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The Cabinet Mission: Negotiatory Efforts by the British Authorities

ABSTRACT

The last years of British rule in India were significant due to the initiation of a new phase of political negotiations. It is termed as a new political phase as the two major stakeholders of Indian politics had substantially revised their policies, which were totally contrasted to the earlier. Those political negotiations were moved around Indian communal settlements. Some of those political dialogues were between the British government and Indian stakeholders, while the others were between the Indians themselves. Cabinet Mission was one of the political dialogues by the British authorities. To lead this Mission, three prominent British Cabinet members named Sir Pethick Lawrence (Secretary of the State for India), Sir Stafford Cripps (President of the Board of Trade), and A.V Alexander (first Lord of Admiralty) were chosen. After discussions with the Indian leadership, they presented their own plan, in which they tried to appease both the major political stakeholders of India i.e. All India National Congress and All India Muslim League. This Plan succeeded in getting approval from the main political stakeholders but ended in failure. This article traces the causes which led Congress and the Muslim League to approve the proposed Plan while discussing the causes of its failure.

Keywords: British Government, All India National Congress, All India Muslim League, Cabinet Mission, Political stakeholders, Political Dialogue

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Introduction

A new governmental system based on democratic principles had been introduced in India by the Britishers. There was no suitability for that system in a heterogeneous country like India; therefore, it was realized about the desperate need for a communal settlement to appease different communities. To achieve this objective, Indian political leaders made many efforts to come to an agreement but could not succeed. In the beginning, the British authorities had granted some constitutional securities to minorities for their protection, but circumstances had been changed after the outbreak of 2nd World War. So the phase of political dialogue and negotiation after the beginning of the war is very significant due to the considerable policy alteration by the two major political stakeholders that was entirely contrasting to the earlier. During the last decade of freedom struggle, Congress claimed to have the sole representation of all Indians, while Muslim League's assertion was to be the sole representative of all Indian Muslims; both of these positions opposed each other. M.L demanded an independent state for Indian Muslims by passing "*Lahore Resolution*"; before that, its objective was to get substantial representation for the Muslim community in the cadres of government. For that reason, "*Lahore Resolution*" is regarded as the climax of communal disagreement and the policy shift of the Muslim League. On the other hand, Congress also altered its policy from acquiring a share in power to demand "*Quit India*." During that phase, British authorities made many negotiatory efforts to settle the Indian communal issue; the "*Cabinet Mission plan*" was one of those efforts.

A Plethora of literature has been produced on British rule in India, particularly on its last decade, which is very significant. Many historians worked on this phase based on the grand narrative of colonial and anti-colonial political struggle with their own interpretation, such as the work of Abu Al Kalam Azad (Azad,) moves around the colonial and anti-colonial political struggle, identity politics, and inter-communal political struggle. Historians such as S.R Mehotra (Mehotra,) made an effort to probe the causes and patterns of the evolution of Indian political nationalism and political institutions. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi (Qureshi), Khurshid Kamal Aziz (Aziz,), and Chaudhary Muhammad Ali (Ali,) elucidated the events on the grounds of Muslim nationalism. Khalid bin Sayeed attempted to discover the growth of Muslim separatism. Historians such as H.V Hudson presented a pro-British version of the political events. Raj Gopal works on this period with an economic perspective along with a comparative study of the Indian economy and administrative institutions before and after British rule. He also concentrated on institutional development under British Raj.

The present study is Historical, analytical, and descriptive. The Cabinet Mission, a negotiatory political effort during the British colonial period, has

been studied and analyzed with the help of primary and secondary sources. Response of Indian main political stakeholders about the Cabinet Mission Plan has also been highlighted.

The Cabinet Mission

After the end of the 2nd World War in 1945, the Labour Party government replaced War Cabinet in England. Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister of the Labour Party, decided to make one more effort for the settlement of communal issues in India and made an announcement in the British House of Commons on 15th March, 1946. He stated that three members of the cabinet, Lord Pethick Lawrence (Secretary of the State for India), Sir Stafford Cripps (President of the Board of Trade) and Mr.A.V. Alexander (first Lord of Admiralty) would leave for India. The motive would be to facilitate self-governing India in conjunction with the Viceroy and the main political leaders there. The P.M stated that he is fully conscious of the fact that when he speaks about India he speaks about a country having different types of races, religions, and languages. ... He further stated that the British government is conscious of the rights of the minorities and that the minorities should be able to live free from fear. However, they are not allowed to use the veto in the development of the majority.... [Ashraf,1946,1]

In his statement, British P.M hinted at his understanding about the complexities prevailing in Indian politics owing to its various communal groups. At the same time, he intended to make it realized to I.N.C that the British government was fully conscious about its claim to represent all India. He also said that different communities based on religions, linguistic and racial groups also existed in India. Therefore, before making any decision about the Indian issues, these elements will not be neglected. Simultaneously, he indirectly alerted the Muslim League that it would not be permitted to abrogate any plan about the resolution of Indian communal issues.

After the arrival of the cabinet Mission in Delhi, Lord Pethick Lawrence, in a press conference, gave answers to the questions. The main focus of journalists was the statement of Attlee, especially the points of placing veto power by minorities in the advancement of the majority. Secretary of State for India made it clear that does not mean that the real demands of minorities are to be ignored. The elections result showed that voters have relied on two major political parties to represent them that are Congress and Muslim League. Despite the fact that the Congress has the representation of greater numbers, it would be inaccurate to think about the Muslim League as only a minority party; it has the representation of the majority of the great Muslim community.[Ashraf,1946,11] In such a manner, the Secretary of State for India invalidated the contrasting interpretations of Attlee's aforementioned

statement and made it clear that the British authorities did not regard Muslims as a minority or Muslim League as a minority party.

After the inauguration of talks with Indian leaders, Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi also came to meet with the members of the Cabinet Mission on 3rd April and told them that he had consumed eighteen days over the past several years with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who never in reasonable terms had given a definition of Pakistan, which in his opinion was a sin. [Mansregh,1977,116-117]. He proposed the Mission to ask Jinnah to form the first representative government and to choose its personnel from elected representatives. Lord Pethick Lawrence stated that since most of the newly elected representatives were from Congress, Jinnah would have to choose members from parties other than his own. Gandhi answered in that situation, if he was not inclined to form, then Congress should be invited to do so. [Wolpert,2006,101-102]

The above-mentioned suggestion of Gandhi had two aspects. On one side, he intended to make it realized to the Delegation that he believed in Indian nationalism, and there was no requirement for the settlement of communal issues with the Muslim League; they were even willing to offer it full authority, which was unfeasible. Simultaneously he revealed his hidden agenda that if a government led by League in India was not feasible, power should be given to Congress in that situation. It was very strange that he did not show the inclination to go for settlement with League.

The next day Jinnah came for his initiatory meeting with the Ministerial Delegation. He elucidated to them the primary dissimilarity between Hindus and Muslims, repeating that Muslims have a different prospect of life from the Hindus ...They have a different culture that evolved from Arabic and Persian in place of Sanskrit extraction. Their social customs are entirely different ...Hindus worship the cow and even today in certain states, a ten years' sentence is imposed for killing a cow. This means nothing to the Muslims ...How is you to put 100 million of Muslims together with 250 million whose way of life is so different? No government can ever work on such a basis, and if this is forced upon India, it must result in failure. [Mansregh,1977,119-120]

In such a manner, Quaid-e-Azam made an effort to explain to the Mission that there were two contrasting dimensions of Indian culture and if the British government intended to impose a formula on India without earlier settlement among Indian communities, its consequences would be confusion and chaos; therefore, a prior settlement among Indians was crucial.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru too presented his viewpoint on 4th of April, and he emphasized leaving the Indians for the resolution of their dispute and finding a scheme without intervention. He also stated that it is always hard to think of these differences in relation to the presence of a third party that controls the situation ...when once it is clearly considered that India is going

to work as an independent and sovereign entity and that the people of India of different section and communities must come to terms or unluckily fight before they reach to a settlement, then reality comes to the picture. [Ashraf,1946,21]

The aforementioned statement of Nehru, a prominent leader of I.N.C reveals that the primary focus of Congress leadership was that British authorities should not be assigned any role for the settlement of Indian communal issues. They were of the view that power should be given to Congress; after attaining power, it would go for settlement with other communal groups. While giving such proposals I.N.C misunderstood the historical developments in the period after the arrival of the British in India and how different communities showed a lack of unanimity.

After the failure of talks with Indian leadership and Indians own failure to present a unanimous formula, Mission decided to present its own Formula for this purpose, it invited Indian leaders to discuss the expected Formula.

Mission shifted its venue for further discussion from Delhi to Simla. Presidents of both major political parties were invited to come along with three members of their political parties. League decided to send Liqueate Ali Khan, Sardar Nishter, and Nawab Ismail Khan, while Congress chose Nehru, Sardar Patel, and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. They held meetings on a regular basis. At Simla, members of the Cabinet Mission discussed their expected proposals with the Indian leadership. [Mansregh,1977,431]

On 16th May, while giving the basic structure of their proposals, Lord Pethick Lawrence Secretary of State for India in his broadcast stated that: -

“We were encountered with a serious hindrance. The two major organizations, The M.L who acquired the eminent victory in the recent elections on Muslim seats, and the Congress who got the majority of all the others were opposing each other about the kind of system to be established. During our stay in India we have strived to secure such an adjustment between the organizations as would facilitate constitution formulating process. Recently we have organized a conference at Simla to bring them together, but though each party was inclined to make considerable compromise, but it was not possible to arrive at complete settlement. That’s why we have been forced ourselves to attempt for an adjustment which by gaining the major objectives of each party will facilitate constitution making process to be brought into instant working. While we perceived the fact of the apprehensions of the M.L that in an exclusively unitary India Muslims with their own culture and code of life might become immersed under the rule of a major communal group, we do not recognized the establishment of Pakistan as a solution of the communal issues. Our own proposals consider a constitution of three layers, at the top of which would be the Indian Union with an executive and legislature authorized to deal with subjects of foreign affairs,

defense, communication and the finance needed for these services. At the bottom would be the provinces which would have, aside from these subjects I have just mentioned, complete autonomy. But we consider more that provinces will want to merge together in sections to accomplish in common services covering a broad domain than that of a single province. These sections may have, if they want legislatures and executives which in that case will be intermediate between those of the provinces and of the union. On these footing, which makes it practicable for the Indian Muslims to gain the benefits of a separate state without receiving the natural hazard in the Indian partition, we give invitations to all parties to join constitutional making process." [Ashraf,1946,71]

At the same time, the Secretary of State for India clarified that what the Mission and the Viceroy had presented was not an award; these were proposals. He further stated that the Formula given by the Cabinet Mission could not be amended to the advantage of one party to the disadvantage of any other party. [Ashraf,1946,71]

The Mission proposed the following structure of the future constitution for India;

- Establishment of Indian union containing both British India and states.
- Foreign affairs, defense, and communication portfolios should be handed over to the Union Government, having the authority to generate the funds required for the aforementioned subjects.
- It was proposed that both British India and states would be given representation in the executive and legislature of the Union.
- It was proposed that residuary powers will be handed over to the provinces
- The states will also be given all subjects aside from those handed over to the Union government.
- Provinces will have the right to formulate groups with executives and legislatures, and each group could decide the provincial subjects.
- Some arrangements should be included in the constitution of the Union and of the groups through which any province could, after the first 10 years, demand a review of the terms of the constitution by a majority vote of its legislature and at 10 yearly intervals afterward. [Ashraf,1946,45-46]

Cabinet Mission also proposed groups of the provinces, which were given below:-

- Group A: All the Hindu majority provinces were placed in this group.
- Group B: The Muslim-majority provinces of Sind, Punjab, Baluchistan, and North Western Frontier Province were included in this group.
- Group C: Provinces of Bengal and Assam were in this group

In the three tiers scheme, the uppermost central government tier would be considerably less significant than the groups tier. The central government tier had the defense, foreign affairs, and communications portfolios. In the group tier, each group would have its own bicameral legislature. The last tier comprised Provinces, each province would have traditional local authority over education and law and order but was dependent on their own group legislature for most of their funding. After ten or fifteen years, any group or any one of its provinces could withdraw from its constitutional status. [Wolpert,1946,104]

For the solution of the Indian communal issue, the aforementioned three tiers scheme was indeed reasonable. In that scheme, it was proposed to retain the Indian union, which was the primary demand of Congress. At the same time, it tried to minimize Muslims' fears by formulating groups on communal grounds, granting maximum authority to groups and provinces, groups having the right of constitution-making, and granting every group and province the right to withdraw from the union after a specific time. In such a manner, it was tried to satisfy both the Congress and Muslim League by accommodating the two contradictory stances i.e. Indian Union and a separate state for Muslims by creating communal based groups.

Gandhi was the First, who responded positively and appreciated the aforementioned Plan, for him, it was not an award. It was just a proposal by the Mission for an Indian settlement that deserved of approval by the constituent assembly. He further stated that it was the jurisdiction of the constituent assembly to revoke the disparity between Muslims and non-Muslims. The provinces had the right to reject the very idea of grouping. [Menon,1981,268-269]

Though Gandhi appreciated the plan, he made its interpretation according to his own views. He was insistent that constituent assembly had the jurisdiction to modify the aforementioned Plan and the provinces were free to exit the groups. He also believed that the constituent assembly had the jurisdiction to revoke the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, revealing the intention to change the grouping. Gandhi's interpretation of the Scheme indeed negated his own ideology of "*Indian nationalism*." On one side, he propagated the above-mentioned ideology and simultaneously wanted to abrogate communal-based grouping. Indeed his main reservation about grouping was the inclusion of Assam in a Muslim majority group, which was expressed by him many times. His contrasting views indicate that he wished to establish Hindu authority in all groups. If he did not express grievance about the inclusion of Assam in group C then it could be assumed that, being a preacher of Indian nationalism, he did not like the grouping of provinces on communal grounds. In the case of approval of the aforementioned explanation by Gandhi, and Cabinet Delegation did not interpret it through its 25th May Statement that grouping on communal

grounds was the essential part of its plan, in that situation, that scheme caused to intensify the communal issues. If the clause of groups was modified and the provinces of the Muslim majority were included in different sections, it maximized the fears and grievances of the Muslim community. Owing to that, they had to face dual layered Hindu raj: one in the form of a centre and the other in groups.

Though, May 16th Scheme was considered an honest effort to adjust contrasting objectives. Gandhi stated on May 17th that the Cabinet Mission had proposed something of which they had for every reason to be satisfied: and even after ten days, he still believed that it was the best document the British government could have made in that situation. Despite this appreciation, it soon became open that Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee would scrutinize the scheme before accepting it. Mr. Jinnah did not show enthusiasm as this scheme had totally denied the idea of Pakistan, and this he could rarely be expected to approve. [Moon, 1961, 48]

As Quaid-e-Azam did not show enthusiasm about Cabinet Mission Scheme, an impression was created that he would not approve the above-mentioned Proposal. In fact, it was the part of his calculated politics. In the Plan, many arrangements were proposed not only to lessen Muslims' grievances for the short term, but also it gave them an opportunity to create a greater and strong Pakistan on long-term basis. In which aside from the inclusion of Muslim majority provinces, the parts of those Muslim majority provinces where the Muslims were in the minority, and Assam having Muslim Minority would also be included. So, it can be stated that the aforementioned plan, instead of curtailing Pakistan, had the probability of a greater Pakistan.

President of Congress, after scrutinizing the Scheme, expressed some grievances through a letter to the Secretary of State for India, in which it was stated that since the Punjab in group B and Bengal in group C would be in a powerful position, they might devise a provincial constitution totally against the desires of the North Western Frontier Province and Assam, and might even decide to nullify the right of provinces to leave the group. [Gwyer and Appadorai, 1957, 589-90]. In fact, his reservation was about the position of the Muslims of Punjab and Bengal; however, they were in the minority in their relevant groups. According to the statement of Cabinet Mission, the total Muslim representation was just 62.07% in Group B and 51.69% in Group C, with a simple majority there were restricted chances for the Muslims. Indeed, the Congress was unwilling to give political authority to Muslims at any level, but they were expected to place their trust in a constituent assembly with Hindu domination. [Ali, 1973, 58]

It can be stated that there was a credibility gap between Muslim League and Congress. Congress had the apprehensions that League, while formulating a constitution for groups, would make an effort to restrict the

provinces from leaving the groups. On the other hand, the League had concerns that Congress would try to abrogate communal-based provincial groups through a central constitution-making body; its leaders also expressed their designs which caused to maximize League's concerns.

When the Cabinet Mission Plan was misinterpreted by Congress leadership, members of that Mission decided to make one more statement about the clear objectives and meanings of their Plan, that statement is known as 25th May Statement. In that statement, it was stated that:

"Since the Indian leadership after protracted talks remained unsuccessful to come to an adjustment, that's why, the Mission announced their own suggestions as the approximate approach to settle the viewpoint of the two major organizations. The plan stands as a whole and can only be successful if it is approved and worked in spirit of cooperation ...the authority and the working of the constitution making body ,and the process which it is intended to follow are clear from the Cabinet Mission's announcement ...the explanation put by Congress of the announcement to the effect that the provinces can in the first instance make the choice whether or not to belong to the group in which they are positioned does not accord with the Mission's plans...The classification of the provinces is the fundamental portion of the plan and can only be amended by concord between the major organizations." [Ali,1973,59]

The above-mentioned statement was an answer to the Congress leadership who misinterpreted the Scheme according to the interest of their party. It was clarified through the aforementioned Statement that the Plan of 16th of May was to settle the communal issues. If a constituent assembly dominated by Hindus had given the power to amend it, consequently, it transformed into a majority party scheme. Communal-based grouping was the fundamental part of the Scheme, through which an attempt was made for the retention of Indian union, in the case of modifying the clause of grouping from Scheme or any other amendments by a majority party in the constituent assembly; it would not be accepted by other communities.

In spite of the above-mentioned explanatory Statement by the members of the Cabinet Mission, Gandhi was still insistent to make the Cabinet Mission's Statement mean what he desired it to mean, regardless of what its authors stated it meant. He was provoking Assam not to enter into group C, the North Western Frontier Province, and the Sikh community in the Punjab not to send its representatives to Group B. [Ali,1973,60]

Gandhi's instigation to the provinces against grouping reveals his political ideology and also about his real designs. His designs were to create Hindu domination; it also exposes his ideology of Indian Nationalism which was indeed Hindu Nationalism. Moreover, his insistence about his own

interpretation of the Scheme indicates that he desired to secure the interests of Congress rather than the settlement of communal issues.

After the explanation of the Cabinet Mission Scheme through the Statement of May 25th, in which Congress leadership's interpretations of the Scheme were rejected, Jinnah approved the Scheme on 6th of June. Muslim League Council passed a resolution approving both the long term and short term plans. The Council confirmed that the Muslim League would join the constituent assembly. With regard to the recommended interim government, it authorized its president to make settlement with the Viceroy and to take decisions in this regard. It reserved the right to review its decision according to the situation. [Gwyer and Appadorai,1957,600-602]

It can be stated that by approving the aforementioned plan, Quaid-e-Azam did not compromise his goal i.e. creation of a separate homeland for Muslims. His goal behind the acceptance of plans was not a compromise but part of his calculated politics. He aimed to achieve a greater and stronger Pakistan for Muslims of India.

The C.W.C had not yet given their decision about the plan and Jinnah's acceptance of it made them alerted to scrutinize it carefully. They made many efforts to get approval for an interpretation of the plan, which would make it a choice for the individual provinces to join the groups in which they had been placed. Since the League did not have a majority in the Punjab, the N.W.F.P and Assam But the Members of Mission firmly denounced the interpretation of the plan made by Congress. So Congress Working Committee gave no verdict about the Cabinet Mission Plan. Meanwhile, the Viceroy's endeavor to make a settlement between the two major parties over the establishment of a provisional government had to face complications. The League demanded parity with Congress and the unshared right to nominate Muslim members. Congress refused to accept both of those demands. So the Viceroy, after consultation with the members of the Mission announced that he had invited fourteen persons to work as a member of interim government. Six members will be from the Hindu community taken from Congress (including one member from the scheduled caste), five members of the League, one Sikh member, one Parsee, and one from the Indian Christian community. After the announcement of Cabinet Mission's above statement, there was hope in the Congress circle to replace a Congress Muslim for one of the Congress Hindus. Both Nehru and Patel were in favor of its approval. But at this decisive moment, once again, Gandhi came forward and intervened with a negative result. Those who were ready to accept the omission of a Congress Muslim from the provisional government were dominated. Congress being a party of national level having a Muslim president, could not, according to Gandhi's opinion, allow to such an exclusion, even as a temporary measure. [Moon,1961,51-54]

Objection expressed by Gandhi about the short-term plan of the Cabinet Mission on the right given to the Muslim League for the nomination of all the Muslims in the interim government contrasted to his own ideology. He instigated Congress to reject the Short-Term Plan because it was contradictory to its "*Doctrine of Indian Nationalism.*" On the other hand, his objection about Long Term Plan denied the above-mentioned doctrine.

When Congress rejected the plan related to the formation of provisional government, the last chance which might have prevented division was lost...While Congress had accepted the Long Term Plan with its own interpretation, but the members of Mission were ready to clutch at any convenient straws, and this vague approval gave them a hope to come out of an embarrassing situation in case of absence of approval by Congress they would have been bound to make provisional government without Congress. That's why; they considered Congress's decision as a genuine acceptance. When it was known to Jinnah about the rejection of Short Term Plan by Congress, he instantly got the Working Committee of the Muslim League to accept it. He then stated that the Viceroy was bound by the Statement of 16th of June to neglect the Congress and move to form a government with League and other parties inclined to join. This was justified that as both the main parties had approved the Constitutional Plan, therefore negotiatory process for a provisional government had to be taken up *de novo*. Upon this, Jinnah accused the Viceroy and the members of Mission of breach of promise and bitterly observed 'Statesmen should not eat their words'. [Moon,1961,55-56]

Though Quaid-e- Azam was confident about the enforcement of paragraph 8th of the Statement of June 16th. In reality this statement was not practicable in the context of the Indian political situation. What would be the option if both the major parties did not accept the Proposal? The result would have been disastrous in case of approval by one party, because both main parties had the representation of a specific community. League was not in the position to formulate a government having the representation of a communal group which was 1/4th of total Indian population. On the other hand, Congress did not represent the Muslim community, so a government led by Congress also led India towards chaos. It can be inferred that the members of the Cabinet Mission were also aware about the impracticality of paragraph 8 of the June 16th statement. Their aim was to pressurize both the major political parties, they were not serious about its implementation. That's why, inspite of Congress's rejection of the plan related to the establishment of the interim government and ambiguous acceptance of the Long Term Plan with its own interpretations, it was invited to formulate government with League. Though I.N.C approved the Constitutional Plan with its own interpretation but later on it was revealed that its leadership was not willing to accept it with its own interpretation. It is mentioned earlier that Gandhi induced the C.W.C to reject the scheme about provisional government. Now

Nehru came forward to destroy the remaining. On 10th of July, in a press conference, he stated that Congress had just agreed to enter into Constituent Assembly by approving Long Term Plan. [Moon,1961,56]. When he was asked that this meant that the Cabinet Mission's Constitutional Plan could be modified, he said his party had decided just to go into the Constituent Assembly and could change the Scheme as it thought best. [Azad,1959,155] He also stated that "the big possibility is, from any approach to the question, there will be no grouping," he argued that in group A (the Hindu majority provinces) would not accept it and in group B, the North Western Frontier Province would not approve it as would Assam in group C. He thought for a strong central government than that suggested in the cabinet Mission Scheme. [Brecher,1959,316]

Being the president of a major party, Nehru's statement was very crucial for Indian politics. In his statement, Nehru clarified the nature of Congress's acceptance of the Constitutional Plan. It indicates that, according to him, communal adjustment had no significance. Moreover, while totally invalidating the Constitutional Plan; he said that Congress only decided to go into the Constituent Assembly and nothing else. Initially, Congress was very contented about the Cabinet Mission Plan, but subsequently, it was realized that the implementation of that Scheme would be first step towards "Greater Pakistan." That's why a strategy was followed, at first objection was raised on communal based grouping, later on it rejected the other clauses of the Scheme, and only showed its willingness to go into the Constituent Assembly. Being a majority party, it was in its interest to go into that Assembly. Further; his statement disclosed that Congress was not in favor of any type of compromise to retain Indian Union. It neither believed in communal adjustment nor a plan without a strong centre having any chance of power sharing with Muslims at any level. This behavior of Congress was accurately described by Mr. Cripps as "*Policy of Nothing or Everything*" and the division of India was the ultimate result of its policy.

After the aforementioned statement of Nehru and Mission's failure to enforce its Statement of 16th of June, Muslim League Council decided to withdraw its acceptance from the Cabinet Mission Plan on 29th of July. The last paragraph of the resolution is given below: -

"The Scheme cannot succeed unless it is worked in a spirit of cooperation. The attitude of the Congress clearly shows that these conditions precedent for the successful working of the constitution making body do not exist. This fact, taken together with the policy of the British government of sacrificing the interests of the Muslim nation and some other weaker sections of the peoples of India, particularly the Schedule castes, to appease the Congress and the way in which they have been going back on their oral and written solemn pledges and assurances given from time to time to the Muslims, leave no doubt that in these circumstances the participations of the Muslims

in the proposed constitution making machinery is fraught with danger and the Council, therefore, hereby, withdraws its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals which was communicated to the Secretary of the State for India by the President of the Muslim League on 6th June, 1946." [Ashraf, 1946, 309]

Cabinet Mission practically failed after the withdrawal of Muslim League from its acceptance because Congress was insistent on its own interpretation of the plan. Later on it was totally invalidated by saying that Congress just decided to enter into the Constituent Assembly.

Conclusion

To conclude, Cabinet Mission Plan was the last conciliatory effort to retain Indian Union by settling communal differences. After discussing with the Indian leadership, members of the Mission presented their own Formula, in that Formula it was tried to appease both major parties. It was ended in failure because of the non-compromising attitude of Congress. Though in that Formula, basic demand of Congress to retain the Indian Union was accepted, that's why it was initially warmly welcomed by Congress leadership, especially Gandhi. But later on, its different interpretations were made by top leaders of Congress; the design behind its interpretation was a refusal to share power with Muslims at any level. To achieve its target, Congress propagated communalism, negating its own ideology based on '*Indian Nationalism*'. It expressed reservation over the inclusion of Assam in a group having a Muslim majority and, at the same time, instigated the Sikh not to enter into a Muslim majority group; both of those reservations were based on communalism contrasting to its own ideology. On one side, Gandhi expressed his grievances over groups due to the inclusion of Assam and Sikhs of Punjab into Muslim majority groups on the other side, in his meeting with the members of the Cabinet Mission he suggested handing over full authority to Muslim League. The suggestion of Gandhi had two aspects. The purpose behind his suggestion was to make it realized to the Mission that he believed in Indian nationalism and there was no requirement for the settlement of communal problems with the Muslim League. They were even inclined to offer it full authority, which was indeed not practicable. It was strange that he did not suggest solving communal issues. Objections raised by Congress leadership about the Short Term Plan and the Long Term Plan of the Mission contrasted with each other. Congress's grievances about the Long-Term Plan were based on communalism, while it refused to accept the Short-Term Plan while preaching Indian Nationalism. So it can be stated that Congress was not clear about its ideology, it used to alter its ideology according to its interest.

On the other hand, Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan, though its basic demand, which was a separate homeland for Muslims in India, was not accepted in it. Its objective behind the acceptance of the plan was not a compromise but part of calculated politics. It had foreseen the chances of a greater and stronger Pakistan for Indian Muslims.

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