was the President and Mr. Ghyasuddin Pathan was the Secretary of the Muslim League of the District of Mymensingh. Mr. Abdul Monem Khan was the Assistant Secretary. In 1941 Mr. Abdul Monem Khan was expelled by his

district Muslim League for his co-operation with Mr. Fazlul Huq after he left the Muslim League and formed a new Ministry which was known as Shyama-Huq Ministry. The ban against Monem Khan was lifted after a few months when he regretted his conduct. Of the Muslim League leaders Mr. Nurul Amin and Dr. A. M. Mallick were the first two to suggest to me that I should be the General Secretary of Bengal Provincial Muslim League. Mr. Nurul Amin maintained a good personal relation with Moulana Akram Khan, Khwaja Nazimuddin and their lieutenants but in the meetings of the Council Mr. Nurul Amin and all the members of the Council representing the district of Mymensingh supported the leftists. When I visited Mymensingh for the first time Mr. Nurul Amin received me at the railway station and took me to the District Board Dak-Banglow where a room was reserved for me. Mr. Nurul Amin personally brought to the Dak-Banglow my lunch and dinner from his house. I went to Mymensingh from Dacca and Shamsul Huq of Tangail accompanied me. We stayed at Mymensingh for two days. Whenever I visited a district headquarters, after attending meetings and functions organised by the Muslim League, I visited district offices of all the political parties and discussed with them the Lahore Resolution of 1940. In the Communist Party office of Mymensingh I met Comrade Moni Singh. There they entertained me with folk songs and folk dance of Mymensingh.

In my tours, besides addressing public meetings organised by the Muslim League, I sat at night for hours with young Muslim League workers and discussed with them thoroughly the ideology of the Muslim League and how to organise and consolidate the party. I discussed with them four principles of political warfare. I advised them to place their case before the people positively without offending sentiments of others who did not agree with them. The four principles of political warfare I taught were, 'Consolidate yourselves, seek as many allies as you can, if you cannot make some your allies, try to make them neutral and thus single out your enemies and beat them in a

pitched battle'. Any movement based on hatred may have immediate benefit but it can never secure abiding result conducive to welfare of the people. I wanted Muslim League workers to make themselves lovable and for that I advised them to render social service to all, irrespective of religious or political persuasion.

In November, 1943, Muslim League Famine Relief Committee was formed with Moazzum Hussain Chowdhury (Lal Mia) of Faridpur as its Secretary. The Committee collected public contributions both in coin and kind and helped the distressed people as much as they could with active co-operation of Muslim League leaders and workers. On the 21st of December, 1943 the annual session of the All India Muslim League was held at Karachi. On the 18th of December I left Calcutta for Karachi. Thirty delegates representing Bengal Provincial Muslim League attended Karachi session of the Muslim League. Mr. Syed Ali Hussain, Secretary of Burdwan District Muslim League, my cousin Mohammad Abdul Basit and Dr. Abdul Khaliq of Memari, Burdwan, represented the District Muslim League of Burdwan. Besides the delegates I took with me my eldest son Badruddin Mohammad Umar and my grand nephew Syed Ali Imam. On our way to Karachi we broke journey at Lahore for a day. Moulana Aftabuddin Ahmed of Burdwan received us at the Lahore railway station and took us to his residence where we spent the day as his guests. Moulana Aftabuddin Ahmed was an active member of the Lahore branch of the followers of Hadrath Mirza Gholam Ahmed of Qadyan. Moulana Mohammad Ali and Khwaja Kamaluddin were leaders of this branch. Moulana Aftabuddin Ahmed worked in England for several years as Imam of the Woking Mosque. Mr. Farmuzul Huq, the Office Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League was sent ahead of us to Karachi to arrange accommodation etc for Bengal delegates. Lal Mia Saheb, Secretary, Bengal Muslim League Famine Relief Committee, collected funds for the Relief Committee at Karachi from delegates attending the Conference. My son and grand nephew joined Lal Mia as volunteers and helped him collect

funds for the Famine Relief Committee. On our way back to Calcutta, we again stopped at Lahore for a couple of days.

In Barisal the leftists under the leadership of Mr. Shamsheer Ali, Advocate, worked vigorously to organise the District Muslim League of Barisal. Mr. Azizuddin Ahmed, the public prosecutor of Barisal was then the President of the District League. In my first visit to Barisal I addressed a public meeting of the Muslim intelligentsia of Barisal at Ashwini Kumar Hall. The first night at Barisal was spent discussing various aspects of the ideology of the Muslim League with young workers who came along with me from Ashwini Kumar Hall to the District Board Dak-Banglow, where I stayed. After I left Barisal they set up Muslim League office and party house at Barisal.

In the district of Noakhali Mr. Mujibur Rahman and Mr. Abdul Jabbar Khaddar took responsibility of organising the district. Mr. Abdul Jabbar Khaddar saw me for the first time in the meeting of the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League on the 7th of November, when I was elected General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. He saw me dressed in dhoti and for that reason he did not vote for me. Later, when he came into close contact with me he became one of my staunch supporters. Of the elderly people Mr. Ghofran supported the leftist movement in the district of Noakhali.

AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

Towards the middle of the year 1944 I suggested to the Working Committee of the Provincial Muslim League some modifications of the existing Constitution under which the Provincial Muslim League functioned. The Working Committee generally accepted my suggestions and authorised me to prepare a draft Constitution in consultation with Khwaja Shahabuddin. I had several sittings with the Khwaja Sahab at his residence and prepared a draft Constitution for the Provincial Muslim League. In the next meeting of the Working Committee I presented the draft before the Working Committee for their consideration. The Working Committee approved the draft Constitution. The Constitution adopted by the Working Committee was printed and circulated to all the branches of the Provincial Muslim League with instruction to organise their districts under the new Constitution.

According to the new Constitution every district irrespective of the population was entitled to have 25 delegates in the Council of the Provincial Muslim League. There was a provision for election of two-third members of the Provincial Working Committee by the Council and the President was entitled to nominate the remaining one-third. The number of the members of the Working Committee was fixed at 27. Offices of the Vice-Presidents and Assistant Secretaries were abolished.

With short intervals I made a whirlwind tour of East and North Bengal. It was settled that the annual session of the Council of

the Provincial Muslim League would be held sometime in November, 1944, and the organisation of the District Muslim League would be completed by the end of September.

On the 16th of July, 1944. Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin and Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy visited Rangpur to attend the Muslim League Conference of the District of Rangpur. The Conference was held in the District Board office ground. Mr. Suhrawardy presided over the Conference. Khwaja Nazimuddin inaugurated it and I hoisted the Muslim League flag. The rightists and the leftists of the Muslim League were in the midst of persistent internal conflict but we never exposed our differences in public functions. Khwaja Nazimuddin in his opening speech claimed that the Muslim League was the only representative organisation of the Muslims of India and emphatically negated the assertion of the Congress that the Congress had in its fold a considerable number of Muslims. While hoisting the flag I said, 'Partition of India as visualised in the Lahore Resolution of 1940, is the only democratic solution of the political problems of India'. The Conference was largely attended and it gave impetus to Muslim League leaders and workers in their campaign for organising the Muslim League in their district.

On July 23, 1944, a Conference of Bengal Provincial Muslims Students' League was held at Islamia College. The Conference was presided over by Mr. Shamsul Huda, Vice President of the Students Union of the University of Aligarh. Mr. Shamsul Huda passed his degree examination from the University of Calcutta. After his graduation he joined the University of Aligarh for higher studies. He was the first Bengali elected Vice-President of Students' Union of Aligarh. I was invited to inaugurate the conference. In my inaugural speech I urged upon the Muslim youths to formally enroll themselves as members of the Muslim League. I said, 'As students you must look after the interest of

the students but as Muslim youths you must be not merely friends but part of the Muslim League, the only political organisation of the Muslims of India.' I explained to the students the meaning and contents of a Muslim State. Marxism had a tremendous appeal to youths of impressionable age. I dealt at length on the social and economic fundamentals of Islam. Report of the conference was published in the daily 'Azad' of 27th of July, 1944.

On 19th of August 1944 a joint meeting of Hindus and Muslims was held at Mirzapur Park. Mr. Anandi Lal Poddar, the Mayor of Calcutta, was in the Chair, Representatives of all political parties addressed the meeting. This was on the eve of the proposed Gandhi-Jinnah talk, A few days earlier Lord Wavel, the Military Viceroy of India, in a statement questioned the possibility of Hindu-Muslim unity. On political future of the sub-continent, in my speech I said that Gandhi-Jinnah agreement would receive spontaneous support of Hindus and Muslims of India. The people of India placed much hope on Gandhi-Jinnah talk.

Mr. Jinnah questioned Mr. Gandhi's authority to speak and make commitments on behalf of the Congress. Mr. Gandhi was not even a formal member of the Congress, although he was a virtual dictator of the party. Gandhi-Jinnah talks ended without any fruitful result.

24 Parganas, the district of Moulana Akram Khan, the President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, had no organisation of the Party. On 20th of August 1944, a Conference of Muslim Leaders of the district was held at the office of the 'Azad' under the presidency of Mr. Khairul Anam Khan, the eldest son of Moulana Akram Khan. Moulana Akram Khan was not present in the meeting. He was possibly taking rest in his house at Madhupur. The conference decided that the district branch of the Muslim Students' League should be authorised to organise

Muslim League units of the district of 24 Parganas with the approval of the General Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League. Mr. Anwar of 24 Parganas was then the guide and philosopher of the Muslim Students' League attached to Akram-Nazimuddin Coterie of the Muslim League. Fully conscious of the kind of Muslim League Organisation we shall have in 24 Parganas I, as General Secretary of the Muslim League, gave my approval to the decision of the Conference. I concentrated my attention and energy in properly organising all the districts now within the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh.

THE BATTLE OF DACCA

Muslim League units in the district of Dacca were thoroughly organised under the leadership of resident workers of the Muslim League Party office at Dacca. Khwaja Shahabuddin and his cousin Syed Abdus Selim had reasons to apprehend that in free and fair election they had little or no chance of retaining their leadership of the Dacca district Muslim League. They conspired to sabotage the annual general meeting of the Council of the Muslim League of the district of Dacca. Date of the general meeting of the Council of the Muslim League of Narayanganj Sub-division was fixed for 10th of September, 1944, Accordingly, the meeting was held at Narsingdi on the 10th of September.

The outgoing Secretary of the District Muslim League, Syed Abdus Selim, presided over the meeting of the Council. It was in the month of Ramadan and for the last few days there had been incessant rains. On the 10th of September the sky was heavily cast and there was heavy rainfall. In spite of all the difficulties more than 150 members were present in the meeting. Out of 87 Unions of the Sub-division as many as 60 Unions were properly organised. Mr. Selim and Kazi Hatim Ali, outgoing Secretary of Sub-divisional Muslim League, in pursuance of their conspiracy, dissolved the meeting on the ground that they had received two petitions from two unions questioning the validity of their Union League Organisation. Obviously, these two petitions were inspired by Mr. Syed

Abdus Selim and Kazi Hatim Ali. The action of Syed Abdus Selim was received by the Muslim League of the Province with shock and surprise. When I received the news of the unconstitutional action of Mr. Selim I issued a statement to the press severely condemning Mr. Selim's action, and issued instructions to the party house of Dacca to immediately convene a meeting of the Council of the Narayanganj Sub-divisional Muslim League at Narayanganj. This was done and the Muslim League of the Sub-division of Narayanganj was duly organised. The first step to sabotage organisation of the district league of Dacca failed. The statement I issued to the Press in this respect was published in the daily 'Azad' of September 13.

The election of the Muslim League of the district of Dacca was held at Ahsan Manzil, Khwaja Shahabuddin kept himself informed as to what was happening in the district of Dacca. He saw that an overwhelming majority of the members of the Council of the Dacca District Muslim League would be against them if timely action was not taken. According to my directives the Muslim League was to be organised upto the sub-divisional level and the organisational work was to be completed by the end of August. Khwaja Shahabuddin sent to Dacca Syed Abdus Selim, the out-going Secretary of the Dacca District Muslim League on the 14th of August. Abdus Selim called at Dacca a meeting of the outgoing Working Committee. In this meeting no representative of the Dacca Party House was invited. He conspired with the members of his Working Committee to find out how the leftist movement under the leadership of 150 Moghultuli could be frustrated. Nevertheless, the activities of 150 Moghultuli continued without any appreciable hindrance. Khwaja Shahabuddin saw that if things were allowed to proceed constitutionally the defeat of his party would be a certainty in the election of Dacca District Muslim League.

The Khwaja decided to adopt other methods. On the 14th of September he came to Dacca along with Syed Abdus Selim and Mr. Fazlur Rahman. They contacted their friends and supporters but did not meet any worker of Muslim League party house. Mr. Awlad Hussain of Manikganj saw Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed at his residence and informed him of the activities of the Khwaja group. He informed Mr. Kamruddin that Mr. Rezai Karim and Mr. Wasek of Dacca joined Khwaja Shahabuddin's group. This was a shock and a surprise to Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed. Mr. Rezai Karim was a constant supporter of the leftists and he contributed considerable money for the activities of the party house. They did not expect that he would desert the leftists and join Khwaja Shahabuddin. Before I was elected General Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League my predecessor-in-office Mr. Suhrawardy expelled Mr. Wasek from the Muslim league when he associated himself with the Shyama-Huq Ministry. Immediately after I became the General Secretary of the Muslim League, I lifted the ban on Mr. Wasek and enrolled him as a member of the Muslim League. Mr. Wasek was known in Bengal as a student leader of some repute. They did not expect that Wasek would betray them.

Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed, Shamsul Huq, Shamsuddin, Tajuddin Ahmed, and others decided to have a close door meeting of leftist leaders at Narayanganj at the house of Khan Saheb Osman Ali. They apprehended that maintaining secrecy would not be possible if the meeting was held at Dacca. Khwaja Shahabuddin's informers were kept busy collecting information as to the activities of the leftists. The Narayanganj meeting was held on the 22nd of September. It was settled that Mr. Kamruddin, Shamsul Huq and Shamsuddin would act as dictators of the leftist movement till the meeting of the district Council was over.

But even at Narayanganj secrecy could not be maintained. Someone present in the meeting disclosed to Khwaja Shahabuddin the decisions made in the meeting. The Dacca party house kept me informed of all that happened at Dacca through telegrams and telephone. They informed me that Khwaja Shahabuddin wanted to impose a compromise formula on the leftists. I gave them instructions by a telegram in which I said, 'If the terms of the compromise be honourable then have peace, if not then fight. This is the way of Islam'.

At 8 p.m. on the 23rd of September Mr. Rezai Karim came to 150, Moghaltuli and took in his car Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed, Shamsul Huq and Shamsuddin. When the car reached Mr. Rezai Karim's residence at Dewan Bazar they saw two other cars waiting. Messrs. Fazlur Rahman, Sultanuddin Ahmed, Abdul Hakim Vikrampur, Syed Abdus Selim and Dr. Moizuddin were in the waiting cars. The three cars moved towards Paribagh. Mr. Rezai Karim took them all to Khwaja Shahabuddin's residence. Khwaja Shahabuddin received them and entertained them with tea. He sat with Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed, Shamsul Huq and Shamsuddin and asked all others to wait in some other room. Khwaja Saheb in his usual hypocritical way praised the workers of the Muslim League party house for the service they rendered to the Muslim League. He discussed with them various matters concerning Muslim League organization of the District of Dacca. Discussions continued till 2 a. m. At the end Khwaja Shahabuddin came out with his proposal.

He proposed that in his place Syed Abdus Selim should be the President of the Dacca District Muslim League. Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Mr. Sultanuddin Ahmed, Dr. Moizuddin, Mr. Awlad Hussain and Mr. Abdul Hakim Vikrampur should be the Vice-Presidents and Mr. Asadullah should be the Secretary. He, however, added that he had no objection to taking some of the leaders of the party house in the Working Committee. He

showed them a petition submitted to him under the signatures of Mr. Abdul Hakim Vikrampur, Khan Bahadur Awlad Hussain and Dr. Moizuddin. In the petition they questioned the validity of Muslim League Organisations of the Sub-divisions of the district of Dacca and prayed that the election of the District League should be postponed. Khwaja Shahabuddin threatened that he would accept the petition of complaint and postpone the election if they did not accept his compromise formula. He showed them a typed notice signed by him as President of District League postponing the election and setting up a committee of enquiry into the complaints made in the petition. He demanded that Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed, Shamsul Huq and Shamsuddin must accept in writing the proposal he made.

It was clear to them that there was no alternative for them but to sign a document of acceptance of Khwaja Shahabuddin's compromise formula. Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed asked Shamsuddin to go to the Party House in order to keep him out of the commitment they would be obliged to make in writing. Khwaja Saheb produced the document he kept ready and asked Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed and Shamsul Huq to sign that. They pleaded that they had no authority to make any commitment on behalf of the Party House. The Khwaja reminded them that at Narayanganj meeting they were authorised to make any commitment on behalf of the leftists. This revealed the fact that the proceedings of the Narayanganj meeting held at Khan Saheb Osman Ali's residence were conveyed to the Khwaja by some of his spies present in the meeting. Having no alternative they signed the document at 4 a. m. and left Khwaja Saheb's residence.

Khawaja Shahabuddin and Fazlur Rahman were outwitted. Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed and Shamsul Huq returned to the Party House from the Khwaja's residence. They decided that in the meeting of the Council Shamsul Huq would propose the panel of office bearers prepared by Khwaja Shahabuddin,

Shamsuddin who left Khwaja Shahabuddin's place before the compromise formula was signed by Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed and Shamsul Huq would propose in the meeting the panel of the office bearers prepared by the Party House. It was decided that the members of the Council would oppose Shamsul Huq's proposal and support the proposal of Shamsuddin.

On the 24th of September at 2 p. m. a meeting of the Council was held in the big Hall room of Ahsan Manzil. The outgoing President, Khwaja Shahabuddin, in an extempore speech highly praised the workers of the Party House for so nicely organising Muslim League Units in the district. The first item on the agenda was to elect a President for presiding over the Council meeting. Mr. Shamsul Huq proposed the name of Mr. A.T. Mazharul Huq. The Council voted by raising their hands. Mr. Rezai Karim received 24 votes and Mr. A. T. Mazharul Huq was elected president of the meeting. Mr. Fazlur Rahman shouted- 'We are betrayed'.

Khwaja Shahabuddin left the Chair and walked out of the hall. Now Mr. Shamsul Huq proposed the panel of office bearers prepared by Khwaja Shahabuddin. Mr. Shamsuddin proposed the panel prepared by the Party House. Only 20 voted for Shamsul Huq's proposal and the rest supported Shamsuddin's proposal. Thus Khan Bahadur Awlad Hussain of Manikganj was elected President and Shamsuddin was elected Secretary of the Muslim League of the district of Dacca. The meeting was dissolved and the members of the Council left the Hall with deafening shouts of 'Long Live Muslim League'.

Thus the Dacca District Muslim League was liberated from the prison of the Khwajas. The decision of the Council of the District Muslim League of Dacca was received with joy by the people in the whole of Bengal. Calcutta dailies flashed the news with banner headlines congratulating the leftist Muslim League leaders of Dacca for their brilliant performance. The leaders of the Dacca Muslim League Party House came to Calcutta the following day to report to me in details all that happened at Dacca. They were received at the Sealdah railway station by a

large crowd of young leaders of Muslim League and press representatives. They submitted to me the written speech of the outgoing Secretary Syed Abdus Selim, in which he appreciated the activities of the Party House in organising the Muslim League in the district of Dacca and in the districts adjoining the district of Dacca. He praised them in hyperbolic terms. Syed Abdus Selim read out his speech at the commencement of the meeting of the Council.

Khwaja Shahabuddin and Mr. Fazlur Rahman requested me to convene a meeting of the Working Committee of the Provincial Muslim League to consider what happened at Dacca. The meeting of the Working Committee was accordingly convened at the office of the Provincial Muslim League. On the day fixed for the meeting young leaders of the Muslim League arrived at Dacca from the various districts of Bengal and collected at the Muslim League office at the time fixed for the meeting. When the gentlemen of the Provincial Working Committee came to the Muslim League office to attend the meeting and saw the crowd of young leaders they apprehended danger. The Young leaders in murmuring voice made it clear to the Khwaja and their followers that they would not be allowed to leave office unhurt if they did not formally recognise the validity of the constitution of the Dacca District Muslim League. The threat had the desired effect.

After I read out the written speech of Syed Abdus Selim, the Working Committee quietly accorded their approval to the constitution of the Dacca District Muslim League. Amongst the young Muslim League leaders present in the premises were Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury of Chittagong, Mr. Shamsul Huq and Shamsuddin of Dacca Party House, Nurul Alam and Sharfuddin of Burdwan, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Faridpur and Nuruddin Ahmed of Barisal.

THE BATTLE OF CALCUTTA

17th of November, 1944, was fixed as the date for the annual meeting of the Council of the Provincial Muslim League. The Khwajas and their supporters intensified their activities to knock me out of the leadership of Bengal Muslim League. They saw it clearly that they had no chance if they could not secure active support of Mr. Suhrawardy. They made frantic efforts to have Mr. Suhrawardy on their side and eventually succeeded in their game. Through Mr. Suhrawardy they attempted to impose their decision on the members of the Provincial Council. Series of compromise talks were arranged at Mr. Suhrawardy's residence at 40 Theatre Road, Calcutta. In course of one of these talks in the presence of Khwaja Nazimuddin and his brother Shahabuddin Mr. Suhrawardy said, 'Hashim, what are you doing? I am perfectly happy as a subordinate minister under the leadership of Khwaja Nazimuddin'. Mr. Suhrawardy thought that the end of the leftist movement was to dethrone Khwaja Nazimuddin and to make Mr. Suhrawardy Chief Minister of Bengal. I said, 'Whether you are happy or unhappy as a subordinate minister under the leadership of Khwaja Nazimuddin is a matter of no consideration. We want to make the Muslim League a people's organisation'. The number of members of the Provincial Working Committee was fixed at 27. They demanded that both Khwaja Shahabuddin and Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury must be elected members of the Working Committee. I told them that one of them might be accepted but not both. I suggested the name of Mr. Azizuddin.

He was then the Public Prosecutor of Barisal. I wanted to accommodate in the Working Committee some of the district leaders. They disagreed, and demanded that their panel of members of the Committee should be accepted. I refused to accept that panel and the compromise talks completely broke down.

On the night of the 15th of November the first conspiracy was made in the bedroom of Mr. Suhrawardy. The conspirators present were Mr. Suhrawardy, Khwaja Nazimuddin, Khwaja Shahabuddin, Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Abdus Sabur Khan of Khulna and Dr. A.M. Malek. Mr. Osman, Secretary of Calcutta District Muslim League, Mr. Farmuzul Huq and I were kept waiting in the drawing room. At 2-30 a.m. the conspirators made their decision Mr. Osman and Mr. Farmuzul Huq took me into the bed room of Mr. Suhrawardy. Mr. Suhrawardy conveyed to me their decision. He said, 'Mr. Hashim, in the interest of the Party's solidarity you must step down. We have decided to have Dr. Malek in your place as the General Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League.' I agreed and left the place.

When Mr. Suhrawardy pronounced his judgment Mr. Abdus Sabur Khan was very happy. He said, 'Mr. Abul Hashim is a communist and is actively associated with the terrorist movement of Bengal'. Khwaja Nazimuddin believed that as General Secretary of the Muslim League I preached communism under the cover of Islam. On the eve of the Council meeting an anonymous letter was published in the daily 'Azad' in which it was alleged that my design was to convert the Muslim intelligentsia of Bengal to communism. Before sunrise the decision of the conspirators spread amongst the members of the Council present in Calcutta. Mr. Benazir Ahmed became almost mad and started shouting, 'Mr. Abul Hashim has betrayed us'.

At every decisive moment Mr. Suhrawardy exposed his opportunism.

In the early morning of the 16th of November Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury with a dozen young Councillors, came to my residence at 64 Lower Circular Road. They said, 'We are under no obligation to accept the decision of Mr. Suhrawardy'. They took me to the Muslim League office. As the day advanced the crowd of Muslim League workers and councilors increased. At 11 A.M. Moulana Abdullah-il-Baqi of Dinajpur came to me and requested me to persuade the crowd to accept the decision of Mr. Suhrawardy and his friends. I said, "It was none of my business to do so; it was upto the leaders who made the decision to see that their decision was accepted by the Council."

At noon Mr. Suhrawardy telephoned to me. He asked me to advise the crowd assembled at the Muslim League office to accept the decision of the 'Leaders'. I gave him the same reply. I left the Muslim League office in the afternoon. In the evening Mr. Suhrawardy, Khwaja Nazimuddin and a few others came to the Muslim League office. They discussed the matter with the members of the Council who came from the districts. The discussion continued till mid-night. Even representatives of Calcutta Muslim League refused to accept their decision. Ultimately the leaders had to accept the verdict of the members of the Council. Mr. Suhrawardy sent a message to me requesting me to see Khwaja Nazimuddin at his residence at Theatre Road in the morning. Sir Nazimuddin received me well and entertained me with nice tea which he kept ready before I arrived at his residence. He said, 'Let us sink our differences. Henceforth, I shall be your man'.

On the 17th of November at 10 a.m. the meeting of the Council commenced at Mohammad Ali Park in a nicely erected pandal. I read out a printed report of the activities of the Provincial Muslim League for the year 1943. When I was reading out the

report standing before the microphone I heard Mr. Suhrawardy saying to Nazimuddin, 'Nazimuddin, you want to destroy the man who is making this excellent speech'. In 1944 we had more than half a million formal members. We had 1,60,000 from Barisal, 1,05,500 from Dacca 60,000 from Faridpur, 50,000 from Noakhali, 44,700 from Tipera, 41,000 from Mymensingh, 40,000 from Chittagong, 24,500 from Dinajpur, 13,470 from Rangpur and 2,000 from Jangipur subdivision in the district of Murshidabad. The district of Barisal was organised by Mr. Shamsheer Ali, Advocate. The report I submitted was accepted by the Council with applause. Moulana Akram Khan was elected President and I was elected General Secretary. This was really a victory of the young leaders of the Muslim League. Immediately after this election Moulana Akram Khan rose from his seat and made a dramatic performance amidst prolonged applause. He took me and his son and placing his hands on our shoulders he said, 'Khairul Anam Khan and Abul Hashim are my two sons'.

It was decided that election of the members of the Working Committee would be held the next day, the 18th of November after final discussion with me. Without my knowledge and consent Mr. Suhrawardy in consultation with Khwaja Nazimuddin's group prepared a list of the members of the Working Committee. Khwaja Shahabuddin, a devoted student of Machiavelli whispered to Suhrawardy, 'The house is overwhelmed with joy. This is the opportune time for getting through the list of the members of the Working Committee' That list included Khwaja Shahabuddin and Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury. But Khwaja Shahabuddin's wisdom failed. The joy was changed into angry resentment. None came forward to second Mr. Suhrawardy's proposal. Mr. Suhrawardy went back to his seat after saying that none of them would associate themselves with the Working Committee if his proposal was not accepted.

This reminded me of Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose. Mr. Bose was elected President of the Indian National Congress defeating Mr. Gandhi's candidate Dr. Pattabhai Sitaramayya, in 1939, Gandhijee declared that Sitaramayya's defeat was his own defeat. The leaders of the Congress refused to work as members of the Working Committee of Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose. This resulted in eventual resignation of Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose and his dissociation from the Congress. I made an immediate decision. I came to the microphone and addressed the Council. I said, 'Mr. Suhrawardy proposed the panel of members of the Working Committee without my knowledge and consent. Nevertheless, I advise you to accept it in the spirit in which the treaty of Hudaybia was accepted by the Holy Prophet (peace be on him). This will eventually turn into your victory'. I advised the President to adjourn the meeting of the Council till 1 a. m. next day. The house was accordingly adjourned. Mr. Suhrawardy took me to a nice hotel and entertained me with cold drinks and requested me to save his honour.

I had to work the whole day to persuade the members of the Council to accept Mr. Suhrawardy's proposal. On the 19th of November Mr. Suhrawardy's proposal was accepted. Under the constitution of the Party, the President and the General Secretary were ex-officio members of the Working Committee. 16 others were elected. They were (1) Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin (2) Sir F. Rahman, (3) Lt. Colonel Sir Hasan Suhrawardy (4) Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, (5) Khwaja Shahabuddin, (6) Khan Bahadur M. A. Momen, C.I.E. (7) Khan Bahadur Tamizuddin Khan, (8) Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, (9) Mr. Azizuddin of Barisal, (10) Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury, (11) Mr. Nurul Amin, (12) Mr. Ahmed Hussain of Rangpur, (13) Mr. Raghieb Ahsan, (14) Mr. Osman, (15) Mr. M.A.H. Ispahani, (16) and Mr. M. S. Ali of Kushtia. Later nine members of the Working Committee were nominated by the President. One of them was Mr. Asadullah of Dacca.

THE DRAFT MANIFESTO

In December, 1944, I shifted my residence from 64, Lower Circular Road to the Muslim League Party House at 3, Wellesly First Lane. There I occupied one room on the first floor. This room was extremely unhealthy. It was open only on the north by a window facing the street. Whenever Lt. Colonel Sir Hasan Suhrawardy, uncle of Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy, came to me he would say, 'Hashim, immediately leave this unhealthy room. In this room Shaheed's mother died.' I placed in the room a bedstead and a small sofa set. There I lived for two years, 1945 and 1946. This room was my bed room, dining room and drawing room. A smart and intelligent young boy, Mohammad Siddique of Dacca, served me as my attendant. This young boy was very honest and faithful.

Ever since I took my residence at the Party House it became the centre of Muslim League Politics of Bengal. Every day I had to interview hundreds of visitors coming from all parts of Bengal. The flow of visitors was almost continuous. At night I discussed with young leaders and workers of the Muslim League fundamentals of Islam methods of party organisation and political warfare, philosophy and sociology. Generally I retired to bed at 2-30 a. m. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman attended my night classes but he had little or no interest in academic discussions. He often fell asleep and rising in the morning he would ask me what was to be done. I found in him an exceptionally good young man of action and not of thought. He did his duty with

precision. I taught them what I call my grammar of political warfare. I insisted on developing an attitude of tolerance towards others' views and thorough understanding of their own ideology. Consolidation of their own party firmly based on their ideology. seeking allies, as many as they could, neutralising those whom they failed to secure as allies, taking the wind out of the sail of their opponents, convincing them that they stood for a wrong cause and finally, singling out their enemies and to beat them in pitched battles--these were the cardinal principles of my grammar of political warfare.

Big guns of the All India Muslim League in their speeches, press statements and discussions breathed fire on the Congress Party and their leaders and reciprocally the big guns of the Congress gave all sorts of bad names to the Muslim League and Muslim League leaders. This widened the gulf between the Muslims and Hindus of India. I discussed this attitude and accordingly I advised Muslim League leaders and workers in Bengal to shake off negative virtues and to place before the people positively the soundness of their own views in inoffensive language. In 1945 I met Mrs. Sarojini Naidu when she appreciated this attitude of the Bengal Muslim League and remarked, 'If we had a Muslim League Secretary like you in C.P. (Central Province) all the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League could be resolved'. Mr. Gandhi's Headquarters was then in the Central Province. Later, in 1947, Mr. Gandhi regretted that I did not meet him before. My catholic approach to politics was construed by Khwaja Nazimuddin and his group as my weakness for the Communists and the Hindus.

The year 1945 was for me a year of extensive tour. Direct personal contact with the people and indoor discussions with the prominent leaders and workers of areas I visited was key to my success in party organisation and political warfare. I would remain outside Calcutta on tour lecturing for weeks without any

rest. In my long tours I never missed any of my engagements. Once I made a continuous tour programme of 45 days. When my tour programme was published Mr. Suhrawardy saw me and said, 'Hashim, you are going to commit suicide. We have collected some money for you, please accept it and send it to your wife'. I said, 'Thank you Mr. Suhrawardy very much. I accept your offer but for the present keep the money with you and I will take it later when I need it.' After completing my 45 days tour I took the money from Mr. Suhrawardy for my personal use.

Mr. Suhrawardy had a very soft feeling for me and I always reciprocated his feelings but he often fell victim to machinations of the Khwajas who were leaders of the then Muslim League Parliamentary Party. Mr. Suhrawardy was my wife's cousin. His mother and my mother-in-law were full-sisters. He was never mentally prepared to completely sever his political association with the Khwajas, and at the same time in the interest of his power politics, could not afford to disoblige the leftists. Thus he always hovered between the right and the left.

I felt deeply the necessity to place before the people a Manifesto with a view to organising and consolidating the ideas I preached in 1944 from the Muslim League platform. I prepared a draft Manifesto of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. A very efficient young communist, Mr. Nikhil Chakravarty, very kindly helped me prepare the draft. The draft was based on universal values of Islam preached and practised by the prophet of Islam and his faithful followers.

Islam did not come to the Indian sub-continent directly from the caliphate of Medina but it came to us from Baghdad, the capital of Arab imperialism, through Persia. The Arabs conquered Persia and the Persians in their turn conquered Arabia culturally. The result was a mixture of pure Islam with pre-Islamic culture of Persia. Orthodox Schools of Islam in India preached and

practised the perverted Islam of Baghdad received through Persia. To them Islam of Medina is communism. This is why Khwaja Nazimuddin believed that I preached communism under the cover of Islam.

Khwaja Nazimuddin was an honest and perfect gentleman. Whenever I mention him I mean Nazimuddin as advised and guided by his younger brother, Khwaja Shahabuddin and Fazlur Rahman. Khwaja Nazimuddin had infinite confidence in the wisdom of his advisers.

I knew perfectly well that the Working Committee of Bengal Provincial Muslim League would never put their thumb impression on the draft Manifesto I prepared. So I decided not to place it before the Working Committee for their consideration but to place it before the Council of the Muslim League. I published it and it was hailed by the progressive elements of the party and the Muslim intelligentsia of Bengal. Immediately after its publication, Mr. Suhrawardy wrote a letter to Moulana Akram Khan, the President of the Party. Mr. Suhrawardy in his letter questioned my authority to publish the draft Manifesto and demanded disciplinary action against me. Moulana Akram Khan forwarded the letter to me and I filed the letter. Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury remarked that the word 'Manifesto' was a communist term. This was the reaction of the reactionaries of the Muslim League. The draft Manifesto was accepted by the progressive elements of the Muslim League of Bengal and Assam as a guide to their thought and action. The draft was published on the 24th of March, 1945.

It provided a solid basis of thought and action to young Muslim League leaders and workers. The reactionaries of the Muslim League and the die-hards of the Islam of Baghdad, scented communism in the Manifesto. Enemies of the Muslim League tabooed freedom movements of the Muslims as communalism. There was nothing communal in the Manifesto. The Manifesto

declared in unequivocal terms that the Muslims shall have no right reserved for them except their right to mould their life according to fundamentals of Islam without any interference with similar rights of the followers of other religions. The non-Muslims would not only have equal rights but would be treated generously by the majority as citizens of an independent and sovereign state. I proposed the constitution of a Constituent Assembly through universal adult franchise.

According to the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League was an agent of British Imperialism. This was a fake idea. Despite the internal differences of political parties in India the draft Manifesto urged upon all political parties to unite in the struggle for liquidating British Rule in India. The Manifesto suggested that the Muslims of India should unite under the banner of the Muslim League to fight for emancipation of India. It suggested unification of the Muslim freedom movement with the common freedom movement of the rest of the Indian peoples and unification of all parties, sections and interests in order to break the prevailing political deadlock.

According to the Lahore Resolution of 1940 Bengal and Assam were to constitute an independent sovereign state. The Manifesto embodied recognition of fundamental rights of man and proposed their implementation in that sovereign state. Among other things it was clearly stated that unqualified rule of law would be the basis on which the entire edifice of the state would be built and civil liberties and right of defence would be recognized and protected. Right to work, right to education and right to health are the three cardinal rights of man. The state would guarantee work for all able-bodied persons assuring equal opportunities for men and women. Education would be a charge of the state and primary education would be free and compulsory. All monopolies and rent-receiving interests in land would be abolished and key industries and transport would be

nationalised. Toilers would have the right to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Legislative measures for guaranteeing this right would be adopted. Provisions would be made for minimum wages, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, trade union rights, etc. Rent receiving interests in land would be abolished and the rights of peasants would be protected. Peasant proprietorship would be set up and collective farming and co-operative marketing would be encouraged. The Muslim League would have the responsibility of protecting the interests of non-muslims. There would be no interference with culture of non-muslim communities. Equal rights would be guaranteed to the depressed classes. The Manifesto was perfectly democratic, progressive and conducive to the welfare of the people as a whole.

The Morning News in its editorial of April 5, 1945 commenting upon the draft Manifesto said, 'If this programme is branded as reactionary we confess we do not know what a progressive programme is'. The Manifesto took the wind out of the sail of all critics of the Muslim League. It broadened and enlarged the outlook of the followers and supporters of the Muslim League and it convinced them that they were struggling for a just cause.

THE LONG TOUR

I announced a 45-day tour programme. I may call it a long march of 45 days. I honoured my commitment with precision. In course of my tour I arrived at Patuakhali in the district of Barisal in the third week of the tour. There a carbuncle was detected on the right side of my neck. The physicians advised me to go back to Calcutta for treatment. I refused to do so and continued my tour with the carbuncle on my neck. In the fourth week of my tour I reached Noakhali where another carbuncle appeared on the left side of my neck but I continued the tour. On the fortyfifth day I was on the last leg of my tour at Bongaon in the district of Jessore.

Mr. Serajul Islam was the leader of Bongaon Muslim League. At Bongaon he was my host. At 2 p.m. I was taken to the Maidan to address a huge gathering of local people. The famous vocalist Mr. Abbasuddin Ahmed was also invited. Usually Abbasuddin's performance would be the last item of the meetings and conferences organised by the Muslim League. Abbasuddin had an important engagement at Calcutta and he sought my permission to finish his performance before I took the microphone so that he might go back to Calcutta in time to attend to his business. I agreed and he treated us to a few excellent songs composed by Qazi Nazrul Islam. Immediately after that I took the microphone in my right hand and pressed my carbuncle with my left hand with a handkerchief. I made a long speech which the people listened in pin-drop silence. When I

finished my speech I saw Abbasuddin sitting in a chair on my right. Abbasuddin said, 'Mr. Hashim, I congratulate you upon your charming speech. When you started I saw my watch and thought I could hear you for fifteen minutes. I was so absorbed in your discussion that I missed my train.'

After the meeting I went to Mr. Serajul Islam's residence. There I offered a thanks-giving prayer to God for enabling me to complete my 45-day tour with precision. Mr. Jafar, a young physician and a friend of mine, treated my wounds with boric cotton and with gentle pressure he squeezed out the last drop of pus from it. I was relieved and felt as though I never had any trouble. Mr. Jafar qualified himself as a physician from the Burdwan Medical School and was a noted football player. The following day I was back to Calcutta safe and sound. Between my tours I always went to Burdwan to take rest for a few days. After this tour I did the same.

THE CHALAKCHAR CONFERENCE

The District Muslim League of Dacca decided to hold a Muslim League conference of the district of Dacca at Chalakchar, a village near Narshingdi. They invited me to preside over the conference. Shamsul Huq of Tangail and Shamsuddin Ahmed were the chief organisers of the conference. Chalakchar area was within the estate of the Khwajas of Dacca and they had, in the village, a permanent office of the estate. This area elected in 1936 Mr. Syed Abdus Selim, a cousin of Khwaja Nazimuddin, to the Bengal Legislative Assembly.

The Khwajas did not like that there should be a conference under my presidency within their sphere of influence. They deputed Syed Abdus Selim for sabotaging the conference. Syed Abdus Selim went to Chalakchar. He warned the people not to give shelter to Shamsul Huq and Shamsuddin and their fellow-workers. In the village there was a Madrasah. With the teachers of the Madrasah and the employees of their estate they organised an army of hooligans. They also imported from Dacca a large number of bandits. Every day they paraded Chalakchar and its adjacent villages and warned the people of serious consequences if they attended the proposed conference. They attempted to terrorise the people. Mr. Abdus Selim was the Commander of the operation.

Under the leadership of Comrade Anandapal the Krishak Samity of the area actively co-operated with Shamsul Huq, Shamsuddin and their team. The interest of the Khrishak Samity, the peasant

front of the Communist Party, lay in destroying the influence of landlords in the area. Leaders of the local Muslim League and the Krishak Samity worked day and night. As the date of the conference drew near, the excitement grew more and more intense. I came to Dacca in time to attend the conference. This time a friend of mine Mr. Zillur Rahman, commonly known as Jhilu Miah of Burdwan, accompanied me. He was tall, strong-built and handsome. He was a middle aged man. He was very fond of multi-coloured dress. He had a gorgeous Karakuli cap, a white lamb-skin cap, khaki breeches and a red-jacket colourfully decorated with badges and medals. He fastened in his belt a toy-revolver and carried in his hand a nicely made long bamboo stick with a steel spear. Jhilu Miah attracted a good deal of attention of the people around him. In the morning I started for Chalakchar with a party of young Muslim League workers.

On the way we heard all sorts of bad news and apprehended danger. Nevertheless, we continued our march towards Chalakchar. Just a couple of miles from the village we crossed a river in a boat. From the boat I plunged into the river and enjoyed for a while a nice river bath swimming along the boat. On the other side of the river a number of bullock carts were kept ready to carry us to the venue of the conference.

As we moved onward we received news of violent fighting between Mr. Selim's army of hooligans and the Muslim League and Krishak Samity workers. On the way we halted for an hour in a garden of jack-fruits. We had a treat of excellent jack-fruits. There we heard that Shamsuddin was captured and kept a prisoner in a room at Mr. Selim's office. It was apprehended that Shamsuddin would be killed. We moved forward. When we came near the village we saw thousands of people with bamboo sticks rushing towards the village from all sides. We were almost certain that all of us would be severely dealt with if we entered the village. Comrade Anandapal came out of the village

to receive us. We saw that he was wounded. The bandage on his head was red with blood. The people we saw running towards the village with bamboo sticks were all our men. We thanked God.

Before we entered the village, Mr. Syed Abdus Selim, for fear of his life, fled from the village with his army. The moulvies, the teachers of the Madrasah, were the first to surrender. The Khwajas lost their battle and we entered the village as conquerers. There was a huge gathering of nearly one hundred thousand people, all armed with bamboo sticks. This was a victory of the combined forces of the Muslim League and the Krishak Samity. The conference ended with thunderous applause and shouts of 'Long live the Muslim League' and 'Long live the Krishak Samity'.

A few weeks after the Chalakchar conference, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman organized a conference of the Muslim League at Gopalganj, his home town. This conference was presided over by Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy. Mr. Suhrawardy and I arrived at Gopalganj in the evening before the day fixed for the meeting. Mr. Suhrawardy put up with one of his friends in the town and I was accommodated in a room in the local Dak Bungalow, situated just on the bank of the river on which the town of Gopalganj is situated.

On the river, near the Dak-Bungalow, I found Mr. Shamsuddahar in a green boat. Mr. Shamsuddahar was a retired Deputy Commissioner of Calcutta Police. He belonged to the leftist group. In the morning when I was taking morning bath in river, I saw a number of fast-moving country-boats carrying young men armed with Ramda. Ramda is a sharp curved sword with a long handle. When I asked who they were, I was told that they were men of the old man in the green boat. They meant Mr. Shamsuddahar. After lunch I took a little rest, and in the

afternoon I went to the place of meeting where a huge crowd assembled.

I never had a peaceful meeting in the district of Faridpur. Leaders of Faridpur always kept themselves ready to use force and violence, if and when necessary. In the place of the meeting I noticed quite a large number of men armed with Ramdas. On the dais four chairs were placed, one for Mr. Suhrawardy and three for us. On the right of Mr. Suhrawardy sat Mr. Shamsuddahar. Armed policemen were also present near the dais.

In front of the dais two rows of benches were placed. On the right, sat a number of youngmen, supporters of Mr. Abdus Salam Khan. On the left, sat Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his friends. A short altercation took place between the two groups. This was immediatety followed by a skirmish between two groups of men armed with Ramda. Mr. Shamsuddahar took out of his pocket a loaded revolver. Mr. Suhrawardy stepped down from the dais and walked straight into the crowd. The trouble was over, and the people quietly sat on the ground. The conference ended peacefully. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took us to his place where we had our afternoon tea.

THE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD

The Government of India announced that a General Election would be held in India in the first quarter of 1946. The All India Muslim League decided to set up Provincial and Central Parliamentary Boards for nomination of Muslim League candidates for the General Election. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Secretary General of the All India Muslim League, came to Calcutta to discuss with members of the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League matters concerning the constitution of the Parliamentary Board. The Working Committee of the All India Muslim League decided that Provincial Parliamentary Boards would consist of nine members. The President of the Provincial Muslim League and the leader of the Provincial Parliamentary Party would be ex-officio members of the Parliamentary Board. One member from the lower-house and one from the upper-house would be elected to the Parliamentary Board by the members of the upper-house and lower-house respectively. Five would be elected by the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. The Working Committee of the Provincial Muslim League fixed 28th September, 1945, for election of two members of the Parliamentary Board by Muslim League members of the lower-house, the Legislative Council, 29th of September was fixed for election of five members by the Council of the Provincial Muslim League.

The leftists of the Muslim League had overwhelming support in the country but the rightists had a marginal majority in the Parliamentary Party. Election of two members for the Parliamentary Board by the Parliamentary Party was held on 28th September, 1945. In the lower-house Khwaja Nazimuddin proposed the name of Mr. Fazlur Rahman. Mr. Suhrawardy expected that Khwaja Nazimuddin would support his candidature, but when he saw that Khwaja Nazimuddin and his team would support Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Mr. Suhrawardy left the house.

Mr. Fazlur Rahman was elected a member of the Parliamentary Board from the lower-house uncontested. From the upper-house Mr. Nurul Amin was elected member of the Parliamentary Board. Khwaja Nazimuddin and Moulana Akram Khan were ex-officio members. In the Parliamentary Board Mr. Nurul Amin supported Khwaja Nazimuddin.

Mr. Suhrawardy came straight to me in the Muslim League Party House from the Legislative Assembly. I was sitting in my room where my young attendant Siddique was also present. Mr. Suhrawardy said, 'Hashim, I must now go into wilderness'. I saw tears trickling down his cheeks. I seated him in a chair and comforted him. Mr. Suhrawardy was not addicted to alcoholic drinks and smoking. Siddique offered him cigarettes and Mr. Suhrawardy smoked cigarettes one after another. It happened like that possibly because he was mentally upset. I said, 'Mr. Suhrawardy, take this defeat as Marshall Goat's retreat from Dunkirk, but don't forget that the American flag is now flying high in Berlin and Tokyo'. Mr. Suhrawardy said, 'Hashim, are you sure of winning all the five seats in the meeting of the Council of the Provincial Muslim League?' I replied, 'I hope so, but henceforth you must behave as a party man'. Mr. Suhrawardy said, 'Of course, I will'. But the same evening he created a crisis.

Khwaja Nazimuddin needed only one more member to have a majority in the Parliamentary Board. He was not much hopeful of his success in the meeting of the Council. He adopted other methods. We exploit each others weakness. Mr. Suhrawardy wanted to be in the majority group of the Parliamentary Board and he was not absolutely sure of our victory in the Council meeting. Khwaja Nazimuddin took full advantage of Mr. Suhrawardy's weakness. In the evening Mr. Suhrawardy was taken to Moulana Akram Khan's residence where Khwaja Nazimuddin and his friends were present. They proposed that in the meeting of the Council they would propose Mr. Suhrawardy's name and would elect him unanimously and that the other four members of the Parliamentary Board would be elected by ballot. Mr. Suhrawardy accepted the proposal and signed an agreement to this effect. The news immediately spread amongst the members of the Council. There was a great consternation amongst the leftists. I was surprised and deeply shocked when I heard the news.

On the following morning crowds of leftists assembled at the Muslim League office and saw me. I advised them not to be despondent but to be confident of their success. I said, we would knock down Mr. Suhrawardy if he did not dissociate himself with the Khwajas. I started hurling all sorts of abuses on Mr. Suhrawardy for his betrayal and sent to him groups of men in succession to inform Mr. Suhrawardy what was happening in the Muslim League office. This tactics succeeded and Mr. Suhrawardy grew awfully nervous.

At 1 p.m. Mr. Farmuzul Huq, the Office Secretary of the Muslim League came to my room and told me that Mr. Suhrawardy wanted to see me. I said, 'Tell him it is not necessary'. After half-an-hour Mr. Farmuzul Huq came to my room and said, 'Mr. Suhrawardy wants to see you and he is sitting in my room'. I said, 'It is not necessary'. After five

minutes Mr. Suhrawardy appeared in my room and said, 'Hashim, you have been breathing fire on me since morning'. I said, 'Or else how could I maintain the morale of the party?' Mr. Suhrawardy was relieved of his worries and said 'Oh yes, I almost thought like that'. He immediately telephoned to Khwaja Nazimuddin and informed him of his inability to honour the agreement he made with them the previous evening. According to Mr. Suhrawardy's political philosophy commitments of political leaders were of no value.

The meeting of the Council commenced on the 29th of September in the afternoon at the Muslim Institute. Khwaja Nazimuddin's advisers did not lose hope. They proposed Mr. Suhrawardy's name according to their previous decision. Mr. Suhrawardy declined the offer with thanks. The rightists could not accept their diplomatic defeat gracefully. They lost their temper and there was exchange of violent words which led to a melee. Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury of Faridpur kicked Shamsuddin Ahmed of Munshiganj. Shamsuddin received serious injury in his stomach and fell on the ground unconscious. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman immediately caught Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury and pressed hard with his hands Mr. Chowdhury's neck and throat and thrust him on the ground. There was chaos and confusion. The meeting was postponed for the next day.

In the evening Mr. Suhrawardy came to my room in the Muslim League office. We had to prepare a panel of five names for membership of the Parliamentary Board. The whole night we kept up in consultation with leading members of the Council. As to four names there was unanimity. The fifth name suggested was Mr. Habibullah Bahar of Noakhali. Under the leadership of Abdul Jabbar Khaddar of Noakhali members of the Council representing the districts of Noakhali and Comilla insisted that in place of Habibullah Bahar some other person should be selected.

Mr. Habibullah Bahar was also present in my room. Mr. Suhrawardy and I thought that Habibullah Bahar should be a member of the Parliamentary Board. Mr Abdul Jabbar Khaddar and his friends did not accept our suggestion and we could not find a suitable alternative. The whole night was spent in this controversy. At dawn Mr. Habibullah Bahar stepped down in the interest of the Party solidarity and Lal Miah of Faridpur was selected in place of Habibullah Bahar. Mr. Suhrawardy, Mr. Raghbir Ahsan of Calcutta, Mr. Ahmed Hossain of Rangpur, Lal Miah of Faridpur and I were finally selected.

This controversy apart, we had to suffer an unpleasant performance of Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury of Chittagong. This gentleman hovered the whole night between our camp and Nazimuddin's camp. He threatened us that 25 members of the Council representing Chittagong would not vote for us if we did not accept him as one of the five members of the Parliamentary Board. He attempted to convince us that we would lose in the contest if the district of Chittagong did not vote for us. Very unfortunately for Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury, neither we nor Khwaja Nazimuddin could accept him.

On the 30th of September at 2 p.m. the Council met at the Muslim Institute. Mr. Tamizuddin Khan was appointed the polling officer and ballots were distributed to the members of the Council. The rightists set up Moulana Abdullah-il Baqi of Dinajpur. They thought that North Bengal would vote for the Moulana. They were disappointed. Mr. Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury voted against us but the rest voted for us. The polling was over in the late afternoon. Abdus Sabur Khan of Khulna helped Mr. Tamizuddin Khan count the votes. The leftists succeeded. Mr. Suhrawardy heartily embraced me; he saw that his way to the office of the Chief Minister of Bengal was clear. There was an implicit understanding between me and him to the effect that he would be the leader of the Parliamentary

Party and I would be the leader of the Provincial Muslim League.

In the evening I addressed the members of the Council amidst thundering applause. I was profusely garlanded and the photographers kept themselves busy. Mr. Suhrawardy became jealous. He said, 'Hashim, what are you doing?' When Mr. Suhrawardy was honoured, he thought it was spontaneous but when others were applauded, he thought it was inspired. Mr. Suhrawardy received the highest number of votes in the election of the 5 members of the Parliamentary Board. This was because the rightists, according to their previous commitment, voted for Mr. Suhrawardy. Mr. Suhrawardy thought that the honour and applause of the Council for our victory was due to him.

Khwaja Nazimuddin requested me to take the responsibility of the office of the Secretary of the Parliamentary Board in place of Mr. Suhrawardy. I said, "Khwaja Saheb, I am not competent for the job". We knew that if Muslim League succeeded in the General Election, the Secretary of the Parliamentary Board would be the leader of the Parliamentary Party. We the members of the Parliamentary Board, elected Mr. Suhrawardy the Secretary of the Board.

THE GENERAL ELECTION

On the 5th of September, 1945, I published a booklet--'Let us go to war'. This booklet became the guideline of election campaign of the Muslims of Bengal and Assam. Mr. Jinnah declared that the General Election of 1946 would be taken as plebiscite of the Muslims of India on Pakistan. He did not place before the country any economic, social or political programme for the General Election. Major Atlee's Labour Government, on behalf of British Imperialism, accepted this challenge. Thus the Bengal Provincial Muslim League in its meeting of the 1st August, 1945, adopted a resolution to this effect.

We claimed that the All India Muslim League was the only representative organisation of 100 million Muslims of India and that the resolution of the All India Muslim League adopted in its Lahore Session of 1940 represented the views of Muslims of India. Representatives of the British Imperialism never unequivocally admitted this. The Congress, the Hindu Mahashaba etc, violently contested our claim. They held that besides the Muslim League there were many other representative organisations of the Muslims of India like the Ahrars, Khaksars and Jamiatul Ulema and that the Pakistani Scheme represented only the views of Mr. Jinnah and some of his friends of the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League. Mr. Gandhi in one of his letters to Mr. Jinnah said this in so many words.

The Lahore Resolution of 1940 did not demand complete independence only of those countries in India which had preponderance of Muslim population. It did not contemplate one undivided Pakistan State and partition of any country or people on communal basis. It did not contemplate partition of Bengal or of the Bengalis and the partition of the Punjab or of the Punjabis. Through Rajagopal Acharya British Imperialism threw as a feeler a proposal of partition of India on communal basis. Mr. Rajagopal Acharya's scheme was rejected both by the Congress and the Muslim League. The Cripps Mission also failed. Very unfortunately both the Congress and the Muslim League ultimately accepted in 1947 Lord Mountbatten's dispensation which was virtually the same as Rajagopal Acharya's scheme. After the failure of the Simla talks the Congress closed their eyes upon hard realities of Indian politics and arrogated to themselves the leadership of the whole of India irrespective of caste, colour and creed.

The ballot box is the only medium through which the public opinion can be ascertained with utmost accuracy. The Muslim League, therefore, as the organisation of the plain blunt Muslims declared that they would take the General Election as a plebiscite on Pakistan and a plebiscite on their claim to represent Muslim India. In a press statement I appealed to leaders and workers of the Muslim League to unite and to keep in cold storage all our internal differences, legitimate or otherwise, ideological or personal, till the General Election was over. To avoid all possible chances and apprehensions of disruption in our own army, the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League in its meeting of the 27th August, 1945, passed a resolution suspending all elections for reconstituting the Union, the Sub-division, the District and the Provincial League till the declaration of the results of the elections of the Central and Provincial Legislatures.

Mr. Jinnah faithfully echoing the sentiments of Muslim India declared that our struggle for Pakistan was not directed against any political party of India but it was directed towards liquidation of British rule in India. Immediately after the Simla breakdown he appealed to the Congress to make a fresh attempt to arrive at a settlement with the League, leaving alone the viceroy and other representatives of British Imperialism. But the Congress declared war against the League from the summer capital of India.

In my booklet, 'Let us go to war', I observed, 'Free India was never one country. Free Indians were never one nation. In the past India was Akhand under the domination of the Mouryas and the Mughals and is now Akhand under the domination of Great Britain. Liberated India must necessarily be, as God has made it, a sub-continent having complete independence for every nation inhabiting it. However much weakness the Congress may have for the capitalists of Bombay, and however much they may desire, by way of doing a good turn to them, to open opportunities for exploiting the whole of India under the cover of Akhand Bharat, Muslim India to a man will resist all attempts of the Congress to establish dictatorship in India of any coterie, group or organisation. Pakistan means freedom for all, Muslims and Hindus alike.' I further added, 'Congress ought to realise that when we Muslims talk of freedom and independence we seriously mean it and Muslims of India are opposed to every kind of domination and exploitation--British or Indian.'

On the 5th of October 1944, Mr. Jinnah declared, 'The (Pakistan) Government will have the sanction of the mass of the population of Pakistan and the Government will function with the will and the sanction of the entire body of the people of Pakistan irrespective of caste, creed or colour.' The General Election of 1946 was a pitched battle with the Congress. We never felt happy about our fight with the Congress, the

Mahashaba or in fact any Indian people or organisation. Our battle was hundred per cent defensive.

The Parliamentary Board decided to consult public opinion in every constituency before selecting nominees of Muslim League for the General Election. Moulana Akram Khan, the President of the Provincial Muslim League and ex-officio member of the Parliamentary Board, was too old to undertake long and strenuous tour round the province. The remaining eight of us divided ourselves into four groups each consisting of two members of the Parliamentary Board. We prepared a tour programme and visited every constituency. Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin and I were in the same group and we moved together.

According to the Macdonald Award Muslim minority districts of Burdwan division consisting of the districts of Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Hoogly, Howrah and Midnapur had, in each district, one seat reserved for the Muslims. So the whole of the district of Burdwan consisting of 16 thanas and six Municipal Areas was my constituency. Mr. Nurul Amin and Mr. Ahmed Hussain of Rangpur visited Burdwan to consult public opinion. Making all arrangements for proper reception and comfortable accommodation for Mr. Nurul Amin and Mr. Ahmed Hussain, I left Burdwan for my village home the day they visited Burdwan.

Under the inspiration of Moulana Akram Khan, Mr. Syed Abdul Ghani advocate of Burdwan, applied to the Parliamentary Board seeking Muslim League nomination from the District of Burdwan. Moulana Akram Khan assured Mr. Syed Abdul Ghani that four of them would support him and would somehow secure one vote from our group of five and would thus succeed in knocking me out. Mr. Syed Abdul Ghani relied on the Moulana's assurance. Personal ambition makes one blind as it was with Mr. Syed Abdul Ghani. He ignored the fact that I was

then the General Secretary of the Muslim League and that we had absolute majority in the Parliamentary Board. He failed to produce before Mr. Nurul Amin and Mr. Ahmed Hussain more than a dozen of his supporters. The result was obvious.

It took us several weeks to complete our visit to one hundred and nineteen constituencies; in the Legislative Assembly 119 seats were reserved for the Muslims. After completing our survey of public opinion we sat at Mr. Suhrawardy's residence at 40 Theatre Road, Calcutta, for selecting our nominees. We had 33 sittings before we could complete our task of preparing and publishing the list of 119 nominees of the Muslim League. Contributions to election fund were received and administered by Mr. Suhrawardy, the Secretary of the Parliamentary Board.

It was felt very necessary that we must have a powerful Bengali weekly of the Provincial Muslim League. The Finance Committee of the Provincial Muslim League sanctioned an initial contribution of Rs. 5,000/-for the journal. In those days the daily Azad was the only Bengali newspaper which supported the Muslim League. The Azad represented the views of the reactionaries in the Muslim League. Khwaja Nazimuddin, the leader of the Muslim League Government of Bengal, patronised in all possible ways the daily Azad. All arrangements for the publication of 'Millat', the proposed weekly journal of the Muslim League, were completed.

I wrote a letter to Mr. Jinnah requesting him to give a message and his blessings for the journal. In reply to my letter Mr. Jinnah advised me not to publish the journal in the name of the Muslim League. He said that I should in my personal capacity print and publish the journal. He said that the 'Dawn' was for all practical purposes the journal of the All India Muslim League, but it was owned and managed by a limited company.

Initially I was the formal editor of 'Millat' but a young journalist, Kazi Mohammad Idris, was appointed working editor

of the 'Millat'. Kazi Mohammad Idris was an efficient journalist. I recruited him from the daily Azad where he worked as one of the poorly paid sub-editors. The first issue of the Millat came out on Friday, the 16th of November, 1945. Within a short time the journal became extremely popular in Bengal and Assam. In peak days of the 'Millat' we had to publish 35,000 copies a week.

The All India Muslim League made an initial contribution of three hundred thousand rupees to the Bengal Provincial Muslim League Parliamentary Board for conducting the general election in Bengal. Mr. Jinnah appointed a committee to supervise Bengal election. Mr. M. A. Ispahani, Khan Bahadur Syed Moazzam uddin and Mr. A. W. Razzaque were the three members of the committee. On the 6th of February, 1946, the Provincial Parliamentary Board completed its task of selecting Muslim League nominees for the election of the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly:

Mr. Chowdhury Khaliquzzaman and Mr. Hasan Imam representing Central Parliamentary Board of the All India Muslim League came to Calcutta on 10th of February to hear appeals against the decision of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League Parliamentary Board. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan could not come to Calcutta. The Bengal Provincial Muslim League Parliamentary Board completed its task of selecting Muslim League nominees but did not release to press their decision. The final approved list of Muslim League nominees was published after the appeals against the selection of Bengal Provincial Parliamentary Board were decided by the Central Parliamentary Board. In the Central Parliamentary Board, Bengal Parliamentary Board was represented by the leaders of the two contending groups, Khwaja Nazimuddin and Mr. Suhrawardy.

The Provincial Parliamentary Board did not nominate Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan, Mrs. Sultanuddin Ahmed and Mr. Abdul

Waseque of Dacca. On the 8th of February Mr. Ataur Rahman Khan, who is now leader of the Jatio League Party of Bangladesh, Mr. Sultanuddin Ahmed, ex-Governor of East Pakistan and Mr. Abdul Waseque, the well known Muslim student leader of Bengal, organised a demonstration before the District League Office against the decision of the Provincial Parliamentary Board. Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed conveyed to me over the phone the news of this incident at Dacca. Mrs. Anwara Khatoon was selected in preference to Mrs. Sultanuddin. I am now fully satisfied that we made a wrong decision. Mrs. Anwara Khatoon's academic qualification influenced me to support her.

The Central Parliamentary Board of the All India Muslim League accepted the appeals of the following gentlemen: Mr. Abul Qasim (Hoogly rural), Mollah Mohammad Abdul Halim (Nadia West), Syed Kazim Ali Mirza (Murshidabad S-W), K.B. Nuruzzaman (Bhola North), Moulana Md. Qasim (Bakerganj West), Khondakar Shamsuddin (Gopalganj), K. B. Sharfuddin Ahmed (Mymensingh North), A. K. Aftabuddin Talukdar (Jamalpur West), Abul Kalam Shamsuddin (Mymensingh West), Taffazal Ali (Tippara North), Ali Ahmed (Brahmanbaria), Moulvi Rukunuddin (Brahmanbaria North), Moulana Fazlul Karim (Missi Runguzcen Rajpur), Mr. Habibullah Bahar (Feni), Illias Ali Mollah (24 Pargana Central), Abdur Rashid Mahmood (Serajganj South), S.A. Selim (Narayanganj North), K. Nuruddin (Calcutta South), K. S. Osman (Narayanganj South), Mohammed Osman (Calcutta North), Abdus Subhan (Pirojpur North), and Mr. Madar Bux (Rajshahi Central).

After publication of the final list of the Muslim League nominees, election campaign started. The army of the leaders and workers went to war. Of the Muslim League nominees, ten returned unopposed. They were: Khan Bahadur Fazlul Kader

Chowdhury (Chittagong), Mrs. Anwara Khatoon (Dacca-Narayanganj), Mr. Hafizuddin Chowdhury (Thakurgaon), Khan Bahadur A.M.A. Hamid (Pabna), Moulvi Abul Kalam Shamsuddin (Mymensingh), Khan Bahadur Mudassir Hussain (Birbhoom), Mr. Abul Qasim (Hoogly), Mrs. Hakim (Calcutta), Khwaja Nooruddin (Calcutta South) and Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy (24 Pargana Municipal).

Mr. Abul Mansoor Ahmed was selected by the Bengal Provincial Parliamentary Board. Mr. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, the then editor of the *Azad*, preferred an appeal against the selection of Mr. Abul Mansoor Ahmed. Mr. Shamsuddin's appeal was accepted.

March 19 to 22 was fixed for the General Election in Bengal. The leftists of the Muslim League had friendly relations with the Communist Party of Bengal. I warned the leaders of the Communist Party of Bengal, that friendly relation between Muslim League and the Communist Party would suffer if there was any contest between Muslim League candidates and the Communist Party in any of the Muslim constituencies. We assured the Communist Party of our support in constituencies reserved for labour. The Communist Party did not agree. They said that they had some Communist pockets in Muslim dominated areas and they were sure of success of their nominees in the secured Communist pockets. They set up some of their candidates in Noakhali and Mymensingh. All the Communist Party members were defeated and their security money was forfeited. We, according to our commitment, supported the Communist Party in labour constituencies. This was the beginning of bad feelings between the leftists of the Muslim League and the Communist Party.

For Gaffargaon constituency of the district of Mymensingh, Mr. Ghiyasuddin Pathan was the Muslim League nominee. Moulana Shamsul Huda was religious leader of the area and there he was

highly respected. He organised a local party of his own, the Imarat Party, and he was the Ameer of the Party.

Mr. Abul Mansur Ahmed collected about three hundred students from Carmichel Hostel, Jinnah Hall, Taylor Hostel, Elliot Hostel and Islamia College to work for the Muslim League. They were sent to Jessore, Barisal and Bagerhat from where Mr. Nausher Ali and Mr. Fazlul Huq sought election to the Legislative Assembly against Muslim League candidates.

A conference was organised by the Mymensingh District Muslim League at Gaffargaon. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy and I attended the meeting. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan came to Gaffargaon via Bahadurabad Ghat. Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr. Suhrawardy and I started for Gaffargaon from Dacca with a big party of Muslim League leaders and workers. News reached us that Moulana Shamsul Huda's workers attacked railway compartments carrying Muslim League leaders and workers. At the Dacca railway station Khwaja Nazimuddin boarded a third class compartment, for he apprehended that higher class compartment would be attacked. I did not agree with Khwaja Saheb. We all sat in higher class compartments. When we reached Gaffargaon we saw several thousand supporters of the Moulana armed with Ramdas. In this tour I took with me my eldest son Badruddin Mohammad Umar, who was a boy of 15.

Khwaja Nazimuddin immediately directed Dacca Administration to send to Gaffargaon a party of armed police. He knew the people of Gaffargaon area more than I knew them. From the railway station our car took us to the local Rest House moving through armed supporters of Moulana Shamsul Huda. The meeting was scheduled to be held in the afternoon.

The ground where the meeting was to be held was filled with Moulana Shamsul Huda's men armed with Ramdas and spears. I came down from the Rest House with my son and walking

through the crowd came to the kitchen to see what they were preparing for our lunch. When I came back to the Rest House Khwaja Nazimuddin reproached me. He said, 'Hashim, you are mad. You are moving in the midst of this horrible crowd with your son!'.

Khwaja Nazimuddin left Gaffargaon before sunset. Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan left earlier. Mr. Suhrawardy and I remained. It needed a good deal of courage to face Moulana Shamsul Huda's people armed with dangerous weapons. Mr. Suhrawardy addressed the people for a few minutes before sunset. I took the microphone after sunset. All praise is due to Allah. That evening I was in good form and made one of my best speeches. It was full of praise for Moulana Shamsul Huda. This surprised Moulana Saheb's men. They sat on the ground and put their weapons on the grass and listened to my speech with rapt attention. The second part of my speech I started by respectfully commenting on the wrong stand the Moulana took. When I was going to conclude my speech Mr. Abul Mansur Ahmed ran up to the dais and said, 'Mr. Hashim, please continue your speech, people want to hear you'.

The meeting was a grand success for the Muslim League but in the election we were defeated. Mr. Ghiyasuddin Pathan was a potential rival of Mr. Nurul Amin in his district politics. Mr. Nurul Amin did not like the success of Mr. Ghiyasuddin Pathan and he secretly opposed the Muslim League nominee. This attitude of Mr. Nurul Amin came to our knowledge after the meeting when we left Gaffargaon for Dacca. At the railway station Mr. Suhrawardy took Mr. Nurul Amin to task for his unpatriotic behaviour. From Dacca I left for Burdwan to look after my election campaign.

I appointed Nurul Alam my election agent. Nurul Alam belonged to the district of Burdwan and he was one of the young leaders of Muslim League workers of Bengal. Mr. Suhrawardy took

charge of conducting the election campaign in the district of Barisal. He appointed Mr. Mohammad Azizuddin advocate to take charge of conducting our election campaign in Barisal as his assistant. This was a wrong selection. He should have given the responsibility to Mr. Shamsheer Ali, a young advocate of Barisal. Mr. Azizuddin was not popular with the leftists of his district.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, regardless of truth and justice, attributed all imaginable vices to Mr. Suhrawardy in his inimitable way. The result was that Mr. Suhrawardy could not make much headway in his campaign. In fact, he could not penetrate into the sub-division of Pirojpur where Mr. Fazlul Huq had tremendous influence. Mr. Suhrawardy sent a telegraphic message to me in which he said, 'Leave your election campaign and come to Barisal immediately and take charge of our campaign in the district of Barisal'.

Nurul Alam took charge of my election campaign in the district of Burdwan and I left for Barisal, where I worked till the 18th of March. Mr. Suhrawardy came back to Calcutta. During my stay in Barisal the steam launch of Mr. Ranada Prashad Shaha was placed at my disposal. I decided to keep Mr. Fazlul Huq engaged within his sphere of influence so that he might not have any time to work in other places. I chased him round the clock. Mr. Fazlul Huq, the venerable old man, kept himself on the move day and night in his mother-boat. I admired his indefatigable energy in his old age. He was really an iron man.

Mr. Fazlul Huq contested from two constituencies, one from Barisal Sadar South and the other from Bagerhat, Khulna. He set up Mr. Syed Afzal in Pirojpur North and Mr. Hatem Ali Jamadar from Mothbaria in the sub-division of Pirojpur. Mr. Fazlul Huq and his two nominees defeated us and in other constituencies of Barisal we succeeded. He defeated our nominee Khan Bahadur Sadrudin Ahmed in Barisal and Dr. Mozammel Huq in Bagerhat.

We lost three more seats in the province. Mr. Shamsul Huda defeated us in Gaffargaon and Mr. Khuda Buksh defeated us in his constituency in the district of Murshidabad and Badshah Mia of Faridpur defeated our candidate Mr. Yousuf Ali Chowdhury (Mohan Mia) in Faridpur. So in the General Election we were defeated in seven constituencies but in the by-election, we regained one seat when Mr. Fazlul Huq resigned from Bagerhat constituency. Mr. Afzal was a relation of Mr. Fazlul Huq and they belonged to the same village in Barisal called Chakhar. Within a mile from Chakhar there was a Muslim League election camp at Khalishakota.

A group of young workers of Barisal was posted at Khalishkota to work for the Muslim League under the leadership of a young leftist worker, comrade Abdus Shaheed of Balahar. When a group of Muslim League workers were having tea in a restaurant in the market of Chakhar an army of Mr. Fazlul Huq's workers surrounded them and carried them by force to Mr. Afzal's residence where they were kept in their custody till the polling was over. Another army of Mr. Fazlul Huq's workers chased the Muslim League workers out of the polling centre. This happened on the day fixed for polling of votes of that area. The Muslim League workers when released came to Barisal and requested Mr. Azizuddin to take necessary steps against the unlawful actions of Mr. Fazlul Huq's workers. Mr. Azizuddin who belonged to the reactionary group of the Muslim League did not pay any attention to the complaints of the leftist workers of the Muslim League.

I had a romantic experience during my campaign in Barisal. One evening I suddenly appeared at Mr. Fazlul Huq's den, Chakhar, in my launch flying the Muslim League flag. Immediately a leader of Mr. Fazlul Huq's party came to the steamer ghat. They shouted, 'Hashim Bhai, we like you and respect you, but we cannot bear the sight of your launch with the Muslim League

Flag. So please go back.' I came out from my cabin and addressing them said, 'I am not here for seeking votes. My stock of tea is exhausted, so I have come here to have some tea as your guest.' They said, 'That is all right, you are welcome to have tea with us.'

Just as I was about to come down from the steamer, another army of Mr. Fazlul Huq's workers under the leadership of B.D. Habibullah of Barisal appeared. As soon as they saw me they started hurling at me all sorts of vulgar abuses. They said, 'Have you not seen bamboos of Barisal and we shall treat you not with tea but with bamboos. Don't you know that Mr. Fazlul Huq is your father'. I said smilingly, 'Yes, yes, I know from my childhood that Mr. Fazlul Huq is to me like my father'. Before I could say anything more Mr. Habibullah's people started throwing stones on the launch. Having no alternative I hurriedly left the place.

After the election, I came back to Calcutta and narrated the incident to Mr. Fazlul Huq. He enjoyed it very much and laughed heartily. Subsequently, on occasion, Mr. Fazlul Huq would request me to narrate the story to the people who sat around him.

In Burdwan I was contested by two gentlemen. One of them was Mr. Abdus Sattar, Secretary, Burdwan District Congress Committee and the other gentleman was Mr. Noor Newaz of Mr. M. N. Roy's Party. I secured 26,702 votes, Mr. Abdus Sattar secured 763 and Mr. Noor Newaz secured 223. Thus in this way the historic General Election of 1946 ended.

SUHRAWARDY MINISTRY IN BENGAL

I suggested to Mr. Suhrawardy that in the first meeting of the newly elected Muslim League Parliamentary Party, policy and programme of work of the Muslim League Government would be placed for discussion and approval of the party before election of the party leader and that the leader would be elected after the party approved the document containing policy and programme of the party. Mr. Suhrawardy agreed but was reluctant to put his thumb impression on any document of this nature. He did not like to bind himself to any clear and concrete commitment.

The 2nd of April, 1946, was fixed for the first meeting of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party after the general election. The meeting was held at the Muslim League office at 3, Wellesley First Lane. Members of the Parliamentary Party of both the houses, the lower and the upper, attended the meeting. Mr. Suhrawardy was the last man to come to the meeting. A few minutes before the commencement of the meeting Lal Miah of Faridpur came to me. He said, 'I have come with a message from Mr. Suhrawardy. The Governor has now called Mr. Suhrawardy for an interview. Mr. Suhrawardy thinks that he should meet the Governor as leader of the Parliamentary Party. This is possible if you do not insist upon discussion of the policy and programme of the party before the election of the leader.' I had no difficulty in realising what Mr. Suhrawardy's message actually meant. I had no time to think otherwise. I

agreed. Lal Miah conveyed this to Mr. Suhrawardy over the phone.

Just a minute before the time fixed for the meeting Mr. Suhrawardy arrived. He was unanimously elected leader of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party. The meeting authorised Mr. Suhrawardy to appoint a committee to draw up a programme of work in the legislature. A Committee was appointed to draft the programme of the party consisting of Mr. Suhrawardy, Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Nurul Amin, Messrs. Fazlur Rahman, Moazzam Hussain Chowdhury, Ahmed Hussain, Habibullah Bahar, Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, M. A. Hamid and my humble self. The Governor asked Mr. Suhrawardy to form the Ministry.

The Muslims ruled Bengal for ten years from 1936 to 1946 and sixteen months more after 1946. They kept out accredited Hindu leaders from the governments. There were two or three Hindu ministers but they did not represent their community. They were show boys and quislings. We were fully conscious of its inevitable reaction which ultimately led to partition of Bengal in August 1947. We decided to constitute a coalition ministry with the Congress and the Hindu Mahashabha. The Congress high command did not agree. They apprehended that if there was a coalition between the Muslim League and the Congress in Bengal, the All India Muslim League would demand similar coalitions in other provinces of India.

Mr. Gandhi on his way to Noakhali met Muslim League leaders at Mr. Suhrawardy's residence at 40, Theatre Road, Calcutta. Mr. Gandhi said that he preferred a one party government to a coalition government. In this respect Mr. Suhrawardy had a liberal attitude. Immediately after he was commissioned by Sir Frederick Burrows, The Governor of Bengal, in a press interview Mr. Suhrawardy said that he would welcome a coalition with the Congress and the Hindu Mahashabha. Asked

by the press about the prospect of a League Congress coalition in Bengal, Mr. Suhrawardy said, immediately after he was elected leader of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party, 'Muslim heart is big enough to embrace all and work for the good of the country'. He did not rule out the possibility of a coalition Ministry with the Congress and the Mahashabha. This interview with the press was reported in the Morning News of April 3.

Mr. Jinnah summoned a convention of Muslim League members of the Central and Provincial legislatures. The three day convention commenced on the 7th of April at Delhi in the Anglo-Arabic College. On the 10th of April at 2-30 a. m. Mr. Jinnah requested me to address the house. In my speech I said, 'Mr. Gandhi has declared that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would be his political heir and successor. Mr. Gandhi is a hermit. How can the haughty pandit of Kashmir be satisfied with being political heir and successor of a hermit? He entertains ambition to be the heir and successor of British Imperialism. If justice fails, equity and good conscience fail, then not shining words but shining steel shall decide the issue'.

Earlier, in the subjects committee of the convention, Mr. Jinnah placed a resolution demanding one Pakistan state. I rose on a point of order. Mr. Jinnah asked, 'Moulana Saheb, what is your point of order?' I said, 'Your resolution is void and ultra vires'. Mr. Jinnah said, 'Why, why?' I said, 'The Lahore resolution of 1940 was accepted by the All India Muslim League in its Madras session of 1941 as the creed of the All India Muslim League. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 does not contemplate one Pakistan state but it contemplates two independent and sovereign Pakistan states and homelands for the Muslims of India. The convention of the Muslim League legislatures is not competent to alter or modify the contents of the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which is now accepted as the creed of the Muslim League.'

Mr. Jinnah said, 'I see, the Moulana Saheb is banking upon the plural 's' which is an obvious printing mistake. I requested Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the India Muslim League to produce the original minute-book. The Nawabzada produced it and in it Mr. Jinnah saw under his own signature the plural 's'. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali said, 'Qaid-e-Azam, we have lost our case'. Addressing me, Mr. Jinnah said, "Moulana saheb I do not want one Pakistan state but I want one constituent Assembly for the Muslims of India. Can you amend my resolution in a manner which may serve my purpose without offending the Lahore Resolution." I said, 'Well then, cut out the adjective 'one' and put the indefinite article 'a' so that your resolution may be, 'Our object is to have a Pakistan state in north West India and in north East India consisting of Bengal & Assam'. Mr. Jinnah agreed.

In the open session of the convention Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy placed a resolution under the advice of Mr. Jinnah. This resolution was a modified form of the resolution which Mr. Jinnah placed at the subjects committee of the convention and which he had to withdraw after the discussion of my point of order. At that time I deliberately kept myself absent from the open session of the convention for I knew that if I were present Mr. Jinnah would have asked me to move his resolution in the open session. My controversy with Mr. Jinnah was reported in detail in the Peoples Age', the Communist Party Journal.

The Congress declined to associate themselves with the Muslim League Government. Mr. Suhrawardy was obliged to constitute his ministry. The new Muslim League Ministry was sworn-in and assumed office on 24th of April, 1946. The Ministry consisted of Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy, Moulvi Ahmed Hussain of Rangpur, Khan Bahadur Abdul Gofran of Noakhali, Khan Bahadur Syed Moazzemuddin Hossain of Mymensingh, Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman of 24 Parganas, Moulvi Shamsuddin

Ahmed of Kushtia, Khan Bahadur Mohammad Ali of Bogra and Jogendra Nath Mondal. I requested Mr. Suhrawardy and his cabinet ministers to come straight to the Muslim League office after assumption of office to hoist the Muslim League flag and to attend a tea party. Of all the ministers only Mr. Gofran complied with my request and came to the Muslim League office. Mr. Suhrawardy was not inclined to submit himself and his ministry to the discipline of the party. Mr. Suhrawardy did not prepare and place before the Muslim League Parliamentary Party any document containing policy and programme of administration of his government for the consideration of the party.

In a party meeting held at Mr. Suhrawardy's residence at 40 Theatre Road, it was decided that every ministry must have an advisory committee for formulating policy and programme of the ministry concerned. Most reluctantly Mr. Suhrawardy accepted the decision of the party. In order to weaken the discipline of the parent body, the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, he attempted to secure direct allegiance of young leaders and workers of the Provincial Muslim League.

I convened a conference of young leaders and workers of the provincial Muslim League at My village home Kashiara, now called Kasemnagar, in the district of Burdwan. In the conference Mr. Suhrawardy and one of his ministers, Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed of Kushtia were present. There it was decided that leaders and workers of the Muslim League must not seek personal favour from the ministry and that they must approach the ministry concerning matters of public interest through their organizations, the Muslim League of their districts, or the Provincial Muslim League.

One of the salient features of Mr. Suhrawardy's character was that he was not vindictive and did not bear any personal grudge against those who were not with him. He did not, however, like those who were by nature mischievous and whose thought and

action centered round their personal interest above all other considerations and as such were not dependable. Mr. Nurul Amin and Mr. Tafazzal Ali of Brahmanbaria were friends of Khwaja Nazimuddin and his group but they were moderate in their political behaviour. I recommended these two gentlemen to Mr. Suhrawardy for the office of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the newly elected Legislative Assembly. Mr. Suhrawardy readily accepted my suggestion and the Legislative Assembly in its first sitting elected Mr. Nurul Amin Speaker and Mr. T. Ali Deputy Speaker without any contest. Mr. Suhrawardy and his cabinet colleagues decided to appoint Lal Miah of Faridpur Chief Whip of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party. I did not agree. I wanted a person with a fair academic qualification. I recommended Mr. Mofizuddin Ahmed of Comilla. Mr. Mofizuddin was appointed Chief Whip. Mr. Suhrawardy knew men and affairs better than I did. I backed a wrong horse.

THE DIRECT ACTION RESOLUTION

Mr. Jinnah convened a meeting of the Council of the All India Muslim League in Bombay on the 19th of July; the Council adopted a resolution which is known in history as the Direct Action Resolution of the Muslim League. It was resolved to take direct action against the British Government for achievement of Pakistan. The resolution authorised Mr. Jinnah, the President of the League, to constitute a committee of action. After the Council adopted the Direct Action Resolution, leaders of the Muslim League coming from all parts of India ceremoniously relinquished titles conferred upon them by the British Government and promised their unqualified support for Mr. Jinnah. After the ceremony of renunciation of titles I was called by Mr. Jinnah to address the house. I said, 'Mr. President, I regret my inability to offer you my unqualified support. You shall have my whole-hearted support if the Direct Action be conducted against British Government and not against any party or people of India. I have been noticing with great interest the leaders of the Muslim League relinquishing their titles. So far as my knowledge goes, the British Government does not confer high honours on persons whom they do not consider hundred percent their own men. I have reasons to question if these British manufactured leaders can change their spots overnight'. Mr. Jinnah said to me smilingly, "Moulana Saheb, don't be so hard on these gentlemen."

When I resumed my seat Mr. Jinnah's secretary came to me and requested me to see Mr. Jinnah at his residence at Malabar Hill in the afternoon. He told me that I could take with me a companion to help me. I took with me Shamsul Huq of Mymensingh. We reached Mr. Jinnah's residence at the appointed time. His secretary received us and seated us in the library room. One by one Mr. Suhrawardy, Moulana Akram Khan, Mr. Hasan Ispahani, Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury and Mohan Miah of Faridpur came. Then we were taken to the balcony facing the Arabian sea. Mr. Jinnah appeared and took his seat. I wondered what the matter was.

Mr. Suhrawardy, Shamsul Huq and I were seated on the right of Mr. Jinnah and the others sat on his left. Moulana Akram Khan, the President of the Bengal Muslim League, placed before Mr. Jinnah a 32 page typed petition of complaint against me. Mr. Jinnah asked Moulana Akram Khan what the papers contained. The Moulana said, 'This is a petition of complaint against Mr. Abul Hashim'. Mr. Jinnah smiled and said, 'If I want to do justice, I will have to study all the provisions of the Indian Evidence Act, the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code. If I find Mr. Abul Hashim guilty what can I do? I can suspend him for a week and that is all. Moulana Saheb, have you considered what will be the repercussion in Bengal? Go to your people, that is the highest court of appeal.' Mr. Jinnah pushed back the papers to the Moulana Saheb.

Mohan Miah of Faridpur said, 'Sir, Mr. Abul Hashim is unfair and unjust to us'. I replied, 'Mohan Miah is one of the leaders of the party in my opposition. I will give you an instance of our injustice done to him. We were absolute majority in the Parliamentary Board. We nominated Mohan Miah for the constituency he sought. This gentleman is President of Faridpur District Muslim League, Chairman of the District Board of Faridpur and Chairman of the School Board of the district.

Inspite of all these, he was defeated in the General Election when the Muslim League had a phenomenal success in Bengal. After his defeat we nominated him for the upper-house, the Legislative Council. He is now a member of the upper-house.'

Mr. Jinnah smiled. After tea the meeting was dissolved. Mr. Jinnah asked me to stay with him for a few minutes and patted me on my back and said, 'We have won our battle. Now you go to your people and consolidate them. Bengal has a culture of its own'.

The 16th of August was fixed for Direct Action demonstration. Before that Mr. Suhrawardy placed before the Muslim League Parliamentary Party the question of release of Andaman prisoners who were repatriated from Andaman and kept in Dacca Jail. The party unanimously decided in favour of the release of the prisoners. Mr. Suhrawardy saw the prisoners at Dacca on the 14th of August, 1946. Shortly after the Calcutta riot all the prisoners were released. After release they came to Calcutta and saw me at my residence at 37. Ripon Street, where I shifted my residence and the Millat press from the Muslim League office in June, 1946. I entertained them at a lunch. This day I saw for the first time the revolutionary leaders of Bengal like Messrs. Ananta Singh, Gonesh Ghosh, Ambika Chakravarty. Loknath Bal, Ananda Gupta and others. Comrade Abdullah Rasul a Communist Party leader of Bengal, introduced them to me.

On the 11th of August 1945 Mr. Osman, the Secretary, Calcutta District Muslim League, issued a statement to the press declaring the programme of 16th of August. The Direct Action Day was observed simultaneously in Calcutta, Howrah, Matiaburuz and 24 Parganas Mill areas under the direction of Calcutta Muslim League. Complete hartal and general strike in all spheres of civic, commercial and industrial life save and except in essential services of water works, hospitals, clinics, maternity centres, electricity, gas and postal services. Processions with bands

starting from every area convulged at the foot of the Ochterlony Monument at 3 p.m. Mr. Suhrawardy presided over the meeting. Representatives of minority communities, the Christians, the Scheduled Castes, aborigines, the tribal people were invited to join the meeting. Special prayers were offered in every mosque after Friday prayer.

On the 13th of August I issued a statement to the press in which I stated that Muslim League would observe the Direct Action Day to demonstrate their grievances against British Imperialism. I made it clear that our target was British Imperialism alone.

I appealed to all sections of the people to make 'Direct Action Day' peaceful and not to degenerate it into a strife between people and people despite provocation from elements that might play the game of the imperial power whose purpose was to suppress popular upsurge in the country.

The Muslim League had no knowledge, no apprehension and no anticipation as to the unprecedented violence that started in the morning and continued in the afternoon of the 16th of August when we were all in the midst of the meeting held at the foot of the Ochterlony Monument. The Muslims were unarmed and unprepared to meet the situation. Men may lie but circumstances never lie. I brought from Burdwan with me my two sons. Badruddin Mohammad Umar, a boy of 15, and Shahabuddin Mohammad Ali, a boy of 8 to show them the great gathering that was expected on the occasion at Calcutta. I took my sons to the Maidan and Lal Miah of Faridpur took his grandson aged six or seven. If we apprehended any danger we would not have taken our sons and grandsons to the Maidan.

THE RIOTS

Khawaja Nazimuddin and Raja Gaznafar Ali Khan of Lahore addressed the gathering. Khwaja Nazimuddin in his speech said, 'Our struggle is against the Congress and the Hindus'. I pushed him back from the microphone and pointing to the Fort William I asserted that our struggle was not against any people of India but it was against the Fort William. While we were on the platform, news came from all sides that violent communal riots had started in every area of Calcutta. Lal Miah and I walked all the way from the Maidan to Ripon Street with our children.

Mr. Suhrawardy declared 16th of August a public holiday. This was a great blunder that Mr. Suhrawardy committed. Peace-loving Hindus and Muslims had little or nothing to do with the riot. That the riot was organized by agent provocateurs of British Imperialism was fully corroborated by what followed the fateful Direct Action Day. The riot continued in full swing for five days--from the 16th, to the 20th of August, Mr. Suhrawardy requested the Governor of the province to call out the army to help the police to restore law and order. The army did not come out. the Calcutta police force was not strong enough to meet the situation. The Commissioner of Calcutta Police was an Englishman. Mr Suhrawardy shifted his headquarters to Lal Bazar Police Headquarters and sat in the Control Room round the clock during the riot. He despatched truck loads of armed constables but they never reached their destination. Mr. Suhrawardy was helpless and the city remained unprotected for

five days. On request of Mr. Suhrawardy Govt. of the Punjab sent to Calcutta a big contingent of armed constables. They brought the situation under control. Mr. Suhrawardy, risking his life, moved round the city in his car by day and by night. Central Calcutta was the centre of the great killing.

A friend informed me that he saw Moulana Azad Subhani walking along Bowbazar Street. I immediately sent volunteers with armed police to Bowbazar to find the Moulana. Fortunately enough they saw the Moulana in Bowbazar Street. They picked him up and brought him to my place. Monnujan Girls Hostel, a hostel for post-graduate women students, was situated at Vivekananda Road in Central Calcutta. The hostel was attacked and the life and honour of the women students were threatened. The hooligans attempted to pull down the Muslim League flag from the hostel but the students gallantly resisted. As soon as news came to me I sent a truck with volunteers and armed constables to rescue the inmates of the hostel. They were brought to my residence at 37 Ripon Street. Immediately through a Press statement I informed the parents and guardians of the women students that they were safe at my residence. When the riot subsided Mr. Suhrawardy provided funds for sending them some.

The tragic news of the Calcutta killing spread all over India. As an immediate reaction to Calcutta killing communal riots started in the districts of Noakhali and Comilla. Most of the dock workers of the Khidirpur port came from Noakhali and Comilla and they were victims of the Calcutta riot. In Calcutta the majority of the victims were Muslims. Mr. Suhrawardy called a meeting of all party leaders at his residence at 40, Theatre Road on the 21st of August. Among those present were Mr. Suhrawardy, Mr. Sarat Bose, Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr. Kiron Shankar Roy, Mr. M.A. Ispahani, Mr. J.C. Gupta, Mr. M.A.H. Ispahani, Mr. S.M. Osman, Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed,

Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, Khwaja Nooruddin and myself. It was decided after long deliberations to take out a peace procession with all the party leaders at the head to inform the people that all the parties had come together in a genuine effort to bring about peace and thus to induce the people to remain peaceful and do their best to bring about normalcy in the city. The procession left Mr. Suhrawardy's residence in a lorry bearing all the different party flags and carrying all the leaders--Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Scheduled Caste and Communist. The procession winded its way through Park Circus, Entally, Beniapukur, Elgin Road, Bhawanipur, Ballyganj, Kalighat, Alipur, Khidirpur and north Calcutta. The appearance of all the leaders together had the desired effect.

Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India, visited Calcutta on 24th of August, 1946. He met leaders of all political parties and visited some riot affected areas and some relief centres. He returned to Delhi on 26th of August. Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr. Suhrawardy, Mr. Mirza Ahmed Ispahani, Mr. S.M. Osman, Secretary, Calcutta Muslim League, Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, Seth Adamjee, Haji Dawood and I saw the Viceroy. While introducing me to the Viceroy, Khwaja Nazimuddin said, 'Your Excellency, I must be frank with you. Here is Mr. Abul Hashim, General Secretary of Bengal Muslim League. He does not believe in your sincerity to quit India'. The result was that the Viceroy discussed with me matters concerning the riot. In course of the discussions I said, 'Your Excellency is responsible for every murder, arson and rape in Calcutta'. The Viceroy asked me why I made him responsible for the crime.

I said, 'Sardar Patel shouted at the top of his voice that the British would quit India transferring power to the Congress. On the other side Mr. Jinnah shouted that the British would quit India transferring power to the Muslims from whom they

captured power in India. This led Hindus and Muslims to believe that they should prepare themselves for a civil war'. The Viceroy said, 'How can I interfere with the utterances of Indian leaders?' I said, 'I do not desire that you should, but how do you explain your conspicuous silence as representative of the British Government? You should have clarified the attitude of your government.

On 29th of August there was a sudden flare-up in the district of Noakhali. This was a reaction to mass killing of Noakhali Dock Workers in Khidirpur. On the 7th of September in a meeting of the Moulvis of Noakhali under the leadership of Moulana Gholam Sarwar, it was declared that the Muslims should devise ways and means to wreak vengeance for the great Calcutta killing. The riot spread over in the districts of Noakhali and Comilla and if timely action was not taken, the riot would have spread over all the districts of East Bengal. Mr. Suhrawardy did all he could to maintain law and order.

Mr. Gandhi reached Dattapara in the district of Noakhali on the 14th of November. Mr. Gandhi's Secretary Mahadev Desai, Mr. Gandhi's grand daughter Munni Gandhi and his grand son's wife Abha Gandhi accompanied Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Suhrawardy saw Mr. Gandhi at Dattapara. Mr. Gandhi walked from village to village and revived the morale of the Hindus. Mr. Suhrawardy posted at every danger spot armed police for restoring peace and order. Refugee camps were set up in various places of the district. Measures were taken for relief and rehabilitation of victims of the riot. Mr. Gandhi and his party visited Noakhali and stayed there as guests of the Government of Bengal. Mr. Gandhi's visit to the district of Noakhali focussed world attention on atrocities committed by the Muslims of Noakhali and Comilla on the Hindu minorities of the two districts. In Calcutta and Bihar riots, the majority of the victims were Muslims. Mr. Gandhi did not visit Calcutta and Patna.

Riots broke out in Patna on 23rd of September, 1946. Khwaja Nazimuddin and I visited Patna and saw Mr. Sri Krishna Sinha, the then Chief Minister of Bihar. Mr. Sinha came down to Patna from Ranchi, the summer capital of Bihar, three days after riots broke out at Patna. Explaining his delay in visiting Patna he said that he could not find any plane for coming to Patna from Ranchi for three days. During the Bihar riot, Professor Abdul Bari, President of the Congress Committee of Bihar and a famous labour leader was killed. Mr. Jinnah did not visit Calcutta and Patna. Commenting upon the riots Mr. Jinnah, in cold blood said that the communal riots proved his two nation theory.

THE CABINET MISSION

In March, 1946 a British Cabinet Mission consisting of Lord Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade and Mr. A.V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty came to India. Their mission was to evolve a synthesis of conflicting ideas of the Muslim League and the Congress. They suggested the formation of three autonomous groups of countries of the Sub-Continent with a Central Federal Government and it was known as the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Muslim League and the Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan. If the Cabinet Mission Plan could be implemented the partition of the Sub-Continent could have been avoided without much prejudice to the ideological contents of the Lahore Resolution.

Unfortunately, at this decisive moment, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru succeeded Moulana Abul Kalam Azad as the President of the Congress. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, as President of the Congress, declared unequivocally in a press conference that the Congress was not bound by the Cabinet Mission Plan, and they were free to frame a constitution for the Sub-Continent as they liked. The reaction of this statement was obvious. The Muslim League went back to the Lahore Resolution of 1940. Direct Action Resolution of the Muslim League and subsequent boycott of the Constituent Assembly were logical consequences of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru's Press statement.

On the 12th of August in an interview with an American Correspondent in New Delhi Mr. Suhrawardy said, 'Probable result of putting the Congress in power, bypassing the Muslim League, would be the declaration of complete independence of Bengal and the setting up of a parallel government'. He further added, 'We shall see that no revenue is derived from Bengal and will consider ourselves a separate State having no connection with the Centre. The League is not, however, itching for a fight. Such drastic steps will be resorted to by the League only if it is forced to'. Mr. Suhrawardy alleged that if the Congress insists on including nationalist Muslims in the Central Cabinet it would stand in the way of the League's joining the interim government. Mr. Suhrawardy observed that the inclusion of nationalist Muslims in the Government would plunge the whole of India into a turmoil and lead to a civil war and disintegration of India.

On the 24th of August the Viceroy reconstituted his Executive Council with Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel, Mr. Rajendra Prasad, Mr. Asaf Ali, Rajagopal Achariya, Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, Mr. John Mathai, Sardar Baldev Singh, Sir Sharafat Ahmed Khan, Mr. Jugjivan Ram, Syed Ali Zahir and Mr. C.H. Bhaba. Lord Wavell called the Muslim League to reconsider their policy and to join the interim government and the Constituent Assembly. Earlier a Constituent Assembly was constituted to frame a Constitution for India. I was one of the members elected to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal. commenting upon the re-constitution of the Viceroy's Executive Council only with the Congress, Mr. Jinnah on 26th of August said, 'The step the Viceroy has taken is most unwise and unstatesman-like.' Mr. Jinnah decided to boycott the Constituent Assembly.

On the 12th of September the Congress tabled an adjournment motion in the Bengal Legislative Assembly to raise a discussion on the Calcutta riot. On the 13th of September after the question-

hour Mr. Dhiren Dutta, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and a Congress Member of the Assembly and Mr. Bimal Sinha moved two resolutions of no confidence in the Chief Minister Mr. Suhrawardy and his Council of Ministers. 19th of September was fixed for the discussion of the adjournment motion. Mr. Suhrawardy welcomed the censure motion and said, 'I am glad that the members of the house are given an opportunity to discuss the cataclysm which overtook Calcutta.'

In my speech addressing the Congress I said, 'You have been telling us all the time that the Hindu-Muslim trouble was due to interference of the third party, the British Imperialism. Where is the third party now? The Hindus are blaming the Muslims and the Muslims are blaming the Hindus. Where is the third party now? Please do not forget that the British possessions in India are coloured red. Due to your struggle for freedom for over fifty years, the red colour on the map of India has faded and British Imperialism has decided to put a fresh coating of crimson on the map of India with the blood of Indians'. Two motions of no-confidence were discussed and put to vote. The motions were defeated. European members remained neutral.

THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT

On the 15th of October, 1946, the Muslim League joined the Interim Government. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Mr. I. I. Chundrigarh, Raja Gaznafar Ali and Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal were nominees of the Muslim League. It was very much expected that Nawab Mohammed Ismail of Meerut and Khwaja Nazimuddin would be nominated for the Interim Government. Raja Gaznafar Ali and Mr. Chundrigarh had no political antecedent of any consequence. No Muslim from Bengal was taken by Mr. Jinnah. Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal was selected to represent Bengal.

Sardar Patel took the portfolio of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Information and Broadcasting. They offered the Ministry of Finance to the Muslim League. The Congress thought that the Muslim League would miserably fail to do justice to the Ministry of Finance. Mr. Jinnah was also a bit nervous about it. Chowdhury Mohammed Ali of the Punjab Finance Department advised Mr. Jinnah to accept the portfolio of Finance and promised whole-hearted support to Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan. Mr. Jinnah accepted his proposal. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan was given charge of the Finance Department. Two other financial experts of the Finance Department of the Government of India, Mr. Gholam Mohammad and Mirza Mumtazuddin, joined the team of Chowdhury Mohammad Ali and helped the Nawabzada to prepare the first budget of the Interim

Government. The Budget was highly appreciated by the people as a progressive people's budget.

The Congress was deeply frustrated. The Congress expectation that Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan would miserably fail, did not come true. The Congress soon realised that they committed a great blunder in handing over finance to Muslim League. Moulana Abul Kalam Azad in his book 'India Wins Freedom' writes, 'In all countries, the Minister in-charge of finance plays a key role in the Government. In India, his position was even more important, for the British Government had treated the finance member as the custodian of its interests. This was a portfolio which had always been held by an Englishman specially brought to India for the purpose. The finance member could interfere in every department and dictate policy. When Liaquat Ali Khan became the Finance Member, he obtained possession of the key to the Government. Every proposal of every department was subject to scrutiny by his department. In addition he had the power of veto. Not even a chaprasi could be appointed in any department without the sanction of his department'.

To accommodate Muslim League members in the Viceroy's Executive Council some of the Congress members had to be dropped. The Congress decided that Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, Sir Shafat Ahmed Khan and Syed Ali Zahir should resign to make room for the League nominees. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose came back to Calcutta with a lacerated heart.

Mr. Bose immediately after his release from jail after the Second World-War, addressing a gathering at the Mirzapur Park in Calcutta said, 'Pakistan is a fantastic nonsense'. Ever since then I had been looking forward to a suitable opportunity to meet him and to convince him that in order to make India really free every country and nation of India must constitute independent and sovereign states. I decided to meet Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose.

The Congress had a bitter experience of the Interim Government and fully realised that a Government with Muslim League ministers would mean perennial trouble for the Congress. Whatever proposal the Congress members of the Executive Council made was either rejected or modified by the finance member Liaquat Ali Khan. Practical experience of the Congress radically changed the outlook of the Congress. Congress leaders in general, and Sardar Patel in particular, saw that partition of India was the only solution.

The Cabinet Mission plan failed and Lord Wavell was recalled. Lord Mountbatten was sent to India as the last Viceroy of India. He reached India on 22nd March and was sworn in as Viceroy and Governor-General of India on the 24th.

THE CONTEST FOR PRESIDENCY OF BENGAL MUSLIM LEAGUE

After Mr. Fazlul Huq left the Muslim League and constituted a new Ministry in Bengal with Mr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Nawab Habibullah, Mr. P.N. Banerjee, Mr. Santosh Kumar Bose, Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed, Moulvi Abdul Karim and Mr. Upendra Nath Barman, Mr. Fazlul Huq and his muslim associates were expelled from the Muslim League by the All India Muslim League. After the General Election of 1946 the ban against Muslim League deserters was lifted. On the 1st of September, 1946, Mr. Fazlul Huq wrote a letter to Mr. Jinnah expressing his desire to rejoin the Muslim League. He pledged unconditional allegiance to the Muslim League and its creed and prayed for lifting the ban against him.

Mr. Jinnah lifted the ban and Mr. Fazlul Huq and his party rejoined the Muslim League. On 8th of September, 1946, Mr. Jinnah in a press statement said, 'In view of the public declaration made by Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq on September 1st and 3rd, and having given his written statement pledging his wholehearted loyalty, devotion and support to the League unconditionally and as he has followed up these declaration by his letter dated September 3rd, addressed to me requesting me to lift the ban which was imposed upon him nearly 5 years ago, and further in view of his assurance of an honest change-over and of joining the League, having already signed the membership form and pledge of the Muslim League which has

been submitted by him through the Calcutta District League to the Provincial Organisation for acceptance of his membership and as the ban was imposed upon him by me by virtue of my emergency power, I hereby remove the same, hoping that Mr. Fazlul Huq will sincerely, earnestly and selflessly serve the Muslim League, the national and the authoritative, representative organisation of the Muslims and our cause, the achievement of Pakistan'-(The Statesman, 9th September, 1946).

Mr. Fazlul Huq in a statement published in the Morning News of 31st January, 1947, said, 'In view of the likelihood of a vacancy in the office of the President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, consequent on the resignation tendered by Moulana Akram Khan, I wish to offer myself as a candidate for election as President in case the resignation of the Moulana Saheb is accepted. Following a well established custom, I wish to say a few words regarding my candidature. The All India Muslim League, of which the Bengal Muslim League is a branch, was founded at Dacca on the 28th December, 1905. And I was one of its natal nurses. I was the Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League till 1915, when I succeeded Nawab Sir Salimullah Bahadur as the permanent President, I was elected President of All India Muslim League for one year in 1917 and I presided over its eleventh Annual Session at Delhi in 1918. What I did to serve the League during my tenure of office as Chief Minister of Bengal is recent history and known to every one interested in politics. I am anxious to place my humble services at the disposal of the Muslim League at the critical juncture of our fight for an honourable existence as an independent nation in India. As the mover of the momentous resolution in Lahore it will be a matter of pride and glory for me to lay down even my life for the attainment of our national goal of Pakistan, as I feel that no sacrifice is too great for an ideal which is the noblest of all in human life. I am sure I can count upon every honest vote in the hope that I make this appeal to my

fellow members of the Council of Bengal Provincial Muslim League to cast their votes in my favour. No one regrets more than I do his submission (Moulana Akram Khan) of resignation at this critical hour in the national history. His position is unique in Bengal politics and he can hardly be replaced by any one now living. Much as I hope to be elected, my hope is still stronger that the occasion may not arise for an election and that the Moulana Saheb will consent to continue in office and guide us as he has done all his life'.

Immediately after I received Moulana Akram Khan's resignation letter I declared my intention to seek election for the office of the President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. After Mr. Fazlul Huq left the Muslim League in 1942 Khwaja Nazimuddin and his adherents used to call Mr. Fazlul Huq a 'Gaddar' or traitor. Now the Khwaja Saheb and his people set up Mr. Fazlul Huq against me for the office of the President of Bengal Muslim League. Khwaja Saheb and his people knew that none of them would be accepted by the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League for the office of the President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. So they decided to set up Mr. Fazlul Huq against me. They had no alternative, for their end was to prevent me from being the head of the Bengal Muslim League. Khwaja Nazimuddin and his people's fear for me made once again Mr. Fazlul Huq a patriot and a sincere Muslim Leaguer.

Mr. Gandhi's visit to Noakhali as guest of the Government of Bengal and his activities in the district of Noakhali and Comilla had a violent reaction in the minds of the Muslims of Bengal. Mr. Fazlul Huq and Khwaja Nazimuddin took full advantage of the situation and they fomented opinion of the Muslims of Bengal against Mr. Suhrawardy and his Government. Mr. Fazlul Huq visited Comilla and Noakhali. In a public meeting in Comilla Mr. Fazlul Huq demanded removal of Mr. Gandhi from Noakhali. Mr. Gandhi in his prayer meeting on 17th of February

at Raipura in the district of Noakhali said, 'I would consider it to be a most unfortunate speech coming as it does from a man holding the responsible position that the Moulovī Sahab (Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq) holds and aspiring to be the President of the Bengal Muslim League'.

Mr. Gandhi said that he was not aware of having done anything to create bitterness between the two communities. Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq sent a telegram to Mr. Gandhi seeking an interview with him. Mr. Huq in his telegram said, 'It has been a part of my religion not to insult or show disrespect to anybody. But frankness in thought and in deed has been the guiding principle of my life and in my Comilla speech I told the audience what I thought of your stay in Noakhali. I strongly maintain that it was a great blunder on your part to go to Noakhali at a time when the minority of Bihar were being butchered by the majority'. Mr. Fazlul Huq saw Mr. Gandhi at Himehat on the 27th of February. Mr. Gandhi left Noakhali for Patna on 28th February.

A meeting of the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League was convened on 9th of February, 1947, to consider Moulana Akram Khan's letter of resignation and to elect a President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League. Mr. Fazlul Huq and Khwaja Nazimuddin's lieutenants organised Khidirpur Dock Workers of Noakhali and Comilla. These people were brought to Calcutta in trucks to shout slogans against me and Mr. Suhrawardy in front of our residences. A few days before the day fixed for meeting of the Council of the Provincial Muslim League, Mr. Fazlul Huq requested me to withdraw my candidature in his favour. I did not agree. Now I think my decision was a great blunder.

At that time Moulana Akram Khan lived with his second wife at Modhupur where he built a house. The Moulana Saheb, in order to restore his declining popularity, occasionally submitted his resignation from the Presidentship of Bengal Muslim League

and thus created a crisis. Every time Khwaja Nazimuddin and his people requested the Moulana to withdraw his letter of resignation, and the Moulana complied with their request. I knew that the same thing would happen on this occasion. I received information that on the day of the meeting of the Council at the Muslim Institute, the Dock Workers of Khidirpur would be mobilised and violent methods would be adopted to create chaos and confusion. I gave instructions to Mr. Osman, Secretary of the Calcutta Muslim League to send Muslim League volunteers to the Muslim Institute, with instructions to occupy the Muslim Institute and approaches to the Institute on the day of the meeting before daybreak. Mr. Osman kept ready Muslim League volunteers and trucks for the purpose.

Without my knowledge and consent Mr. Suhrawardy in a conference with Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr. Fazlur Rahman and Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury decided to request the Moulana Saheb to withdraw his letter of resignation. Mr. Suhrawardy did not like that I should be the President of the Bengal Muslim League. Mr. Suhrawardy needed my friendship till he became Chief Minister of Bengal but after achieving his objective, he adopted sinister methods to get rid of my vigilance as General Secretary of Muslim League over his activities as the Chief Minister of Bengal. Like his predecessors in office, he wanted to make the Muslim League subservient to him and his Government. Mr. Suhrawardy knew that this was not possible so long as I was Secretary or President of the Muslim League.

In my struggle with the combined forces of Mr. Fazlul Huq and Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr. Suhrawardy remained neutral. Mr. Suhrawardy did not like Mr. Fazlul Huq either. So he wanted withdrawal of Moulana Akram Khan's resignation and to maintain the status quo. At midnight the Muslim League volunteers were ready to move towards the Muslim Institute to occupy the Hall and its approaches. But before day-break Mr.

Suhrawardy telephoned to Mr. Osman to demobilise the volunteers and told him that everything had been settled and that there was no apprehension of any trouble. Mr. Osman did as he was instructed by Mr. Suhrawardy. Instead of the Muslim League volunteers occupying the Muslim Institute and its approaches they were occupied by Khidirpur Dock Workers organised and mobilised by Khwaja-Huq party.

The result was obvious. We were surrounded by Khidirpur Dock workers and some students inspired and organised by Dr. Zuberi and Shah Azizur Rahman. Dr. Zuberi was the Principal of Islamia College. He expected that he would be appointed minister for education. This could not be. So he looked forward to an opportunity to discredit us. In the meeting of the Council Khwaja Nazimuddin betrayed Mr. Fazlul Huq and requested Moulana Akram Khan to withdraw his letter of resignation. Mr. Fazlul Huq became violent and he insisted that the Moulana's resignation was accepted. There was voting. Mr. Fazlul Huq secured only 11 votes in favour of his proposal of acceptance of Moulana's resignation. The Moulana withdrew his letter of resignation.

Thus the Khwaja Saheb successfully utilised Mr. Fazlul Huq to resist me from being the head of the Bengal Muslim League. Disappointed members of the Council, who sought Muslim League nomination for the General Election of 1936, under the leadership of Mr. Fazlul Qader Chowdhury of Chittagong started shouting slogans against me. Immediately after the hooligans had assembled around the Muslim Institute they started assaulting my supporters. This continued for some time and then the situation became comparatively quiet.

We left the Muslim Institute. I walked the whole way from the Muslim Institute to the Muslim League office. Amidst rows of murderers, hooligans and miscreants, Mr. Shamsheer Ali of Barisal and Mr. Zillur Rahman of Burdwan came all the way

with me. Mr. Shamsheer Ali was on my left and Mr. Zillur Rahman was on my right and an Anglo-Indian sergeant followed me closely. Suddenly a youngman rushed towards me with an open dagger to stab me from behind. The sergeant immediately struck the youngman on his back with his baton and the youngman fell on the ground. We walked steadily and reached Muslim League office.

Liberation of the tenants of Bengal from the exploitation of landlords was the only socio-economic programme of the leftists of the Muslim League. Mr. Abul Mansur Ahmed had moved a resolution to this effect in Gaffargaon conference. The resolution was unanimously adopted. Mr. Suhrawardy had no interest in land. I rightly presumed that Mr. Suhrawardy would not stand in the way of abolition of rent-receiving interests in land. This was the reason why Mr. Suhrawardy was marked for the leadership of the Muslim League Government of Bengal. On my recommendation Mr. Fazlur Rahman was appointed Minister for Revenue. The Governor of Bengal was then at Dacca. Ever since annulment of partition of Bengal in 1911 the Governor of the Province shifted to Dacca for a fortnight every year. I took Mr. Fazlur Rahman from Calcutta to Dacca. He was sworn in as a Minister at Dacca on the 21st of November, 1946.

In March, 1947 Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Minister for Revenue introduced in the Bengal Legislative Assembly a Bill for abolition of rent receiving interests in land. The Bill was then referred to a select Committee. The Congress, which represented vested interests in land, opposed the Bill with all force as they did before during the discussion on Bengal Tenancy Bill in 1938. The Bill could not be passed into an Act before the partition of Bengal. After partition the Bill was taken up in both parts of Bengal and with certain modifications, passed as Acts in Calcutta and Dacca.

The Morning News and the Azad were supporters of Khwaja Nazimuddin. Mr. Suhrawardy decided to have a daily paper of his own. His Bengali daily the 'Ittehad' appeared on the 17th of January, 1947. Mr. Abul Mansur Ahmed was appointed Editor, Nawabzada Hasan Ali was In-charge of the Management of the paper and Mr. Toffazal Hossain (Manik Miah) was appointed superintendent. These three gentlemen constituted themselves into a coterie and started a conspiracy to create a rift between me and Mr. Suhrawardy in their material interest. They succeeded in convincing Mr. Suhrawardy that his declining popularity was due to his association with me. The 'Ittehad' gradually stopped giving me publicity and in my contest with Khwaja-Huq combination for the Presidentship of Bengal Muslim League, Mr. Suhrawardy and his paper 'Ittehad' remained neutral. Mr. Suhrawardy drifted away from my political thinking and accepted Abul Mansur Ahmed, Nawabzada Hasan Ali and Manik Miah as his conscience keepers. This attitude of Mr. Suhrawardy eventually led to his defeat in his contest with Khwaja Nazimuddin for the leadership of East Pakistan.

PARTITION OF BENGAL

After Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose was dropped from the Interim Government in October 1946, I saw him at his residence No. 1, Woodburn Park, Calcutta. I took with me Shamsuddin Ahmed of Munshiganj and my son Badruddin Mohammad Umar, who was then a school student. In this first meeting Mr. Bose admitted that India was a sub-continent and not a country and the Indians were not one nation and that India would be really free when all the component countries and nations of India would be independent and sovereign states.

This radical change in Mr. Bose's political philosophy was obviously due to his sad experience of Indianism and Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel was mainly responsible for this. I succeeded in my mission. The man who maintained that Pakistan was a fantastic nonsense agreed to the partition of India and to make Bengal an independent and sovereign state. A few days after my interview with Mr. Bose, there was the annual dinner of Mr. Shubhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army, the Azad Hind Fouj, at the Shubhas Institute. Mr. Bose invited me to attend the dinner. He said, 'Mr. Hashim, I accept your proposition but you must get it accepted by the leaders of the Indian National Army when we meet them at the annual dinner'.

I attended the dinner and succeeded in securing unanimous support of the leaders of the I.N.A. When I sat for dinner I asked the gentlemen present if they wanted me to eat or to talk. They said that they wanted to hear me. I said, 'In that case,

please give me a plate of hot soup, I shall sip it and talk.' In conclusion I said, 'Gentlemen, if there is truth in what I have said, you must accept my theory as surely as the earth attracts everything towards its centre, however much a particle may have an upward tendency'. In one voice, they said, 'We accept'.

Immediately after I had my first interview with Mr. Bose at his residence, Shamsuddin Ahmed of Munshiganj reported the talk I had with Mr. Bose to 'Swadhinata', the Bengali Daily of the Communist Party. The 'Swadhinata' reported my discussions with Mr. Bose with banner headline. The report indicated that I contemplated creation of 'A Greater Bengal' where Muslims would be a minority. This was a distortion of truth. We never discussed the proposition of creation of 'A Greater Bengal'. The term 'Greater Bengal' was coined by the Communist Party. Nevertheless, this report of 'Swadhinata' gave a nice opportunity to my political enemies for carrying on extensive propaganda against me. Ultimately the Communist Party supported partition of Bengal and opposed separation of Sylhet from Assam. This decision was due to the Party's decision to maintain their popularity in Bengal and Assam. Mr. Shamsuddin was a member of the Communist Party and this was not known to me before he reported to the Communist Party my discussion with Mr. Bose. Later it transpired that the Communist Party deputed some members of the Party to do factional work in the Muslim League.

The British Imperialism has its own way of doing things. When they want to do something, they throw a suggestion to this effect through some persons respected by the people concerned as a feeler and watch its reaction. If the reaction is favourable, the thing is done peacefully. If the reaction is unfavourable, they adopt other methods to create a situation in which their scheme might be easily accepted. So it was with the British Plan of partition of India. The manner in which India was partitioned

was suggested through Mr. Rajagopal Achariya. Rajajee's scheme of partition of India was rejected both by the Congress and the Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah rejected the Pakistan contemplated by Rajajee as a truncated, moth-eaten and mutilated Pakistan. The British diplomats watched carefully the reaction to Rajajee's Plan. The reaction was unfavourable. So they adopted other methods.

Experience of a Central Government composed of Congress and Muslim League leaders made it clear to Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel and the Congress that they could not have their own way in an undivided India. The Congress became mentally prepared for the partition of India. Communal riots of 1946 created a situation in which Rajagopal Achariya scheme of partition of India could be readily accepted by the Congress and Muslim League.

Lord Mountbatten prepared a scheme for the partition of India, Bengal and the Punjab. After series of parleys with political leaders of British India, he prepared a final plan which was accepted by the Congress and the Muslim leaders on the 3rd of June, 1947. There was a provision in the Mountbatten dispensation regarding the approval of the Bengal Provincial Legislatures for joining either India or Pakistan and also to find out nothing but a formal matter as will be revealed from the procedure prescribed in the plan.

A joint session of both house of the Legislature was held to decide whether they would join India or Pakistan. Since the Muslim League commanded majority in the joint meeting of the two house they decided to join Pakistan. After that the members of the Legislatures representing East Bengal districts met separately to decide whether they wanted a united Bengal or partition of the province. The East Bengal group of Muslim League members of the Legislatures voted against partition of Bengal according to the mandate of the Muslim League and since in that house the muslims were in a majority their decision was

carried. After that the West Bengal group of Legislators also met separately. They had to decide the same issue. In this case, the Muslim League members of the Assembly voted against partition, again according to the mandate of the Muslim League. But in this house, the hindus had a majority and they voted in favour of partition of Bengal. The meeting of the East Bengal group was presided over by Mr. Nurul Amin and the meeting of the West Bengal group was presided over by the Moharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan, Uday Chand Mahatab. The same procedure was followed in the Punjab.

Thus it is clear that not the Muslim, but the Hindus, in obedience to the mandate of the Congress, were responsible for the partition of India, Bengal and the Punjab on the basis of religion. It may be recalled that Mr. Gandhi introduced religion into politics long before 1940 when he declared his theory of 'Ramraj' in India. In February 1947 Lord Mountbatten prevailed upon Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel and the Congress and set afoot his diplomatic activities for creating conditions favourable to partition of Bengal and the Punjab and to implement the British plan of partition of India.

Shyama Prasad Mukherjee met Governor of Bengal Sir Fredrick Burrows, on February 22, 1947. Obviously inspired by the Governor, he made a statement on the 23rd demanding partition of Bengal on communal basis. The President of the India National Congress, Acharya Kripalini, supported the demand of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha. They started the movement for the partition of Bengal. Lord Mountbatten had already conveyed to the leaders of India determination of the British Government to divide and to quit India. Quite naturally the Congress adopted a new political line. They threw into the winds their opposition to partition of India. The British scheme for partition of India

suggested through Rajagopal Achariya was rejected by the Congress and the Muslim League. But now the Congress accepted the line of the partition of India as it was suggested by Rajagopal Achariya. On the 15th of April the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha conference was held at Tarakeshwar. The conference authorised Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee to take steps for establishment of a separate homeland for Hindus of Bengal.

The united movement of the Congress and the Mahasabha for partition of Bengal greatly influenced the Hindus of West Bengal and the Calcutta dailies supported the movement. In 1905 Lord Curzon divided Bengal, and the Hindus of Bengal, under the leadership of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, started a violent movement for annulment of partition of Bengal. Surendra Nath Banerjee's movement, like wild-fire, spread all over the subcontinent and it became irresistible. The Hindus eulogised Surendra Nath Banerjee as 'Mr. Surrender-Not'. Sober elements of Muslims of Bengal like Mr. A. Rasul and my father, Moulvi Abul Kasem of Burdwan, supported Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee and politically undeveloped Muslims of East Bengal and Assam supported Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal under the leadership of Nawab Sir Salimullah of Dacca. In 1911 British Government resolved upon annulment of partition of Bengal and decided to shift the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. This decision was announced by his Imperial Majesty King George V in an Imperial Darbar held at Delhi. Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, in one of his speeches at the Calcutta town Hall said, 'We are assembled here to protest against the partition of Bengal. Even Lord Morley, who once declared that partition of Bengal was a settled fact, has now to admit that it was one of the greatest blunders that he committed.'

The freedom movement of India began with Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee's organised political movement. The great Indian leader

Mr. Gokhale said, 'What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow'. Such was then the prestige of Bengal in Indian politics. Under the leadership of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, Bengal rose to the height of her political genius. After the first world war Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee accepted Montague-Chelmsford Reforms and accepted the Ministry of Local self Government under the Government of Bengal. This led to Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee's fall in the politics of Bengal. After the fall of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee and death of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, the leadership of India shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.

On April 27, under the leadership of Mr. Deben Dey some young Congress leaders belonging to Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose's group came in a jeep to see me at Burdwan. They requested me to come to Calcutta immediately with them. They said that Bengal was going to be divided. I did not believe them. I asked, 'Who is going to divide Bengal? Between 1905 and 1911 the Hindus of Bengal made the greatest sacrifice for annulment of partition of Bengal and the Muslim League of today is against partition of Bengal.' I was a fool in thinking like that. I did not take into consideration the latest developments in Indian politics and British diplomacy. Lord Mountbatten pushed his plan in indecent haste as a result of which Indian leaders completely lost their head and fell helplessly into the trap laid by Mountbatten. On the 28th of April I came to Calcutta and issued a statement to the press which was widely published on the 29th of April. The following is the text of my statement:

"Time has come when truth must be told. Surrender to vulgar thinking for cheap popularity and opportunist leadership is intellectual prostitution. Only around 1905 Bengal was the thought-leader of India and successfully challenged the might of the then British Government. It is a pity that Bengal today is intellectually bankrupt and is begging and borrowing thought

and guidance from alien heroes. I wonder what has happened to the Hindus of Bengal who produced men like Surendra Nath Banerjee, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Ashutosh Mukherjee, Chittaranjan Das and Subhas Chandra Bose,

'The present revolutionary thinking of India owes its birth to Bengal. True revolution in internecine killing but in creating revolution in thinking and feeling. Bengal must shake off her inferiority complex and defeatist mentality, revert to her past traditions, rise again to the heights of her genius and mould her destiny.... Sentiments and emotions have no place in serious thinking. Temporary insanity should not be allowed to influence our future decisions.

'Bengal today is standing at the crossroad one leading to freedom and glory and the other to eternal bondage and abounding disgrace, Bengal must make a decision here and now. There is a tide in the affairs of man, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune. Opportunity once lost may come no more.

'Cent per cent alien capital, both Indian and Anglo-American, exploiting Bengal is invested in West Bengal. The growing socialist tendencies amongst us have created fears of expropriation in the minds of our alien exploiters. They have the prudence to visualise difficulties in a free and united Bengal. It is in the interest of the alien capital that Bengal should be divided, crippled and incapacitated so that neither part thereof may have strength enough to resist exploitation.

'From the nature of the communal disturbances in Bengal I am of the opinion that these were engineered and encouraged by Anglo-American vested interests and their Indian allies. In the ordinary course of business respectable and reliable parties find it difficult to secure licence for fire arms. But immense quantities of dangerous weapons of British and American origin, left over in India, were lavishly distributed among the Hindu and Muslim

hooligans, conscious and unconscious agents of the partition of Bengal. A big gun of Bengal who has developed an obnoxious craze for the premiership of Bengal, once remarked to me that since he has no future and for him everything was past, he would seize anything the immediate present has to offer him. He has thus justified his opportunism. Fossils of Bengal may find immediate gain in her partition but what has happened to her youths whose entire destiny lies in the future? Are they going to barter away their future for the benefit of handful of careerists placed at a position of vantage by circumstances?

'Partition of Bengal bears no analogy to the partition of India. The lamentable perversion in thinking, which suggests that the movement for the partition of Bengal is a convenient counterblast to Pakistan arises out of a colossal ignorance of the content and implications of the Lahore Resolution to which and which alone and not to this interpretation or that interpretation thereof, Muslims of India owe allegiance. That resolution never contemplated the creation of any Akhand Muslim State or any artificial Muslim majority either by forcible importation of alien elements as is being done in Palestine or by any mass transference of populations as was done between Turkey and Greece.

'It merely demands complete sovereignty for those countries which are known to the world as Muslim majority countries, and by implication demands complete sovereignty and self-determination of all the nations and countries of India. It gives Bengal and other cultural units of India complete sovereignty.

'Pakistan never postulates that in Bengal or the Punjab Muslims shall be the ruling race and others reduced to the status of a subject-nation. Mr. Jinnah after the failure of Jinnah-Gandhi talks at Bombay had declared in clear and unequivocal terms that free Pakistan states shall be governed and administered by the will and consent of the entire people on the basis of universal

adult suffrage. I will like to add, by a system of joint electorate if the minorities do not demand separate electorate for their own protection.

'In the absence of outstanding leadership the country in being rack-rented by vulgar fortune-hunters. Youths of Bengal both Hindus and Muslims must unite, liberate their country from the shackles of extraneous influence and make a bid for regaining Bengal's lost prestige and an honourable place in the future comity of nations, both of India and the world. Let the youths of Bengal build their character from their past traditions and derive inspiration for their present struggle from the glories of the future.

'Hindus and Muslims of Bengal, preserving their respective entities had by their joint efforts, in perfect harmony with the nature and climatic influence of their soil developed a wonderful common culture and tradition which compare favourably with the contribution of any nation of the world in the evolution of man.

'In the free state of Bengal, Hindus and Muslims as such shall have no right exclusively reserved for them except the right of Muslims to govern their society according to their own 'Shariat' and the right of Hindus to govern their own society according to their 'Shastra'. These rights give the Muslims their spiritual need for Pakistan and the Hindus a real homeland for the free development of their own ideology and material realisation of their particular outlook on life.

'It is unthinkable that in a free Bengal, the Hindus of Bengal who constitute nearly half of its population will be denied their legitimate share in administration and in the enjoyment of other material resources. Hindu-Muslim population of Bengal is almost balanced. Neither community is in a position to dominate the other. If Bengal is permitted to harness all her resources for the exclusive service of the children of her soil, both Hindus and

Muslims shall be happy and prosperous for many a century to come.

'But in a divided Bengal West Bengal is bound to be treated as a far-flung province, possibly colony, of alien Indian imperialism. However high they may pitch their expectations on partition, it is crystal clear to me that the Hindus of Bengal shall be reduced to the status of daily wage-earners of an alien capitalism.

'It will be a tragic mistake to visualise the future in the context of the vicious present of bondage and slavery. Hindus of Bengal have developed a suspicious complex from 10 years of one-party Muslim ministry in Bengal. But it must be told in all fairness that neither the Bengal nor the All India Muslim League ever stood in the way of coalition with the real representatives of the Hindus of Bengal. The League party in the legislature made persistent efforts to effect such a coalition but failed in the attempt due to the interference of the Congress High Command. Mr. Suhrawardy before the formation of his ministry made honest efforts to secure the co-operation of the Congress.

'I distinctly remember that Mr. Gandhi in course of his talks with us at 40, Theatre Road, on the eve of his departure for Noakhali said, 'I am not enamoured of coalition. I believe in one-party Government. Therefore, I do not insist on coalition in Bengal'. I might mention here that Bengal was then the only place which had a Muslim ministry. Any coalition here would have envisaged coalition ministries in the rest of India. Thus Hindu Bengal was left in the lurch as were Muslim Leaguers elsewhere.

'Hindus and Muslims of Bengal left to themselves and freed from the menace of Indianism can settle their affairs peacefully and happily. Unfortunately, the paramount interest of Muslim parliamentarians has always been in shuffling and reshuffling the ministry like a pack of cards, they could hardly concentrate on any policy and programme good, bad or indifferent.

'I am unfortunate in as much as I fail to appreciate what is there in the wretched ministry under the Act of 1935, since reasonably or otherwise there is a suspicion on the part of the Hindus against them, it is now upto Muslims to clear the deck and convince them, not merely by sermons and press statements but by action that they do not mean to be unfair to them. The present unrest, perverse thinking and suicidal moves constitute a disease of the social organism. Intense patriotism for the creation of a united and sovereign Bengal having all the attributes of an independent country, is the remedy and not partition.

'Mr. C.R. Das is dead. Let his spirit help us in moulding our glorious future. Let the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal agree to his formula of 50-50 enjoyment of political power and economic privileges. I again appeal to the youths of Bengal in the name of her past traditions and glorious future to unite, make a determined effort to dismiss all reactionary thinking and save Bengal from the impending calamity". (Amrita Bazar Patrika, 29th April, 1940.)

Since Muslim League opposed partition of Bengal and the Punjab, reactionary Muslim League leaders of Bengal could not directly oppose the movement against partition of Bengal; but they indirectly opposed the movement by pungent criticism of my statement through some of their stooges. They questioned my authority to make a statement like this and newspapers supporting them adopted an attitude of neutrality in respect of the movement of sovereign Bengal. Although Moulana Akram Khan and Khwaja Nazimuddin issued statements in respect of sovereign Bengal. I made another statement to the press in reply to my critics. My reply to my critics was reported in the Morning News of May 17, in the following terms:

'Earlier, on May, Mr. Abul Hashim replied to his Critics. He said, 'My critics have questioned my authority to suggest a possible basis of discussion between Hindus and Muslims of

Bengal. No authority is necessary for doing a good thing. In my statement, I addressed both Hindus and Muslims and did not speak on behalf of either.

'I know my own limitations and do not consider myself big enough to speak on behalf of 54 percent Muslims of Bengal, much less all of them or deliver the goods on their behalf. In the present context of Muslim politics, as even a child knows, that Mr. Jinnah is the only individual who can deliver the goods on behalf of the entire Muslims of India. I know Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy is keeping Mr. Jinnah well informed of the developments of Bengal's political situations.

'Much confusion in being created over my suggestion of 50-50 enjoyment of political power and economic privileges of this country. They conveniently forget that the 50-50 ratio is the existing rule which was brought about by an agreement between the Hindus and the Muslims during the first Muslim League Ministry under the leadership of Mr. Fazlul Huq.'

Mr. Hashim continued: 'In a system of an unaltered joint electorate which I have suggested, no question of 50-50 or 60-40 arises in the matter of seats in the legislature or ministry. My 50-50 suggestion merely relate to the political privileges enjoyed by having a share in the services and nothing more.

'Some of my Muslim critics suggested that Muslims who are a majority in Bengal, will find no place in a system of joint electorate with adult franchise. If any one would suffer at all under the said system it will be the Muslims of West and Hindus of East and North Bengal.

'A false panic is being created in the minds of the scheduled castes who constitute the bulk of the Hindu population of Bengal, and have nothing to lose in joint electorate.

'I shall appeal to the gentlemen of the negotiating committee of the Muslim League to go ahead with their job of negotiation with

the Hindus and to give a concrete suggestion regarding Bengal's future instead of beating about the bush and vilifying us.'

Mr. Hashim went on: 'If a United Sovereign Egypt where there is a mixed population of Muslims, Jews, Christians and others can be pro Pakistani, if United Sovereign Iran can be pro Pakistani, I fail to appreciate why a United and Sovereign Bengal, where the Muslims are in a majority will be anti Pakistani?'

'My demand for complete freedom of my country is in keeping with the true ideals of Islam and strictly in accordance with the Lahore Resolution. Our Prophet (peace be on him) is reported to have remarked that love of one's country is part one's faith'.

Mr. Ruhul Quddus, the now Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, in a letter published in the Morning News of May 20, said:

'Mr. Editor, your editorial published on May 12-13 has really startled me. I do not belong to any political group although I believe in Pakistan. What exactly, may I ask, are the faults of Messrs. H. S. Suhrawardy and Abul Hashim? How do their views go against Pakistan? Mr. Suhrawardy has not so far made any definite commitment. So he may be left out of consideration. Mr. Abul Hashim has, of course, talked of a 50:50 share of administration. But is it not the practice even today? Now, out of 50 some seats must also go to the Scheduled Castes who have signified their sympathy with the Muslims. Caste Hindus, obviously, do not get all the facilities granted to the Hindu Community.

'Then comes the question of joint electorate. I wonder how Muslims feel the necessity of separate electorate in a province where they are in a majority. It does not lie in the ruling class either to ask for safeguards. The Hindus in their own interest

cannot want joint electorate in Bengal. And is it not better, for us to wait till the demand for separate electorate comes from them?

'You cannot also object to Bengal's being sovereign. The Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League envisaged this. And I think you were too hasty in pronouncing your judgment on Mr. Abul Hashim's formula. Mr. Hashim never meant it to be final. It left room for changes and amendments. You revealed a mentality which was not a happy commentary on the unity of Muslims which we profess and Mr. Jinnah wants'.

In the last week of April a meeting of Muslim League and Congress leaders was convened at Mr. Suhrawardy's residence at 40 Theatre Road, Calcutta. A joint committee was formed for drafting the salient features of the Constitution of sovereign Bengal. In the Committee the Muslim League was represented by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Khwaja Nazimuddin, Mr. Mohammad Ali of Bogra, Dr. A. M. Malek, Mr. Fazlur Rahman of Dacca and myself. Hindus were represented by Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, Mr. Kiran Shankar Roy, Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, and Mr. Sattaya Ranjan Bakshi. Khwaja Nazimuddin attended the first meeting of the committee. At the conclusion of the meeting the Khwaja said, 'I shall accept any Constitution if it provides unadulterated joint electorate or unadulterated separate electorate'. Interviewed by a 'Statesman' correspondent reported on 23 April, Khwaja Nazimuddin said, 'It is my considered opinion that an independent Sovereign Bengal is in the best interest of its people whether Muslims or non-Muslims and I am equally certain that partition of the Province is fatal to the interest of Bengalis'. Thus declared Khwaja Nazimuddin, Deputy Leader of the Muslim League in the Central Assembly and member of the League High Command. 'I have always maintained', he added, 'that there is no limit to the progress and development of this province and its people if they are in a position to manage their own affairs. Bengal has always

received step-motherly treatment from the Centre. Whenever I talked to my Hindu friends their one demand is let Bengal settle its own affairs. The logical conclusion of this demand is recognition of a Sovereign State in Bengal. Then and then only can Bengalis settle their own affairs.'

In a press statement on May 19, Moulana Akram Khan said, 'Muslim Bengal is positively against the division of Bengal. Partition of Bengal can be effected only on the corpses of the Muslims of Bengal. I will not support any proposal that was not in consonance with the scheme outlined in the Lahore Resolution.'

Mr. Gandhi left Patna on the 7th of May, 1946, for Calcutta. He reached Calcutta on the 9th. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose saw him on the day Gandhijee arrived at Sodepur Asram. Mr. Bose took me to Mr. Gandhi on the 10th of May. Our interview with Mr. Gandhi has been reported in the second volume of Mr. Pyarelal's Book, 'Mahatma Gandhi--the last phase'. Pyarelal writes:

"Sarat Chandra Bose called on the day Gandhijee arrived at Sodepur Asram. Next day he brought Abul Hashim, the Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League. The latter, to Gandhijee's agreeable surprise, based his case for United Bengal on the ground of 'common language, common culture and common history that united the Hindus and Muslims alike'. Whether Hindu or Muslim, a Bengali was a Bengali; both had an equal abhorrence of being ruled by Pakistanis from over a thousand miles away. This belated admission on the part of one who as a staunch supporter of Pakistan, was opposed to the unity of India, did not induce in Gandhijee a feeling of easy optimism. Warily he asked the League Secretary whether they had not been ruled over by the Britisher from across seven thousand miles in the past. And when the League Secretary reiterated his objection to the Bengalis being ruled by the

Pakistanis from the West, he returned to the charge and asked him whether there would be any objection to their going to Pakistan, if, instead of incorporation, Pakistan invited them to enter into a voluntary federation for the propagation of 'Islamic culture and religion'. To this Abul Hashim vouchsafed no reply.

Gandhijee resumed the argument. Since Bengal's common culture as embodied in Tagore, to which the League Secretary had referred, had its roots in the philosophy of Upanishads, which was the common heritage not only of Bengal but of the whole of India, would sovereign Bengal contemplate entering into a 'voluntary association' with the rest of India; again the League Secretary kept silence. A part answer, however, was furnished by the Chief Minister of Bengal on the 15th May. In reply to a question at a Press Conference at Delhi, as to whether united Bengal would agree to join the Indian Union, he stated that on all vital matters affecting Bengal and the Indian Union in common, it should be possible to come to some understanding or arrangement, 'call it treaty or whatever you will'. (P. 180)

Mr. Pyarelal writes,

"On the following day, the 11th May, Shaheed Suhrawardy accompanied by Mohammad Ali, Minister for Finance in the Bengal Cabinet (later Prime Minister of Pakistan), and Abul Hashim, the Bengal League Secretary, came to Gandhijee to discuss with him the question of Sovereign Bengal. Gandhijee tried to impress upon Shaheed the need for a thorough and genuine change of heart. It must show in his own conduct and in the conduct of his administration if he expected his profession to be taken seriously by the Hindus. But the Bengal Premier maintained instead that peace already reigned in Calcutta and none could accuse the Bengal Government of being guilty of any injustice. He lost his temper when Gandhijee told him that as the head of the administration he was morally responsible for every death that had occurred in Bengal and in return accused

Gandhijee of being the author of the whole trouble. 'What a curious man', later remarked Gandhijee. It matters nothing to him what he says. He wants people to trust him because he says the new Bengal which he wants to build assures to communities equal treatment. But the future is the child of the present. If what is happening in Calcutta today in an earnest of things to come, it does not bode well for his plan'.

When Suhrawardy left the room, Mr. Gandhi said to me, 'Hashim, the difficulty is that no one trusts Suhrawardy'.

Mr. Gandhi on his way to Calcutta from Bihar addressed a letter to Lord Mountbatten on the 8th of May and the letter was dropped from a way-side station. Mr. Gandhi wrote:

'It stikes me that I should summarise what I said and wanted to say and left unfinished for want of time at our last Sunday's meeting.

1. Whatever may be said to the contrary, it would be a blunder of the first magnitude for the British to be party in any way whatsoever to the division of India. If it has to come, let it come after the British withdrawal, as a result of understanding between the partes or an armed conflict which according to Quaide-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah is taboo. Protection of minorities can be guaranteed by establishing a court of arbitration in the event of difference of opinion among contending parties.

2. Meanwhile the Interim Government should be composed either of congressmen or those whose names the Congress chooses or of Muslim League men or those whom the League chooses. The dual control of today, lacking team work and team spirit, is harmful for the country. The parties-exhaust themselves in the effort to retain their seats and to placate you. Want of team spirit demoralises the Government and imperils the integrity of the services so essential for good and efficient government.

3. Referendum at this stage in the Frontier (or any province for that matter) is a dangerous thing in itself. You have to deal with the material that faces you. In any case nothing should or can be done over Dr. Khan Saheb's head as Premier. Note that this paragraph is relevant only if division is at all to be countenanced.

4. I feel sure that partition of the Punjab and Bengal is wrong in every case and a needless irritant for the League. This as well as all innovations can come after the British withdrawal, not before, except for mutual

agreement. Whilst the British power is functioning in India, it must be held principally responsible for the preservation of peace in the country. That machine seems to be cracking under the existing strain which is caused by the raising of various hopes that cannot or must not be fulfilled. These have no place during the remaining thirteen months. This period can be most profitably shortened if the minds of all are focussed on the sole task of withdrawal. You and you alone can do it to the British occupation is concerned.

5. Your task as undisputed master of naval warfare, great as it was, was nothing compared to what you are called to do now. The singlemindedness and clarity that gave you success are much more required in this work.

6. If you are not to leave a legacy of chaos behind, you have to make your choice and leave the Government of the whole of India including the States to one party. The Constituent Assembly has to provide for the governance even of that part of India which is not represented by the Muslim League or some states.

7. Non-partition of the Punjab and Bengal does not mean that the minorities in these Provinces are to be neglected. In both the Provinces they are large and powerful enough to arrest and demand attention. If the popular Governments cannot placate

them, the Governors should during the interregnum actively interfere.

8. The intransmissibility of paramountcy is a vicious doctrine, if it means that they can become sovereign and a menace for independent India. All the power whenever exercised by the British in India must automatically descend to its successor. Thus the people of the States become as much part of Independent India as the people of British India. The present princes are puppets created or tolerated for the upkeep and prestige of the British power. The unchecked powers exercised by them over their people is probably the worst blot on the British Crown. The princes under the new regime can exercise only such powers as trustees can and as can be given to them by the constituent assembly. It follows that they cannot maintain private Armies or Arms Factories. Such ability and statecraft as they possess must be at the disposal of the republic and must be used for the good of their people and the people as a whole. I have merely stated what should be done with the states. It is not for me to show in this letter how this can be done!

9. Similarly, difficult but not so baffling is the question of Civil Service. Its members should be taught from now to accommodate themselves to the new regime. They may not be partisans taking sides. The slightest trace of communalism among them should be severely dealt with. The English element in it should know that they owe loyalty to the new regime than to the old and therefore to Great Britain. The habit of regarding themselves as rulers and, therefore, superiors must give place to the spirit of true service of the people'. (Pyarelal P. 171-72).

The meetings of the joint Committee of the Congress and the Muslim League were held at Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose's place at No 1, Woodburn Park. It appears from the diary of Mr. Bose that during the day Mr. Bose frequently consulted his Hindu friends. The Committee completed its task on the 19th of May,

1947. On the 20th Mr. Bose convened a conference at his residence and entertained all the members of the conference with a sumptuous dinner. In this conference the draft constitution prepared for the Interim Government of Sovereign Bengal was signed after dinner. On the 23rd of May Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose sent a letter to Mr. Gandhi through Mr. Deben Dey. Mr. Bose wrote:

My dear Mahatmajee,

Since you left Calcutta I have had several Conferences which were attended by some Muslim League leaders and Kiran and Satya Babu and important developments have taken place. Last Tuesday evening (20th instant), there was a conference in my house which was attended by Suhrawardy, Fazlur Rahman (Minister), Mohammad Ali, (Minister), Abul Hashim (Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League, now on leave), Abdul Malik (Member, Bengal Legislative Assembly representing Labour), Kiran and Satya Babu. We arrived at a tentative agreement, copy of which is enclosed herewith for your consideration. For purposes of identification, it was signed by Abul Hashim and myself in the presence of the others. It will, of course, have to be placed before the Congress and Muslim League Organisations. From the trend of the discussions we had, it seems to me that so far as the Congress and Muslim League Organisations in Bengal are concerned, the tentative agreement will be ratified by them, possibly with some modifications here and there. I am most anxious to have your reactions and also your help, advice, and guidance in giving final shape to the tentative agreement arrived at. I need not repeat what I told you at Sodepur. I still feel that if with your help, advice and guidance the two Organisations can arrive at a final agreement on the lines of the tentative agreement, we shall solve Bengal's problems and at the same time, Assam's. It may also have a very healthy reaction on the rest of India. If you want me to come to Delhi to

discuss matters further with you, I need hardly say that I shali come as soon as I get your message. Things are moving rapidly and, speaking for myself, I feel that further discussions with you are most necessary.

I trust your Bihar tour is putting your health to a great strain. I am feeling somewhat better. With pronams,

Yours affectionately,
Mahatma Gundhi. *Sd. Sarat Chandra Bose.*

The following is the text of the tentative agreement signed by Sarat Chandra Bose and Myself:

1. Bengal will be a free State. The free State of Bengal will decide its relations with the rest of India.

2. The Constitution of the free Bengal will provide for election to the Bengal Legislature on the basis of joint electorate and adult franchise, with reservation of seats proportionate to the population amongst Hindus and Muslims. The seats as between Hindus and scheduled castes Hindus will be distributed amongst them in proportion to their respective population or in such manner as may be agreed among them. The Constituencies will be multiple Constituencies and votes will be distributed and not cumulative. A candidate who gets the majority of the votes of his own community cast during election and 25% of the votes of the other communities so cast will be declared elected. If no candidate satisfies these conditions, that candidate who gets the largest number of votes of his own community will be elected.

3. On the announcement by His Majesty's Government that the proposal of the free State of Bengal has been accepted and that Bengal will not be partitioned, the present Bengal Ministry will be dissolved and a new Interim Ministry brought into being consisting of an equal members of Muslims and Hindus (including scheduled castes Hindus) but excluding the Chief

Minister. In this Ministry the Chief Minister will be a Muslim and the Home Minister a Hindu.

4. Pending the final emergence of a Legislature and a Ministry under the new Constitution, the Hindus (including scheduled castes Hindus) and the Muslims will have an equal share in the services including Military and Police. The services will be manned by Bengalis.

5. A Constituent Assembly composed of 30 persons, 16 Muslims and 14 Hindus, will be elected by Muslim and non-Muslim members of the Legislature respectively, excluding the Europeans.

*1, Woodburn Park,
Calcutta,
20th May, 1947.*

*Sd. Sarat Chandra Bose
Sd. Abul Hashim,*

I reply to Mr. Bose's letter dated 23rd May Mr. Gandhi on 24th of May wrote from Patna:

My dear Sarat,

I have your note. There is nothing in the draft stipulating that nothing will be done by mere majority. Every act of Government must carry with it the co-operation of at least two thirds of Hindu members in the Executive and Legislative. There should be an admission that Bengal has common culture and common mother tongue-Bengali. Make sure that the Central Muslim League approves of the proposal notwithstanding reports to the contrary. If your presence is necessary in Delhi I shall telephone or telegraph. I propose to discuss the draft with the working Committee.

*Yours
'Bapu'*

On the 26th of May, 1947 in reply to Mr. Gandhi's letter Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose wrote:

'My dear Mahatmajee,

I am very grateful for the suggestions contained in your note of the 24th instant which was handed over to me by Deben yesterday. We have been discussing the terms almost every day and trying to improve upon them. Day before yesterday, I had a long discussion with Kiran and some members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. Last night had a discussion with Abul Hashim and Satya Babu. As a result of the discussion, I have redrafted paragraph 1 and 2 of the terms and forwarded them to Shaheed this morning. I enclose copies of re-drafted paragraphs 1 and 2 herewith for your consideration.

As regards your suggestions that every act of Government must carry with it the co-operation of at least two thirds of Hindu members of the Executive and Legislature, I have not been able to discuss the matter with Shaheed. He is leaving for Delhi this afternoon by air. If I come to Delhi, I shall discuss with him there. If, in the meantime, he sees you, you may put the matter before him and ask for his reactions.

As regards your suggestion that there should be an admission that Bengal has common culture and common mother tongue--Bengali the discussions I initiated in January last and have been carrying on since then have been on the basis that Bengal has common culture and common mother tongue--a basis agreed to by all the parties to the discussions. In one of Shaheed's statements made last month, he made that admission. There should, therefore, be no difficulty in incorporating the admission in the terms.

So long today, with pronams.

*Mohatma Gandhi,
New Delhi.*

*Your affectionately,
Sd Sarat Chandra Bose.*

P.S. Shaheed and Fazlur Rahman will discuss the terms with Jinnah and his Working Committee. From the conversations I have with them, I have gathered that if the Congress and the Muslim League in Bengal could come to an agreement, Jinnah may not stand in the way.

On the 9th of June, 1947, Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose addressed a letter to Mr. Jinnah. Mr. Bose wrote:

My dear Jinnah,

I have to thank you most sincerely for your courtesy and cordiality towards me and for the consideration you gave to my suggestions. Bengal is passing through the greatest crisis in her history, but she can yet be saved. She can be saved if you will kindly give the following instructions to Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly:

(i) At the meeting to be held of all members of the Legislative Assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision will be taken on the issue as to which Constituent Assembly the Province as a whole would join if it were subsequently decided by the two parts to remain united, to vote neither for the Hindustan Constituent Assembly, nor for the Pakistan Constituent Assembly and to make it clear by a statement in the Assembly or in the press or otherwise that they are solidly in favour of Bengal having a Constituent Assembly of her own.

(ii) At the meetings of the members of the two parts of the Legislative Assembly sitting separately and empowered to vote whether or not the province should be partitioned, to vote solidly against partition.

The request I am making to you is in accordance with the views you expressed to me when we met. But it seems to me that if you merely express your views to your members and not give them specific instruction as to how to vote, the situation cannot be saved. I hope you will do all in your power to enable Bengal remain united and to make her a free and independent state.

If Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly vote solidly as suggested in paragraphs (i) and (ii) above, I think Lord Mountbatten will be compelled to convene another meeting of all members of the Assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision can be taken on the issue as to whether the Province as a whole desires to have a Constituent Assembly of her own.

I shall be coming to Delhi again on the 13th or 14th and shall call on you on the 14th or 15th.

Thanking you and with kind regards.

Quaid-e-Azam M.A. Jinnah,

Barister-at-Law,

10, Aurangzeb Road,

Yours sincerely,

Sd.Sarat Chandra Bose

New Delhi.

Mr. Jinnah sent instructions to the Muslim Legislators to vote solidly for Pakistan and to vote against partition of Bengal. Mr. Jinnah wanted the whole of Bengal in Pakistan and the Congress wanted half of Bengal in the Indian Union. Accordingly, the Congress High Command sent instructions to the Hindu Legislators of Bengal to vote for partition of Bengal. In the meantime the Hindu leaders alleged that the Muslim League started bribing members of Bengal Legislatures to vote against partition of Bengal. Mr. Gandhi believed this. On the 9th of June, 1947 Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose sent the following telegram to Mr. Gandhi at Bhangi Colony, New Delhi:

'Request you publicly disclose names of your informants and details of information regarding money being spent like water to buy votes for united Bengal and hold enquiry to ascertain truth. If information false punish informants, if information true punish bribegivers and bribe takers.

Sarat Bose'

On the 10th of June Mr. Gandhi telegraphically replied to Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose's telegram. Mr. Gandhi wrote:

'Received angry wire. Anger unworthy. Wrote Sunday. Must not publish names. How bribegivers and takers be punished by private persons except bar public opinion be calm and steadfast--Bapu'

On the 11th of June Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose sent to Mr. Gandhi the following telegram:

'No anger in me or in my wire; only a request. Did not expect you give currency rumours before ascertaining truth stop awaiting your letter, shall not publish names without your consent.'

Sarat Chandra Bose'

Before the exchange of telegrams mentioned above Mr. Gandhi wrote to Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose on the 8th of June 1947:

'My dear Sarat,

I have gone through your draft. I have now discussed the scheme roughly with Pundit Nehru and Sardar. Both of them are dead against the proposal and they are of opinion that it is merely a trick for dividing Hindus and Scheduled Caste leaders. With them it is not a suspicion but almost a conviction. They feel also that money is being lavishly expended in order to secure Schedule Caste votes. If such is the case you should give up the struggle at least at present. For the unity purchased by corrupt practices, would be worse than a frank partition, it being a recognition of the established division of hearts and the unfortunate experiences of Hindus. I see also that there is no prospect of a transfer of power outside the two parts of India. Therefore, whatever arrangement is come to, has to be arrived at by a previous agreement between the Congress and the League.

This as far as I can see, you cannot obtain. Nevertheless, I would not shake your faith unless it is founded on shifting sand consisting of corrupt practices and trickery alluded to above. If you are absolutely sure that there is no warrant whatsoever for the suspicion and unless you get the written assurance of the local Muslim League supported by the Centre, you should give up the struggle for unity of Bengal and cease to disturb the atmosphere that has been created for partition of Bengal.

*Lovingly,
Bapu'.*

The 3rd of June, 1947 was fixed for meetings of Council of the All India Muslim League and the All India Congress Committee for consideration of Lord Mountbatten's final dispensation of partition of India, Bengal and the Punjab. The meetings were held at Delhi. The meetings of the Council of all India Muslim League was held at the Imperial Hotel at Delhi at 10 a.m.

A few days before leaving for Delhi members of the Council of the All India Muslim League representing Bengal met at Mr. Suhrawardy's place. They decided unanimously to oppose the official resolution of the Muslim League if it accepted Lord Mountbatten's dispensation. After the meeting Mr. Suhrawardy left Calcutta for Delhi by plane to discuss the problems with Lord Mountbatten and Mr. Jinnah Bengal delegates left Calcutta for Delhi by train. I left Calcutta by air for Delhi on the 2nd of June.

At Palam Airport Mr. Abdul Jabbar Khaddar of Noakhali received me and he informed me that Mr. Suhrawardy called a meeting at his place at Delhi and he persuaded Bengal delegates to support Mr. Jinnah's resolution. When I heard this from Mr. Khaddar the tragedy of Palasi flashed inwardly before my eyes. Next morning I left my hotel for the Imperial Hotel to attend the meeting of the Council.

According to our previous negotiations Muslim majority provinces of India like the Punjab and Sindh and even Mr. Jinnah's province Bombay agreed to support Bengal. At the approach of the Imperial Hotel thousands of Muslim youngmen from the minority provinces of India lined up; when they saw me they shouted, 'They have all betrayed us, you are now our only hope'. I heard their lamentation but was helpless.

The meeting was held on the first floor. Near the entrance of the Hall I saw Mr. Suhrawardy. I asked him. 'Are you going to move the official resolution?' He said, 'No, Hashim, they have not asked me to do so; but I may have to speak something for it, for the alternative is ghastly'.

As soon as Mr. Jinnah came to the microphone and read his resolution, the Khaksars armed with belchas attacked the meeting Hall from two sides, from the front and from the rear through the kitchen. I sat quietly in my chair smoking my cigarette all the time apprehending fatal blows of belchas on my head. The front of the Hall was guarded by Bengal Volunteers and the Baluch and the rear was guarded by the Punjabis. The Khaksars were successfully repelled but the floor of the Imperial Hotel was strewn with fresh blood of the Khaksars. It may be recalled that on the 23rd March, 1940, when we adopted Pakistan Resolution, Sir Sikendar Hayat Khan's police opened fire on a big Khaksar demonstration; thus the beginning and end of the so-called Pakistan Resolution was marked by the blood of the Khaksars.

Mr. Jinnah moved his resolution. Moulana Hasrat Mohani and I attempted to speak on the resolution, but Mr. Jinnah did not call us to the platform. Then the house wanted to hear us. Mr. Jinnah said, 'If I allow Mr. Abul Hashim to speak, I have to set up ten first class speakers to neutralise the effect that he would create; I have no time for that. What is there to discuss, partition of Bengal and the Punjab? This must be taken as a settled fact.

You must accept Mountbatten's dispensation as a whole or reject it as a whole. Say, yes or no'.

There was a voting by raising of hands. Mr. Suhrawardy counted the votes and with the air of a victor he said, 'Quaid-e-Azam, only eleven votes against us'. The official resolution was carried. On the 7th of June Mr. Suhrawardy in a statement to the press said, 'Dacca is now in Pakistan'.

In the evening of 3rd of June, I issued a statement to the press. I said, 'The decision of the Council of the Muslim League is the result of three fears. First, habitual fear of Mr. Jinnah, secondly, fear of an uncertain future and thirdly, fear of their uncertain status in Pakistan if they incurred the displeasure of Mr. Jinnah'. Commenting on my statement the Dawn came out with a leading article under the caption 'A snake in the grass'. The Dawn called me a snake in the grass.

Thus the famous resolution of 1940 was thrown unceremoniously into the Arabian Sea and Mr. Jinnah accepted unhesitatingly a Pakistan which he once characterised as a truncated, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan. The Indian National Congress which persistently opposed partition of India, agreed to partition of India and partition of Bengal and the Punjab on communal basis.

On the 14th June Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose wrote to Mr. Gandhi the following letter:

'My dear Mahatmajee,

Your kind letter of the 8th instant was to hand yesterday afternoon. I note that both Jawaharlal and Ballav Bhai are dead against the proposal. As regards their opinion that it is merely a trick for dividing Hindus and Scheduled Castes leaders, I cannot subscribe to it. Having had conversation with some Muslim League leaders in and from January last and subsequently with some Congress Leaders, I can say definitely and emphatically

that there was nothing in the nature of trickery. I am unable to understand what Jawaharlal and Ballav Bhai mean by saying that they feel that money is being lavishly expended in order to secure Schedule Caste votes. It is possible to deal with facts but not with mere feeling or suspicion. I must say, however, that the feeling or suspicion that money is being expended to secure Scheduled Caste votes is entirely baseless. My faith remains unshaken and I propose to work in my own humble way for the unity of Bengal. Even after the raging and tearing campaign that has been carried on in favour of partition. I have not the slightest doubt that if a referendum were taken, the Hindus of Bengal by a large majority would vote against partition. The voice of Bengal has been stifled for the moment, but I have every hope that it will assert itself.

With pronams.

Yours affectionately,

*Mahatma Gandhi,
New Delhi.*

Sd.Sarat Chandra Bose'

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose addressed another letter to Mr. Gandhi in which he said:

'It grieves me to find that the Congress which was once a great National Organisation is fast becoming an organisation of Hindus only.'

Writing on the 11th February, 1950 under the shadow of a great personal bereavement; Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, as Chairman of Editorial Board, the Nation, wrote:

'I appealed to my brother Bengalis in East and West Bengal for peace, for peace with honour to prudence, honour to sobriety, honour to sanity. I appealed to them in the name of all that was sacred, in the name of Bengals' past, in the name of the comradeship that was and will remain, in the name of humanity

to abjure the cult of violence, restore sobriety and sanity and to re-establish communal peace and harmony. I asked them not to look either Delhi way or Karachi way, for light would not come from there. I asked them to be guided by the light that was within them'.

On the 20th of June, a joint meeting of the Legislatures of Bengal was held at the Assembly Chamber. The joint meeting voted for joining Pakistan. Fifteen minutes after this two meetings were held, one of the Legislators of Hindu majority area of Bengal and the other of the Legislators of Muslim majority area of Bengal. The Muslim Majority area voted against partition of Bengal and the Hindu majority area voted for partition of Bengal. Bengal was partitioned. Communist Party members voted for partition.

The Communist Party voted for partition of Bengal but in the Sylhet plebiscite, they voted against secession of Sylhet from Assam. When the verdict of the plebiscite was in favour of seccssion of Sylhet from Assam, the Communist Party demanded that the Hindu majority thanas of Sylhet should secede from Sylhet and be merged with Assam.

On the 5th of August two meetings were held under the Presidency of Mr. Chundrigarh. In the meeting of the Legislators of East Pakistan Mr. Suhrawardy contested Khwaja Nazimuddin for the leadership of the Parliamentary Party of East Pakistan. Mr. Suhrawardy was defeated. Khwaja Nazimuddin secured 75 votes and Mr. Suhrawardy secured 39 votes only. Mr. Suhrawardy immediately after his defeat rushed into the room, with Mr. Abdur Rahman of Bashirhat, where West Bengal members of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party sat to elect their leader. Mr. Abdur Rahman proposed Mr. Suhrawardy's name. Mr. Suhrawardy was elected leader of West Bengal Muslim League Parliamentary Party. This was a sight for the gods to see. A man who a moment ago decided to

migrate to Pakistan and aspired to be the Chief Minister of East Pakistan got his name proposed for the leadership of Muslim League Parliamentary Party of West Bengal.

The Indian Union came into existence as an Independent and Sovereign State on the 15th of August, 1947. Mr. Rajagopal Achariya was appointed the first Governor of West Bengal. In the morning of 15th August the Indian National Flag was hoisted on the Government House and Mr. Rajagopal Achariya was installed as Governor of West Bengal. We attended the ceremony.

Mr. Gandhi was present in Calcutta. In the afternoon I saw him at his Sodepur Asram. Mr. Deven Dey was with me. When we entered Mr. Gandhi's room he stretched his long hand to shake hands with me and laughed heartily. He said, 'Hashim, you are defeated'. I thought he referred to Mr. Suhrawardy's defeat in the election for the leadership of the Parliamentary Party of East Pakistan. Mr. Gandhi said, 'No, no, that is a trivial matter. You could not resist partition of Bengal. this is your defeat, but I assure you that you could succeed if you had not lost your vision.' By 1947 I became almost completely blind. Here he referred to the loss of my eyesight.

Mr. Gandhi sat, as usual, on a simple cane-mat. The world thought that the day was the day of victory of Mr. Gandhi's life-long struggle for independence. But with sighs he expressed his deep frustration. He said, "The world knows Sardar Patel is my 'yes-man'. but these days he says 'no' to everything I say; Babu Rajendra Prasad goes out with me in my morning walk but when I come back to my Asram I feel as though, we shall never meet again; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is really a jawahar but at times, in sentiment and emotion he makes utterances which he should not do. But he has the courage to admit his mistakes, if he is convinced otherwise. How long shall I live to see these

things'. He did not live long after. He was assassinated on Friday, the 30th January, 1948.

Mr. Gandhi's lieutenants like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad etc, never accepted Mr. Gandhi's ideals, but they utilised him as a leader for promoting their ambition. This Mr. Gandhi deeply realised and here was the defeat of his life-long struggle. In conclusion of our talks I asked Mr Gandhi what would be his attitude if today Mr. Jinnah offered him his fourteen points as an alternative to Pakistan. He said, 'Hashim, I shall jump at it.' In a respectable and humble voice I remarked, 'Mahatmajee, you must then admit that you could not visualise the 15th of August, 1947 when you rejected Mr. Jinnah's fourteen points.'

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Mr. Jinnah's 14 Points

Decisions taken in the Muslim All-Parties Conferences at Delhi on 31 December 1928, under presidency of H. H. The Aga Khan.

1. The Government of India should be federal.
2. Residuary power to vest in the Provinces and States.
3. Any Bill opposed by three-fourth members of any community present shall not be proceeded with.
4. Right of separate electorates of Muslims to remain intact till they themselves give it up.
5. One-third representation of Muslim members in the Central Legislature.
6. Retention of the present basis of representation in the provinces where the Muslims are in a minority.
7. No majority to be converted into minority or equality.
8. Reforms be introduced in Baluchistan and in the N.W.F.P.
9. Separation of Sind.
10. Reservation for the Muslims in the services.
11. Protection of Muslim culture, language, religion and education, personal laws and waqaf.
12. Proper representation of Muslims in Education Department of the Government.
13. No changes in the Constitution of India to be brought about without the willing consent of the provinces.
14. No change in the Constitution of India to be brought about without the willing consent of the Indian States.

These 14 points were accepted by the Muslim League Conference in March 1929 held in Delhi and were later described by Hindu Press as "Mr. Jinnah's Fourteen Points".

Appendix 2

The Lahore Resolution 1940

(The Lahore Resolution, officially known as Pakistan Resolution, as moved in the India Muslim League Council on March 23 and adopted on March 24, 1940 at Lahore. Mover: Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huq of Bengal).

1. "While approving and endorsing the action taken by the Council, and the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League as indicated in their resolutions dated the 27th of August, 17th and 18th of September and 22nd of October 1939 and 3rd. of February 1940 on the constitutional issue, this session of the All-India Muslim League emphatically re-iterates that the scheme of Federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 is totally unsuited to and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.

2. "It further records its emphatic view that while the declaration dated the 18th. of October 1939 made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government is re-assuring in so far as it declares that the policy and plan, on which the Government of India Act 1935, is based, will be reconsidered in consultation with the various parties, interests, and communities in India; Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered de novo and that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent.

3. "Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be

workable in this country or acceptable to Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz. that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states in which constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

"That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in these units and in these regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them; and in other parts of India where the Musalmans are in a minority adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

"This session further authorises the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles; providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary".

Appendix 3

LET US GO TO WAR

Abul Hashim

(Statement issued to the Press on the 6th September, 1945).

Quaid-i-Azam Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah on behalf of the All India Muslim League declares that the ensuing General Election of the Central and Provincial Legislatures of India will be taken as a plebiscite of the Muslims of India on Pakistan and the working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League in its meeting on the 1st. August, 1945 adopted a resolution to this effect. Major Attlee's Labour Government on behalf of the British Imperialism has accepted this challenge.

We claim that the All-India Muslim League is the only representative organisation of the ten crore muslims of India and that the now-famous resolution of the All India Muslim League passed in its 1940 Session at Lahore which is generally known as the "Pakistan Scheme" represents the views of Muslim India. Representatives of the British Imperialism never unequivocally admitted this--and the Congress, Mahashaba, etc. in India violently contested our claim. They held that besides the Muslim League there were hundred other representative organisations of the Muslims of India--like the Ahrars, Khaksars and Jamietul Ulema and that the Pakistan Scheme represented initially the views of Mr. Jinnah and some of his friends of the Working Committee of the Muslim League. Mr. Gandhi in one of his letters to Mr. Jinnah said this in so many words. Subsequently

the Congress described the Muslim League as a Communal Organisation of some section of Muslim India and the Pakistan Scheme as the Communal demand of that section of Muslim India whom according to them the Muslim League represents. But the Phenomenal development of the League Organisation in India, its meetings, demonstrations and above all its hundred per cent success in the by-elections of the central and provincial Legislatures in India during the past eight years have gone a long way to convince those who are concerned with the Indian politics that the Muslim League and the Muslim League alone can deliver the goods on behalf of Muslim India. And the Pakistan Scheme of the All India Muslim League faithfully represents the views of the entire body of the Muslims of India. In fact the Cripps Proposals which formed the basis of the negotiations between Great Britain and India and Mr. Rajagopal Acharya's Scheme which formed the basis of negotiations between the Congress and the Muslim League betray indirect acceptance of the claims of the Muslim League and acceptance of the basic principle of Pakistan; although both Rajaji and Sir Strafford Cripps in their own way made clever efforts to sabotage the Lahore Resolution by introducing various anti-Pakistan elements in their schemes.

After the failure of the Simla Talks the Congress has very unfortunately taken up its own old attitude completely ignoring and closing eyes upon hard realities of the Indian politics. They have started the same old propaganda against the League and its Pakistan Scheme. They are now attempting an all-out bid for liquidating the League and its claims to arrogate to themselves the leadership of the whole of India irrespective of caste, colour and creed, and their agents and missionaries sent abroad are trying to canvass public opinion in U.S.S.R, Great Britain and the United States of America with a view to influencing effectively M. Stalin, Major Attlee and Mr. Truman-in the hope of getting a decree in their favour from Potsdam.

In these days the ballot box is the only medium through which the public opinion can be ascertained with the greatest possible accuracy. The Muslim League, therefore, as the organisation of the plain blunt Muslims who are not addicted to clever machinations have straight-way demanded general election in India and have declared that they would take this election as a plebiscite on Pakistan and a plebiscite on their claim to represent the whole of Muslim India. His Majesty's Govt. have decided to hold election in the next winter. We, are therefore, in the midst of a war as the General Election is going to be the first pitched battle for Pakistan with the enemies of Muslim India.

The Bengal Provincial Muslim League is making necessary preliminary preparations for fighting this battle. We have to marshal and mobilise our resources for winning this war. The Bengal Provincial Muslim League represents thirtyfive millions of Muslims of Bengal and it was now on record over ten lacs of members. In such a democratic organisation as this it is quite natural that there will be difference of opinion among its leaders, workers, members and supporters. I appeal to all in all sincerity and earnestness to bundle up all their differences and to preserve them if necessary in cold storage during the pendency of our common struggle. Our internecine conflict either for power, personal likes or dislikes or for anything for the matter of that at this juncture would be suicidal. The result of the coming General Election shall have far reaching consequences and for sometime the destiny of India shall be determined by it.

Whatever the Congress may think about itself or may like others to think about it the fact remains as clear as the bright mid-day sun that it does not represent the Muslims. The few Muslims still attached to the Congress are keeping their allegiance to it either due to their deep rooted conservatism which makes them unable to keep pace with the rapid progress and development of political thinking or to serve their personal ends. They have no

representative capacity as they represent none but themselves. With due respect to Moulana Abul Kalam Azad his presidency of the Congress is a political camouflage, a carefully devised design for deceiving those who are not fully acquainted with the politics of India.

Immediately after the Gandhi-Jinnah Talks faithfully echoing the sentiments of Muslim India the Quaid-i-Azam declared that our struggle for Pakistan was not directed against any political party but was directed towards the liquidation of the British Imperialism in India. Immediately after the Simla breakdown he also appealed to the Congress to make fresh attempts to arrive at settlement with the League leaving the Viceroy and such other accredited representatives of the British Imperialism alone. But the Congress had not the goodness to make a suitable response. As it often happens with persons highly intoxicated with lust for power and domination the Congress leaders took this gesture of the Quaid-i-Azam as a sign of weakness and declared war against the League from the summer Capital of India. Our struggle with the Congress would therefore be defensive, although our struggle for Pakistan is not initially directed against the Congress but towards the liquidation of British Imperialism. The Congress in their wisdom have forced us to enter into a struggle with them. The result of the General Election will set at rest once for all the controversies about the representative character of the League and the Congress.

In this war of ours in spite of all of our differences legitimate or otherwise, ideological or personal, we must unite. As a first step, in order to avoid all possible chances and apprehensions of disruption in our own army the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League in its meeting of the 27th August, 1935 passed a resolution suspending all elections for reconstituting the Union, the sub-Division, the District and the Provincial Leagues till the declaration of the result of the

elections of the Central and Provincial Legislatures. I am summoning the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League among other things to elect members of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League Parliamentary Board. It does not require much wisdom to understand that our winning this General Election would much depend upon the composition of the Parliamentary Board. I, therefore, warn the gentlemen of the Council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League from now not to allow personal interest to overpower their sense of patriotism.

Quaid-i-Azam Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah wants us to send a first class team to the Legislatures. During the last eight years of Provincial Autonomy we have had enough experience of a bad and unreliable team. We can only select the right type of men if we can constitute a Parliamentary Board which would, while nominating the candidates for the legislatures have no other consideration than honesty, integrity and efficiency. The personnel of the Parliamentary Board be such as may inspire confidence amongst the people.

We are receiving information from everywhere that prospective candidates for the legislatures have already started canvassing votes for themselves. Some in order to scare away their probable rivals are spreading rumours to the effect that they have already been nominated by the League for their respective constituencies. Persons responsible for this kind of propaganda, if they continue to behave like this shall be considered as the greatest enemies of the League. The Muslim League calls upon the people not to vote for any individual but to vote for the claims and the ideals of the League.

If the Parliamentary Board be honestly constituted it will take seriously into consideration local opinion in the matter of selecting the candidates. For so many years we have been shouting slogans--Muslim League Zindabad, Pakistan Zindabad and Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad. Now time, occasion and

opportunity have come for a real test of our loyalty to the League, its creed--the Pakistan, its Leader-Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. We must, therefore, be at the height of our patriotism.

I have every reason to believe that Muslim Bengal will rise united as one man to its full height and enter into the contest with the spirit of a Muslim Mujahid and shall emerge out of it successful earning the honour and dignity of a Gazi. Some are of opinion that the Muslim League will sweep the polls and score hundred per cent success. By the grace of God we hope so but we must guard ourselves against too much of complacency. Let us pray to God in all humility that He may bless us and at the same time let us do all we can to deserve His blessings. This is the proper Muslim way of thinking and doing things.

Pakistan means complete independence. They are the fools, dreamers, visionaries or the hypocrites who think that Pakistan can be achieved without the greatest imaginable struggle and sacrifice. It must be known clearly to every soldier of Pakistan that the way to Pakistan is harder than the way to Calvary.

Our poets and literateurs, artists and artisans, youths and students, landlords and peasants, ulema and laymen must answer to the clarion call of the great Leader of Muslim India, sink all their differences, forget the past, and pull all their resources for the winter struggle, the General Election of the Legislatures. Muslims as we are, our persons and property belong to God and it is mandatory to us to lay all our resources in the way of God if and when it is necessary. Those who have got money will place money necessary for the struggle at the disposal of the League with the spirit with which Hajrat Abu Bakr offered all his material resources to the Prophet for the battle of Mu'ta, those who have got facile pen will help us with their writings, those who have got powerful tongue will help us

with their persuasive eloquence. Youths and students will contribute their indefatigable energy.

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in his latest press statement made a stirring appeal to the muslims of India. Let us all give him a suitable response. A great organisation like the Muslim League can have no vengeance or malice against anybody and the League would welcome all who desire to come to its fold with honest and sincere purpose. Let them all who are still outside the League realise the gravity of the situation and join the League without further delay.

The Congress has plunged itself into a useless and unnecessary conflict with the League. Let us gallantly meet the challenge. Moulana Abul Kalam Azad has in his recent statement talked of territorial autonomy and the right to secede from the centre and has kindly promised to place his proposal to the All India Congress Committee. It is very kind of him indeed. But the Muslims of India are unfortunately for the Congress not just as foolish as they would like them to be. They can by the grace of God now see below the surface.

The Pakistan formula is very simple and corresponds with the realities of Indian Politics. The basis of Pakistan is real democracy, freedom, equity and justice and is opposed to imperial domination and economic exploitation which is the basis of the favourite, '*Akhand Bharat*' of the Congress.

Free India was never one country. Free Indians were never one nation. In the past India was *Akhand* under the domination of the Mouriya and the Mughals and is now *Akhand* under the domination of Great Britain. Liberated India must necessarily be, as God has made it, a subcontinent having complete independence for every nation inhabiting it. However, much weakness the Congress may have for the capitalists of Bombay and however, much they may desire by way of doing a good turn to them to open opportunities for exploiting the whole of

India under the cover of *Akhand Bharat*, Muslim India to a man will resist all attempts of the Congress to establish dictatorship in India of any coterie, group or organisation. Pakistan means freedom for all, Muslims and Hindus alike. And the Muslim of India are determined to achieve it if necessary, through a blood-bath. This, Congress ought to realise that when we Muslims talk of freedom and independence, we seriously mean it and Muslims of India are opposed to every kind of domination and exploitation- British or Indian. In Pakistan there will be just and equitable distribution of the rights and privileges of the state amongst all its citizens irrespective of caste, colour and creed. And it is not in the contemplation of the Muslims to reserve any advantage for themselves except their right to govern their own society according to the laws of the *Shariat*. It is untrue and mischievous to say that Pakistan means the domination of the Muslims and to say that Pakistan means opportunity for the Muslims to dominate and exploit others. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah on behalf of All India Muslim League has declared, "The (Pakistan) Government will have the sanction of the mass of the population of Pakistan and the Government will function with the will and the sanction of the entire body of the people of Pakistan irrespective of caste, creed or colour." (5th October, 1943.)

While appealing to the Muslims to join the army of the League and to fight its defensive war against the Congress I would warn them not to forget the now quiet and apparently indifferent imperialists of Delhi and London. We must not forget that the achievement of Pakistan lies in the ultimate liquidation of the British Imperialism. These Imperialists got scent of the Congress' lust for power and making proper use of it have carefully laid a trap for catching both the Congress and the League. At Simla liveried servants and officials and the sweet words of Marshall Wavell successfully drew the Congress into the trap. The Congress tried to have their 'straight forward'

soldier- Viceroy as their ally for beating the Muslims. Thanks to the Quid-i-Azam, he maintained the prestige and dignity of Muslim India and left Simla with his head high, and with the boldness and courage of an honest leader demanded General Election. The League has, therefore, appealed to the people and not to our white masters. We shall win Pakistan by the toils and sacrifices of our own people and not through the courtesy and benevolence of the British. Since we have taken our stand upon the solid rock of equity, justice and fairplay, since freedom and liberty and not domination and exploitation is the incentive of our struggle, by the grace of God we are going to win, if we are united. So unity, fraternity and liberty shall be the battlecry for our first war for Pakistan.

The head and the heart of the people as I have seen during my tour in Bengal are perfectly sound and they will not make any mistake unless the leaders at the top in their anxiety to secure their leadership create confusion in their minds. We therefore, must guard ourselves against this only possible source of disruption. We must never forget a moment that Pakistan is our end and a ministry under the Government of India Act of 1935 will be merely incidental. Whoever amongst the leaders will exhibit any tendency to secure his position from now in the future assembly either as a Minister or a Prime Minister shall be marked well and Muslim Bengal shall never forgive him.

The General Election is the beginning of our struggle. Immediately after recording our votes in favour of Pakistan at the polling centres, immediately after winning our plebiscite liquidating the false claims of the Congress to represent the Muslims we shall direct our attention towards British Imperialism and demand immediate transference of power to the peoples of India on the basis of Pakistan. Our battle is a battle for freedom for all and we hope and trust that every genuine freedom loving man and woman shall be with us.

We are going to fight the Congress but we don't feel quite happy about it as we never liked to consume any part of our energy in fighting the Congress, the Mahashaba or in fact any Indian people or organisation. Our battle is hundred per cent defensive. We did not like to fight the Congress, they unjustly and unfairly like the Fascist aggressors have forced war on us. Therefore, without malice, without vengeance, with complete faith in our ultimate victory, with heart within and God over head 'LET US GO TO WAR'.

Appendix 4

The Delhi Resolution 1946

(Text of the Resolution as adopted in the Legislators' Convention held at Anglo-Arabic College, Delhi, on April 9, 1946, popularly known as Delhi Resolution, Mover: Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy of Bengal).

"Whereas in this vast sub-continent of India 100 million Muslims are adherents of a Faith which regulates every department of their life, educational, social, economic and political, which is not confined merely to spiritual doctrines and tenets or rituals and ceremonies, and which stands in sharp contrast to the exclusive nature of the Hindu Dharma and Philosophy which has fostered and maintained for thousands of years a rigid caste system resulting in the degradation of 60 million human beings to the position of untouchables, creation of unnatural barriers between man and man and superimposition of social and economic inequalities on a large body of the people of the Country, and which threatens to reduce Muslims, Christians and other minorities to the status of irredeemable Helots, socially and economically;

"Whereas the Hindu Caste System is a direct negation of nationalism, equality, democracy and all the noble ideals that Islam stands for:

"Whereas different historical backgrounds, traditions, cultures, social and economic orders of the Hindus and the Muslims made

impossible the evolution of single Indian nation inspired by common aspirations and ideals and whereas after centuries they still remain two distinct major nations;

"Whereas soon after the introduction by the British of the policy of setting up political institutions in India on lines of Western Democracies based on a majority rule which means that the majority of the nation or society could impose its will on the majority of the other nation or society inspite of their opposition as amply demonstrated during the two and half years' regime of Congress Governments in the Hindu majority provinces under the Government of India Act 1935, when the Muslims were subjected to untold harassments and oppressions as a result of which they were convinced of the futility and ineffectiveness of the so called safeguards provided in the constitution and in the instrument of Instructions to the Governors and were driven to the irresistible conclusion that in a United India Federation, if established, the Muslims, even in Muslim majority provinces, could meet with no better fate and their rights and interests could never be adequately protected against the perpetual Hindu majority at the Centre;

"Whereas the Muslims are convinced that with a view to saving Muslim India from the domination of the Hindus and in order to afford them full scope to develop themselves according to their genius it is necessary to constitute a sovereign independent state comprising Bengal and Assam in the North East zone and the Punjab, North-West Frontier Provinces, Sind and Baluchistan in the North-West zone:

"This convention of the Muslim League Legislators of India Central and Provincial, after careful consideration hereby declares that the Muslim nation will never submit to any constitution for a United India and will never participate in any single constitution making machinery set up for the purpose, and any formula devised by the British Government for transferring

power from the British to the people of India, which does not conform to the following just and equitable principles calculated to maintain internal peace and tranquillity in the Country will not contribute to the solution of the Indian problem:

(1) That the Zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the North-East, and the Punjab, the NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan in the North-West of India, namely the Pakistan Zones, where the Muslims are a dominant majority, be constituted into one sovereign independent state and that an unequivocal undertaking be given to implement the establishment of Pakistan without delay.

(2) That two separate constitution making bodies be set up by the people of Pakistan and Hindustan for the purpose of framing their respective Constitutions.

(3) That the minorities in Pakistan and Hindustan be provided with safeguards on the line of the All India Muslim League Resolution passed on the 23rd March, 1940 at Lahore.

(4) That the acceptance of the Muslim League demand for Pakistan and its implementation without delay are the sine-qua-non for the Muslim League co-operation and participation in the formation of an interim Government at the Centre.

This convention further emphatically declares that any attempt to impose a constitution on a United India basis or to force any interim arrangement at the Centre, contrary to the Muslim demand, will leave the Muslims no alternative but to resist such imposition by all possible means for their survival and national existence.

Appendix 5

MOTIONS OF NO CONFIDENCE

Speech of Mr. Abul Hashim

Thursday, the 9th September, 1946 at 2 P.M.

Proceedings of Bengal Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, to-day I have decided not to enter into any acrimonious discussion or to make any attempt to apportion blame between the Hindus and the Muslims of Bengal having regard to what repercussion and reaction it may produce in future. I wonder if the motion of no-confidence tabled against the present Ministry should really be a motion against the present Ministry or against the Government of India Act of 1935 and its authors and their allies. I have no doubt as I have full confidence in the intelligence and power of understanding of our friends on the Congress Benches, that if they could rise above their own peculiar interest and could see things objectively and make an analysis of the grievances of the Muslims in a dispassionate attitude, they would have instead of bringing a motion of no-confidence against this Ministry, particularly against the Home Minister and the Chief Minister, the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy, brought a motion of confidence in him. It is a thousand pity because I have always, inspite of my difference with other parties and organisations of my country, maintained some respect and regard for my opponents-today when I hear from the Congress Benches one of our friends charging Mr. Suhrawardy for making the Commissioner of Police a scapegoat; I feel a thousand pity because in the ordinary courses of business one

could never expect the members of the Congress representing a great organisation which during recent years held aloft the torch of revolution and independence in India to say things like this and plead in defence of the bureaucratic machinery of the Government. Let me disabuse of my affiliation to the party I have the honour of belonging to, but as an honest and sincere man may I tell you, Sir, from what I feel at heart that it is my conviction that what has happened did happen not due to Mr. Suhrawardy or his Ministry but inspite of them. Let me in my own way place before you the causes that I think and feel, led to this horrible bloody carnage. Sir, in my humble opinion there cannot be a greater fool crawling upon the surface of the earth who can for a moment say that Sir Stafford Cripps and his colleagues I may say the world's greatest diplomats representing the nation which has been beating all other nations for centuries in diplomacy came to India to settle the Hindu Muslim question for the good of India. After the Sepoy Mutiny the British in India was consolidated and British Imperialism got the control over Indian business and Indian administration. Thereafter they were busy doing politics elsewhere in the middle East and Europe. But now when we Indians, are making serious efforts to achieve independence, when we are proceeding towards our goal, the time has come when England should do some politics here also. So, Sir Stafford Cripps and his colleagues came to India for doing politics and they have succeeded in their mission. It is to our utter shame that they have again succeeded and I lay stress on it so as to have the courage to be conscious of our own limitations. Sir, these diplomats came to India to deal with politics while here in India the Hindus and Muslims were quarrelling with each other, the great leaders of the Congress and the League alike were squarely beaten by Sir Stafford Cripps and his colleagues by their superior political intellect. Let this be admitted first, and then there will be no difficulty whatsoever in finding out who was responsible for this great killing, where the remedy lies and then do our work. We should never forget that British possessions in India are coloured red. The red colour on the map of India faded by our struggle of the

last forty years. Now they want to have a fresh coating of red by the blood of Hindus and Muslims alike. The Calcutta carnage is a beginning, and unless we strike a warning it will take place and the blood of Indians will put a fresh coating on the red colour of the map of India for another one hundred and fifty years or more. His Excellency Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India, if he really meant peace and tranquillity, unity and harmony among the people of India-unity between the Congress and the Muslim League, if he had taken a firm stand that he would not give favour to any party unless and until the Congress and the League came to an agreement, an agreement would have been possible long ago. The congress says that we are demanding communal favour and that the Hindu-Muslim disunity is something artificial created by the third power. It is a pity-a thousand pity-that today it has forgotten their power and the reason for what is happening between the Hindus and Muslims that one party will be bypassed by another and it is as a direct result of that the Calcutta disturbances followed. This had created an idea in the minds of the Muslims that they have been delivered to the Hindus and an impression has been created in the minds of the Hindus that they have got what they wanted.

It reminds me of that mighty personality of Bengal, Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee, that great patriot who was in fact the pioneer of freedom movement in India. He also inspite of his talents, intelligence, experience and sufferings, at the fag end of his life thought he got what he wanted after 1919. So I think also that our reverend Congress leaders whose sacrifices and sufferings will go down in history and for these sufferings the whole of India shall ever remain grateful to them, at the fag end of their life after having strenuous struggles for over 25 or 30 years, have now felt, as Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee had felt in Bengal, that they got what they wanted in the Interim Government. That is why when the Bombay Resolution of the Muslim League was adopted, Sardar Patel from that end of India declared that the direct action of the Muslim League was not against the British but was against the Congress and the Hindus. They declared that

British Imperialism was no more, that Great Britain had abdicated and Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and others were in possession of India; they were at the head of a sovereign state. This impression Pandit Nehru and others had created in the mind of everybody.

Now, Sir, I know that His Excellency the Viceroy has no control over the statements and utterances of big leaders of India, but, Sir, when Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel made utterances creating this false impression in the minds of the people of India that British Imperialism has abdicated, which is far from truth, the Viceroy should not have sat silent over the whole affairs. His conspicuous silence over the statements for weeks led to the belief that really what Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel had said had come true after the Bombay Resolution was adopted. His Excellency the Viceroy summoned a meeting of Governors of the provinces. It was not, I believe, merely for the fun of it. That has also a political background.

Here in Calcutta today we find our friends in the opposition have come forward with a motion of no-confidence against Mr. Suhrawardy on the ground of incompetence and indifference and they have asked him, appealed to him in the name of God, to resign.

I would ask them also in the name of God and anything that is sublime, let them analyse their own mind and ask themselves whether it is a fact or it is not a fact that Mr. Suhrawardy was found at his height of genius during this carnage. There is no doubt that law and order collapsed. It will be denying reality if anything was said to the contrary but the fact is, from what I have seen of the great man, that he was at the height of his genius, he was at the height of his honesty, integrity, sense of justice and efficiency. At that time he was seen moving at the risk of his life in the streets of Calcutta day and night. He saw his comrades, friends falling one by one but he never lost that sense of justice which is becoming of a Chief Minister of our country. Our friends of the Congress said that his affiliation and attachment to the Muslim League Party unbalanced him, but

nothing can be a greater perversion of truth. We found during those days Muslims in bands and parties coming to us and complaining that Mr. Suhrawardy was attending too much to the Hindus. We found him working restlessly without food, without sleep these three, four days, locking himself up in Lal Bazar control room, passing orders. If any one dares to consult his private note book he will find how much he had to go into the details. It is true that on the 16th and 17th the ordinary traffic police were found absent, it is true that the Calcutta Police could not cope with the situation, but who can deny this fact that Mr. Suhrawardy at the earliest opportunity called upon the Army to take charge of the city--(Here the member reached his time-limit but was given two minutes more) but the Army did not obey as hastily and as quickly as they ought to have done, because under the Govt. of India Act the Chief Minister has no control over them. And if he says anything against the Commissioner of Police he is not making him a scapegoat. Whatever Mr. Suhrawardy may be, I can assure the friends of the opposition and through them the country, he is not a coward. He knows how to take responsibility himself.

As my time is up I would ask in all seriousness, in the name of God, in the name of anything that is noble and sublime, will the Muslims and Hindus alike fall so easily a victim to the British machination and not see things as they should see them? Let us realize that time has come and we should rise up to the height of our genius. Public calamity is a mighty leveller. Will this public calamity, the blood of our friends, relations and comrades help in levelling our differences and make a united effort to drive out the third party, the British Imperialism from India.

INDEX

A

- Abbasuddin Ahmed 98,99
Abdul Jabbar, Nawab 13-19,22
Abdul Majeed 13,15-17,18,22
Abdul Hafeez 15,19,
Abdul Halim 19
Abdul Gani, Khan Bahadur 72
Abdul Monem Khan 72,73
Abdul Jabbar Khaddar 75,107,108
Abdul Hakim Vikramপুরi 83,84
Abdul Bari, Professor 137
Abdul Momin, Mohammad, Khan Bahadur C.I.E. 15, 16, 17, 19, 29, 37, 47, 91,
Abdul Khan 26
Abdul Jabbar Wahidi, Maulana 44
Abdul Khaleque, Maulana 51
Abdul Hakim, Justice 51
Abdul Hai 58
Abdullah, Mohammad 15,17,19,
Abdullah Al-Mahmood 47
Abdul Karim Moulvi 144
Abdul Awal 59,65
Abdul Khaleque, Dr.74
Abdullah-il-Baqui, Maulana 89,108
Abdur Rahim, Sir 27
Abdur Razzaq 22,41
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur 126
Abdur Rashid, Mohammad 28,116
Abdur Rouf 69
Abdur Rashid Khan 58
Abdur Rahman 58
Abdus Sattar, Maulana 51
Abdus Sattar (Burdwan) 122
Abdus Sattar (Chittagong) 70
Abdus Salam Khan 71,72,103
Abdus Sobhan 116
Abdus Sabur Khan 59,88,108
Abdus Samad 49,51,71,72
Abdus Shaheed 121
Abid Reza Chowdhury, Khan Bahadur 72
Abul Barakat 17
Abul Hayat 17,27,38,39
Abul Hasnat 17,18,20
Abul Kasem 13,22
Abul Khairat 17,18,20
Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana 138,142
Abul Hossain (Rangpur) 59
Abul Kalam Shamsuddin 116,117
Abul Mansur Ahmed 17-119,150,151
Abul Qasim, Moulvi 20,22,23,
Abul Qasim (Satkhira) 47
Abul Qasim (Hooghly) 116,117
Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology 24
Adhikari, G. 41
Adamjee 62,138
Aftabuddin Ahmed, Maulana 74
A'fia Khatoon 14,17,18
Aftabuddin Talukdar 116
Ahmad Sirhindi, Hadhrat 14
Ahmed, A. K. R. 59
Ahmad Hossain (Rangpur) 91, 108, 113, 114, 124, 126
Ahrars 110
Ahsan Manzil 52,81,85
Akra Khan, Maulana 41, 45, 47, 57, 73, 78, 79, 90, 95, 105, 106, 113, 130, 145, 145
Alexander, A. V. 138

Ali Ahmed 116
 Almas Ali 59,65
 Ambika Chakravarty 131
 Ananda Gupta 131
 Anwarul Huq 59
 Anwar (24 Parganas) 79
 Anandilal Poddar 78
 Ananda Pal 100,101
 Anwara Khatoon 116,117
 Andaman Prisoners 131
 Ananta Singh 131
 Asre-Jadeed 44
 Asaf Ali 139
 Asadullah 83,91
 Ataur Rahman (Rajshahi) 58
 Ataur Rahman Khan 115,116
 Attlee, Major 110
 Awlad Hossain, Khan Bahadur 82, 83, 84, 85
 Ayub Khan, President 24
 Azizul Huq Chowdhury 25
 Azam, Mohammad 32
 Azad Subhani, Maulana 43,44,64,134
 Azad, The Daily 53, 54, 57, 78, 81, 88, 114, 115, 117, 151
 Azizuddin Ahmed 75,87,91,120,121

B

Badruddin Badr, Makhdum Shah 14
 Badshah Mian 121
 Bahar, Habibullah 47,107,108,116,124
 Bankim Chandra Chatterjee 16
 Bankim Mukherjee 41
 Baldev Singh Sardar 139
 Baset, M.A. 51,74
 Bashir, Qazi Mohammad 59
 Benazir Ahmad 57,64,88
 Bhaba, C.H. 139
 Bhudeb Mukherjee 31

Bhupesh Gupta 41
 Bimal Singha 140
 Bijoy Bhattacharya 38
 Bijoyprasad Sinha Roy, Sir 30
 British Imperialism 34, 97, 110, 111, 112, 140, 125, 132, 133

C

Cabinet Mission 138
 Cabinet Mission Plan 138,143
 Carmichael Hostel 118
 Chendal 24
 Chowdhury Mohammad Ali 141
 Chundrigar, I. I. 141
 Congress Indian National 30, 32, 33, 77, 78, 91, 93, 96, 110, 111, 138, 124
 Cornwallis, Lord
 Cripps, Sir Stafford 138
 Cripps Mission 111
 Curzon, Lord 15

D

Dabirul Islam, Mohammad (Dinajpur) 59
 Dawood, Haji 135
 Dawn 114
 Desai, Mahadev 136
 Dhiren Datta 140
 Direct Action Resolution 129,138
 Direct Action Day 131,132,133

E

East India Company 13,16
 Eliot Hostel 118

F

Faqir Mohammad 59

Farhad Banu 52

Fariduddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur 72

Farmuzul Huq 50,57,69,74,88,106

F.Rahman, Sir 105

Fazlul Huq, A.K.29-31, 34, 37, 40-42,
50, 73, 118, 120-122, 144, 149

Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury 69, 70, 71, 86,
89, 108, 149

Fazlul Qadir Chowdhury, Khan Bahadur
117

Fazlul Karim, Maulana 116

Fazlul Karim,Qazi 46

FazlulRahman 47, 50, 55, 60, 82-86,
88, 91, 95, 105, 124, 148, 150

Fort William 133

Frederick Burrows124

G

Gandhi,M.K.Mahatma 33, 78, 90, 93,
110, 124, 125, 136, 146, 147

Gandhi, Ava 136

Gandhi, Munni 136

Gandhi-Jinnah Talk 78

Ganesh Ghosh 131

Gaznafar Ali Raja 133,141

Ghyasuddin Pathan 72,117,119

Giasuddin Ahmed, Moulvi 19,20,22

Goat, Marshall 105

Goffran Ahmed, Khan Bahadur 75, 126,
127

Golam Asgar, Khan Bahadur 13,16

Golam Mohammad 141

Golam Mohiuddin, Syed 26

Golam Murtaza 24,26,31,39

Golam Mustafa (Poet) 51

Golam Sarwar, Maulana 136

Gani, Syed Abdul 31,32,113

H

Habiba Khatoon 19,22

Habibullah, B. D. 122

Habibullah, Nawab48,52-144,

Hafizuddin Chowdhury 117

Hafsa Khatoon 19,26

Hakim (Mrs.) 117

Halima 68

Hamid Daneshmand (Hamid Bangali)14

Hamid, M. A. 124

Hamid, A.M. A. Khan Bahadur 14

Hamidul Huq Chowdhury 25, 45, 47, 55,
57, 87, 88, 90, 91, 95, 124, 130, 135,
148

Hamudur Rahman 59

Hasan Ali, Nawabzada 151

Hasan Imam 115

Hasrat Mohani 33

Hatem Ali Jamaddar 120

Hayat Majid Shah 14

Hindu Mahashabha 37, 46, 110, 124

I

Ikramul Huq, Mohammad 58

Illias Ali Mollah 116

Illyas, B. M. 58

Imarat Party 118

Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fouz)
152

Interim Government 139, 141, 143,
152

Islamia College 77, 118, 149

Ispahani, M.A.H. 30, 50, 62, 91, 115,
137, 135

Ispahani, M.H. 50, 62, 130, 134

Ittehad 151

- J**
- Jafar, Dr. 99
- Jagjibanram 139
- Jamiyatul Ulema 110
- Jinnah, Mohammad Ali 30, 33, 36, 40, 63, 78, 110, 112, 114, 115, 125, 126, 129, 130, 131, 135, 137, 139, 141, 144
- Jinnah Hall 118
- Jitendranath Mitra 38
- J.C. Gupta 134
- John Anderson, Sir (Governor of Bengal) 29
- John Herbart (Governor of Bengal) 42
- John Mathai 139
- Jogendranath Mondal 127, 141
- Joshi, P.C. 54
- K**
- Kamruddin Ahmed 59, 65, 82, 83, 84, 85, 116
- Kazem Ali Mirza, Syed 116
- Kazi Hatem Ali 80, 81
- Kazi Mohammad Idris 114, 115
- Khairul Anam Khan 54, 78, 90
- Khaksars 34, 110,
- Khaliquzzaman Chowdhury 115
- Khondkar Shamsuddin 116
- Khuda Baksh 121
- Khujiata Akhtar Banu 23
- Khwaja Group (the Kwajas) 52, 71, 72, 82, 100, 102, 106
- Khwaja Family (Nawab Family of Dacca) 52
- Khwaja Habibullah 29, 62
- Khwaja Kamaluddin 74
- Khwaja Nasrullah 48, 52
- Khwaja Nazimuddin 29-31, 37, 40-42, 45, 48, 50, 55, 59, 60, 62, 72, 73, 77, 79, 87, 91, 93, 95, 100, 105, 109, 113, 115, 118, 119, 128, 132, 135, 137, 141, 149, 151
- Khwaja Nooruddin 52, 116, 117, 135
- Khwaja Shahabuddin 45, 47, 50, 52, 54, 55, 60, 76, 80, 88, 90, 91, 95
- Kiran Chandra Datta 30
- Kiran Shankar Roy 134,
- Kirman Colonel 49
- Krishak Praja Party 29
- Krishak Samity 100, 101, 102
- L**
- Lahore Resolution of 1940 34, 35, 36, 56, 69, 73, 77, 96, 110, 111, 138, 125, 126, 145
- (Pakistan Resolution)
- Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawabzada 46, 104, 115, 118, 119, 126, 141, 142, 143,
- Loknath Bal 131
- M**
- Macdonald Award 28, 29, 113
- Machiavelli 52, 90
- Madar Bux 116
- Mahboob Anwar 59, 64
- Mallick, Abdul Mottaleb (Dr. Malek) 46, 55, 73, 88
- Marxism 78
- Mashrequi, Allama Enayetullah 34
- Masiha Khatoon 15, 19
- Masiuddin Ahmed (Raja Mian) 59
- Motaharul Huq (Bagerhat) 57
- Mazharul Huq, A.T. 85
- Mahmuda Akhtar 85
- Millat, The weekly 114, 115, 131
- Mirza Golam Ahmad, Hazrat of Qadiyan 74

- Mirza Momtazuddin 141
 Moazzam Hossain Chowdhury 64, 65, 74, 108, 123, 124, 128
 (Lal Mian, Abdullah Zahirudin) 132, 133
 Mohammad (Prophet) 45, 56, 68, 91
 Mohammad Ali (Bogra) 127
 Mohammad Ali, Maulana (Lahore) 74
 Mohammad Ali, Maulana 28
 Mohammad Abdur Rafique Chowdhury (Pabna) 59
 Mohammadan Association of Burdwan 31, 39
 Mohammad Ismail, Nawab 141
 Mohammad Mahbulul Huq 58
 Mohammad Qasem (Bakerganj) 116
 Mohammad Solaiman Khan 59
 Mohsin, M.A. 58
 Moizuddin, Dr. 59, 65, 83, 84
 Mokarrama Khatoon 13
 Molla, Mohammad Abdul Halim 116
 Moni Singh 73
 Morning News 48, 51, 54, 97, 125, 145, 151
 Morley-Minto Award 28
 Mosharraf Hossain Khan 58
 Moshtaque Ahmed, Khondkar 59, 72
 Mountbatten, Lord 111, 142
 M.S.Ali (Kushtia) 47, 91
 Mozammel Huq, Dr. 120
 M.N.Roy 122
 Mudassir Hossain 117
 Mufizuddin Ahmed 72, 128
 Mujibur Rahman, Moulvi 27
 Mujibur Rahman (Noakhali) 75
 Munir Chowdhury 68
 Musalman, The 27
 Muslim Institute 70, 107, 108, 148
 Muslim League, All India 30, 33, 37, 43, 46, 74, 93, 104, 110, 111, 114, 115, 1116, 124, 125, 129, 144, 145
 Muslim League, Bengal Provincial 29, 33, 41, 49, 50, 52, 53, 56, 58, 61, 63, 70, 73, 79, 81, 87, 93-95, 104, 105, 109-111, 113-115, 117, 127, 144-147, 149, 151
 Muslim League, Burdwan District 31, 33, 41, 43, 47,
 Muslim League, Dacca District 51, 65, 80, 81, 83, 85, 86, 100
 Muslim League, Calcutta District 131, 148,
 Muslim League Famine Relief Committee 74
 Muslim League Government 38, 114, 123, 126, 150
 Muslim League Parliamentary Board (Central) 104, 113, 114, 115, 116
 Muslim League Parliamentary Board (Provincial) 104, 115, 116, 117, 130
 Muslim League Provincial Parliamentary Party 29, 42, 50, 53, 57, 61, 94, 123, 124, 125, 127, 128, 131
 Muslim Students League 58, 78, 79
 Muslim Students League, Bengal 58, 77
 Muzammel Huq 58

 N
 Najmal Huq 70
 Najmul Karim 59
 Naranarayan Mukherjee 25
 Naseeba Khatoon 14, 19, 22
 Naziruddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur 25, 31, 32
 Nazrul Islam, Kazi 98
 Nazrunnesa Khatoon 14, 17
 Nawsher Ali 118

Nehru, Jawaharlal 138, 139, 125
 Nikhil Chakravarty 94
 Nishtar, Sardar Abdur Rab 141
 Nooruddin Ahmed 58, 64, 86
 Noor Nawaz 122
 Nurul Alam 86, 119, 120
 Nurul Amin 46, 47, 72, 73, 91, 105,
 113, 114, 119, 124, 128
 Naruzzaman, K.B. 116

O

Obaidullah Obaidi, Moulana 23
 Othman, S.M. (Osman) 44, 88' 91,
 116, 131, 134, 135, 148, 149
 Oli Ahad 59
 Osman Ali, Khan Saheb 65, 82- 84, 116

P

Pakistan 34, 110, 111, 112, 125, 126,
 129, 142, 145, 152,
 Patel, Sardar Ballav Bhai 33, 135, 139,
 141, 143, 152
 Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya 90
 Peoples Age 126
 Pethick Lawrence, Lord 138
 P.N. Banerjee 144
 Presidency College 21, 24

Q

Qamruzzaman, Abul Hasnat, Mohammad
 58
 Qasim, Chowdhury Mohammad 25

R

Rabbaniyat 45
 Rafia Khatoon 17

Rafiuddin Siddiqui 70
 Raghib Ahsan 44, 51, 91, 108
 Rajagopal Achariya 111, 139
 Rajendraprasad 139
 Randaprasad Saha 120
 Rasul, A. 131
 Rasul, Wahajur 23
 Razzaque, A.W. 115
 Rezai Karim 82, 83, 85
 Rukunuddin 116

S

Sadequa Khatoon 13
 Sadruddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur 120
 Saleh Ahmed 58
 Salmah Khatoon 17
 Sarat Chandra Bose 134, 139, 142, 152
 Sarojini Naidu 93
 Santosh Kumar Bose 144
 Sardar Fazlul Karim 68
 Selimullah, Nawab, Sir 145
 Sepoy Mutiny 16
 Shafat Ahmed Khan Sir 142
 Shafia Khatoon 17
 Shah Abdul Bari 58
 Shah Azizur Rahman 59, 65, 149
 Shah Golam Ali 23
 Shah Syed Ziauddin 23
 Shahabuddin (Islamia College) 59
 Shahabuddin Mohammad Ali 132
 Shahedullah, Syed 41, 42
 Shamsuddahar 102, 103
 Shamsuddin Ahmed 59, 64, 65, 82, 86,
 100 101, 107, 124, 153, 124, 134,
 144, 152
 Shamsuddin Ahmed (Kushtia) 127
 Shamsher Ali 75, 90, 120, 149, 150
 Shamsul Huda 77

- Shamsul Huda, Moulana 117, 118, 119, 121
 Shamsul Huq 59, 61, 62, 64, 65, 73, 82, 86, 100, 130
 Shamsuzzoha 65
 Shaokat Ali Mohammad 59
 Sharafat Ahmed Khan, Sir 139
 Sharfuddin Ahmed (Burdwan) 86
 Sharfuddin Ahmed, K.B. 116
 Sheikh Abdul Aziz (Khulna) 58
 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman 58, 72, 86, 92, 102, 103, 107
 Shukurul Hossain 26
 Shyamaprasad Mukherjee 37, 144
 Shyama-Huq Ministry 37, 38, 40, 41, 52, 73, 82
 Siddique, Mohammad 92, 105
 Sikandar Hayat Khan, Sir 30
 Sirajul Islam 98
 Sirajganj Conference 33
 Soyeba Khatoon 17
 Star of India 54
 Statesman 145
 Subhas Chandra Bose 91, 152
 Subhas Institute 152
 Sufia Khatoon 19, 25
 Suhrawardy, Abdullah 23
 Suhrawardy, Amin 23
 Suhrawardy, Sir Hasan 23, 91, 92
 Suhrawardy, Hossain Shaheed 23, 29, 30, 40-43, 45-47, 49, 50, 52, 54, 59, 60, 63, 67, 70, 77, 82, 87-92, 94, 95, 102, 103, 105-109, 114, 115, 117, 120, 123-128, 130-136, 146-151
 Suhrawardy, Zahedur Rahim Zahed 49
 Sultanuddin Ahmed 83, 116
 Sultanuddin Ahmed (Mrs) 115, 116
 Surendranath Banerjee, Sir 14-15, 32
 Syed Abdul Hafeez 52
 Syed Abdus Salam 19
 Syed Abdus Selim 51, 52, 65, 80, 81, 82, 83, 86, 100, 101, 102, 116
 Syed Ali Hussain 23, 51, 74
 Syed Ali Imam 74
 Syed Ali Zahir 139, 142
 Syed Hamidullah 19
 Syed Mohammad Afzal 120, 121
 Syed Moazzemuddin Hossain 115, 126
 Syeda Aziza Akhtar Banu 23
 Syed Sahebe Alam 52
 Swadhinata, The 153
- T
- Tafazzal Ali 116, 128
 Tajuddin Ahmad 59, 82
 Tamizuddin Khan, Khan Bahadur 91, 108
 Tarkabagish, Moulana Abdur Rashid 47
 Taylor Hostel 21, 51, 118
 Tayyeiba Khatoon 17
 Thanvi, Moulana Ashraf Ali 19
 Toaha, Mohammad 59
 Tofazzal Hossain (Manik Mian) 151
 Togo Sarkar (Pranabeshwar Sarkar) 38, 39
- U
- Umar, Badruddin Mohammad 24, 74, 118, 132, 152,
 Upendranath Barman 144
 Usman 51
- V
- Viceroy 78, 112, 136, 139
 Victoria, Queen 67

W

Wahiduzzaman 72

Wasek, Abdul 82, 116

Wavel, Lord 78, 135, 139, 143

Y

Yar Mohammad 59

Yasin, Mohammad (Burdwan) 32, 33,
39, 51

Yousuf Ali Chowdhury (Mohan Miah)
47, 55, 71, 72, 88, 91, 107, 121, 130

Z

Zahiruddin 59

Zillur Rahman (Jhilu Mian) 101, 149,
150

Zuberi, Dr. I.H. 149



Mr. Abul Hashim was born on the 27th of January 1905, in the district of Burdwan, West Bengal. His father Moulvi Abul Kasem was a reputed public man of Bengal. He graduated from the University of Calcutta in 1928 and joined the district bar of Burdwan in 1931. The Muslims of Burdwan elected him in November 1936 to the first Legislative Assembly constituted under the Mac Donald Award. He joined the Muslim League in 1937. He was elected a member of the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League in the year 1941 and was elected General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League in November 1943 and carried the responsibility till the end of the struggle for Pakistan. He was elected a member of the Constituent Assembly of British India which was eventually boycotted by the Muslim League.

From the partition of Bengal in August 1947 upto April 1950 he stayed in West Bengal and functioned as the leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly. He migrated to Pakistan in April 1950.

In 1952 he was a member of the All Party State Language Committee of Action and presided over its very

important meeting held in the afternoon of February 20. He was arrested and detained in jail for about sixteen months.

After his release, from jail he joined the Khilafat-e-Rabbani Party and continued as its chairman till 1956.

He was made the first Director of the Islamic Academy at Dhaka in 1960 by President Ayub Khan. In August 1962, he was appointed a member of the Islamic Ideology Council of Pakistan and became the Chief Organiser, East Pakistan Muslim League, in September 1962.

Mr. Abul Hashim had written a number of books and articles on various subjects. His first book- 'The Creed of Islam' was published in 1950. He also wrote a tafsir of Surai-al-Fatiha in Bengali which was translated into Arabic. He was the Chairman of the Board of Translators who undertook a new translation of the Holy Quran into Bengali published by the Islamic Academy. He is also the author of 'Arabic Made Easy'. His memoirs 'In Retrospect', primarily deals with only that period of his political life during which he played the most effective role in the politics of Bengal.

Even as a Muslim Leaguer he was always opposed to the system of separate electorates, was a consistent upholder of Bengali culture and a great admirer of Rabindranath Tagore. During the Ayub regime, he very strongly and fearlessly opposed all the efforts of the Ayub Government in repressing the distinctive culture of Bengal. During the political turmoil of 1971 he remained in Dacca but refused to extend any co-operation to the Yahya regime, which he considered totally un-Islamic and barbarous.

This great soul breathed his last in Dhaka in the afternoon of October 5, 1974.