Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Mahatma Gandhi, Ali Brothers and the Non-Cooperation Movement in British India 1920-1922

Riaz Ahmad
Prof & Chairman, Dept. of Pakistan Studies,
Al-Khair University, Bhimber, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan.

Abstract:
The non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements played a vital role in the history of Indo-British and Hindu-Muslim relations. The paper explores the stance of Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the issue and his relation with Mohen Das Karam Chand Gandhi and Ali Brothers. For, the paper focuses on the original sources of Jinnah’s speeches, press coverage and official and personal correspondence. Jinnah considered the launch of non-cooperation Movement a futile exercise, with no outcome. His focus was on sharing of power through electoral politics. Jinnah’s suspicions about the results of the movement came true and it ended with a failure and imprisonment of Gandhi and Ali brothers.

Key Words: Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Non-Cooperation Movement, Ali Brothers, Resistance to the British in India

For the purpose of pressuring the British Government, the Non-Cooperation or Satyagraha movement was formally launched after the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress in December 1920. The founders of this movement played tactfully with the sentiments of the people – both Hindu and Muslim. The Muslim sentiments were critically antagonistic to the British because of the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the uncertain future of the Holy Lands of Islam in Arabia. This was the time when Mahatma Gandhi, as an Indian nationalist had started his political career. He developed close ties with the Muslim religious class
particularly with the Deoband School. To win a Public support Gandhi promised to win Swaraj by December 1921 against British imperialism. Even Maulana Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali came to believe in such a given hope and joined hand with addressing a public gathering in Bombay on 22 February, 1922. Maulana Mahomed Ali categorically expressed that they were determined to get Swarj within the next eight months. Mohammad Ali Jinnah did not believe in such promises by Mahatma Gandhi. As a spokesman of Hindu-Muslim unity and architect of Lucknow pact 1916, Jinnah had logical reasons not believe in such promises. Jinnah believed that there were still a certain number of steps needed to be taken both by the Congress and Muslim league leaders for realization of Hindu-Muslim unity and Swaraj. Before Jinnah’s ideas could mature in practical terms, Non-Cooperation Movement was initiated and Jinnah’s plan for Hindu-Muslim unity was thwarted. However, the Movement could not succeed in its aims to get Swaraj by December 1921. Contrary to the aims instead of keeping a concerted pressure on the British Government, it ended with Hindu-Muslim tension and riots in different parts of South Asia, the pretext of the incident of Chauri Chaura, where some policemen were burnt alive in February 1922.


3  Bombay Chronicle, 21 & 23 February 1921

3  Bombay Chronicle, 23 February 1921

4  Ibid. As Maulana Mahomed Ali put it.

5  Bombay Chronicle, 13 February 1922. The Working Committee of Indian National Congress met at Bardoli on 11-12 February 1922 decided in favour of “suspension of mass civil disobedience”.

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political forces became so much divided as a result that they were lying “in ruins leaving the British” as “the masters of the field” in the long future to come. The political paradigm of that Hindu-Muslim unity for Swaraj. M.A. Jinnah had established after years of his hard work was absolutely shattered due to the pre-mature initiation of the Non-Cooperation Movement. This shattered unity was never repaired.

The ground for initiating Non-Cooperation against the British was being prepared since 1911 and Jinnah was leading it. Gandhi was after the death of B.G. Tilak in August 1920, Jinnah and Gandhi had become role representation a new entrant into practical politics by December 1919.

Thus, practical the Indian political leaders, on the whole had started their movement for non-cooperating the British Government soon after the introduction of the Rowlatt Bills in the Imperial Legislative Council in February 1919. As a follow up of this Movement, Jinnah was the first leader who resigned from his membership of the Imperial Legislative Council on 28 March 1919. The Bombay Chronicle, with its

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with its largest circulation all over India under Jinnah’s guidance, took a lead to start an extreme anti-government propaganda. The Government placed to intern Jinnah, but the ideas was dropped due to certain other possible reactions with which the Government was not ready to face, enjoyably due Jinnah’s influence among all communities of India. The Chairman of the Bombay Publicity Department reported to the Chief Secretary of the Bombay Presidency in December 1991:

“The extremist section of the Home Rule Party, headed by Messrs. Horniman, Jinnah, and Jamnadas, have organized themselves very fully with a view not merely to poison the minds of the people against Government as it exists but to inculcate Bolshevist ideas.”

The British Government considered Horniman, Editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, and his well-guarded writings responsible for Jinnah’s popularity. He was ordered to be

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10. Lloyd to Montagu, 18 March 1919 Montagu Papers, IOL. SS. Eur.D. 523/24. This was termed one of the ‘chief supporters’ of “Satyagraha or Passive Resistance Movement”. See ibid.

11. Ibid.

deported to England by the night of 26 April 1919\(^\text{13}\) However, Jillian Wallah Bagh Tragedy on 13 April 1919.\(^\text{14}\) Untimely Bombay had become “hot-bed of sedition and disloyalty”\(^\text{15}\) among all provinces as Jinnah and Gandhi both belonged to this region. The approval of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms by the British Parliament in December 1919 in the form of the Government of India Act 1919, was a joint endeavor of Jinnah, Gandhi and Malviya through making the Amritsar Congress in December 1919 agree to work for the reforms.\(^\text{16}\) The anti-government stance built up by these leaders was to be utilized in the upcoming Council elections\(^\text{17}\). It was in the conflict of this close partnership that Jinnah proposed the name of Gandhi for President ship of the Home Rule League, an office which was lying vacant since last year due to desertion of Mrs. Annie Besant.\(^\text{18}\) This was, as a matter of fact, expression of Jinnah’s confidence in Gandhi, but Gandhi was secretly planning a new strategy in politics which was certainly different from what Jinnah was thinking.

\(^{13}\) Secretary, Govt, of India (Home Dept.) to Chief Secretary, Bombay Government (Political Dept.), 12 April 1919 Government of India (Home Dept.) Confidential Proceedings. 1999, IOR P/50; Bombay Judicial Dept. (Confident Proceedings. 1919, IOR. P/46 On 17 April 1999 Lord Chelmsford the Viceroy authorized Sir George Lloyd, the Bombay Governor for Horniman’s Deportation.


\(^{15}\) Lloyd to Montagu, 6 April. 1919. Montagu Papers, IOL. MSS. Eur. D. 423/24

\(^{16}\) Bombay Chronicle, 30-31 Dec. 1919, Jan 1920

\(^{17}\) Ibid.

After securing his position in Indian politics, Gandhi chose to differ with Jinnah on the issue of elections. Jinnah wanted to keep anti-government stance up. Jinnah had planned after the election council other option of developing pressure with the Government in the assembly could be applied. But Gandhi had planned an agitation movement as through the thinking was that once legislatures Jinnah. In order to oust Jinnah and other leaders from the national leadership, Gandhi wanted to avoid the elections in these circumstances.

The reasons of Gandhi’s difference with Jinnah over Council [legislature] entry are not well explained by the biographers with the exception of universally labeling Jinnah as a mere constitutionalist who was not ready to adopt other means to attain Swaraj. This plea has since then been carried by almost all the Hindu, Muslim and Western writers. However new material explains a somewhat different story. Gandhi did not want Jinnah to be the central leader of Congress/League politics. Gandhi was represent by Brahman intellectual class, and in spite of his anti-government stance he was supporting government to control to the Constitutional and legal politics.

Jinnah was not averse to the idea of Non-Cooperation. However, Jinnah believed, the Non-Cooperation movement was bound to fail unless the political leader and the public undergo the electoral process result was what Jinnah as expected Gandhi had to take refuge in

19 Author’s parenthesis.

20. See Mahadev H. Desai, Day-to-Day with Gandhi (Secretary’s diary), Nov 1917 to March 1919, I. Rajghat. 1968; and V.N. Nai. Mr. Jinnah (A Political Study), Bombay, 1947. pp.5-6, 16-17.
confinement which proved to be face-saving or asylum from
the public exposure21.

When the Nagpur Congress was determined to resort to Non-
Cooperation without participating in recent Council elections, Jinnah was sure enough to foretell the failure of the Movement23.

Even Government, had noted such signs of failure before the end of the movement in February 1922.22

Jinnah’s views were well-explained in a public gather at Bombay on 19 February 1921 organized to commemorate sixth anniversary of G.K. Gokhale, To remember “Gokhale’s “loss”23 and “to recall some lessons which might be learnt from his bright career”24. Jinnah as principal speakers on this occasion, expressed his views on the Indian situation boldly.25

Jinnah declared that why he had “remained silent” at the “present critical moment” referring the governments action Jinnah believed that “they had a Government which had


25. Ibid.
persistently and deliberately followed a policy that had wounded the self-respect of the country”26. “Government were still under the impression that the people of India could be ruled and controlled by the old policy, by giving concession with the one hand and repression with the other”27. Citing the examples of dictatorial policies of Czarist Russia, Jinnah warned government that it was the continued disregard of “the will of the country” that led to revolution that was the caused of the turmoil coming out of Non-Cooperation movement. However, Jinnah declared that “if it were not taking them to the wrong channel and if he could be convinced, he would have been the first man to join it”28.

As far as Jinnah’s personal feelings for Gandhi and others who joined him were concerned, he had “greatest respect and reverence for Mr. Gandhi and the men who were working with him”. In his opinion what they wanted was a real political movement based on real political principles and based on the fire which burnt in the heart of every man for his motherland. So long as they had not that as the basis, their programme was defective. If in the Assembly there had been “today twenty or thirty of their best men” they would have “fought” the Government’s dictatorial policy “to the bitter end” and that the “Government would have been obliged to suspend the Assembly in less than a year of its existence”.29 However, Jinnah expressed his surprise that Gandhi and co-leaders could not understand why they should not go to the Council and fight face to face with the bureaucrats30. By February 1921, Jinnah’s ideas proved true. Commenting on the Non-Cooperation issue, Jinnah “emphatically” declared that it was

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
“not really political movement” like that of Germany. Jinnah believed the it had failed to a generate mobilization. Jinnah criticized the programme launched by the movement he believed that before calling the students off the Government schools and colleges, “National Schools and Colleges” would have been established and then Gandhi “could have withdrawn the school-going boys from the government schools. It was just throwing the children “in the street”. Jinnah explained his view:

There were now two effective ways of attaining their goal. The first was to put their hands in the pocket and pay for their country and the second was to shed their blood. As a matter of fact they were powerless. Now the only strength and effective strength was money. If Mr. Gandhi in the Calcutta session of the Congress formed a Committee to appeal to the 320 millions for their countrymen for funds for national education, nobody would have said a word against it. He could have by all means started National Schools and Colleges and fill them up.

Jinnah’s views were refuted by the Khilftisits. However, British official documents expose a view similar to Jinnah’s view on the success of the movements.

I believe you are quite as likely as not to be right about the break-up of the Hindu-Moslem entente. The entente meant that the Moslem gained the organization which he lacked before, and the Hindu gained a new programme flavoured with a religious idea which carried its appeal much further

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31 Ibid.
32 Author’s Parenthesis.
33 Bombay Chrionicle, 21 Feb. 1921
34 Bombay Chronicle, 23 Feb. 1921
than his own political programme could do. But programmes with a religious flavouring had a habit of turning from servants into masters, and I doubt whether the Hindu Congressman is getting much satisfaction when he sees the Khilafat question taking the first place in the Congress resolutions.35

According to the official report Gandhi was suffering from a mischievous from of religious mania36 had promised the Bengali Hindu Marwaris, who had lavishly supported the move financially, “the disappearance of Western civilization and a return of the golden days of Hindu Supremacy in the land.”37 Therefore, boycott policy of the Council election as part of the Satyagraha was found ‘good’ by Lloyd as it could prevent extremist’s entry into Councils.38 Who were against the British Government?

The Government treated the leaders of the two religious communities separately to disband the movement. Willington advised the Government to “first” put its hand on Maulana Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali, and “then to go to Gandhi”39 When Ali brothers were arrested in September40 and sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment 41, the only arrested Hindu

40. Bombay Chronicle, 16-19 Sept, 1921
41. Bombay Chronicle, 16-19 Sept, 1921
leader (Mr. Shankaracharya) was “acquitted” 42. it developed
the feelings of Government’s leniency towards the Hindus
among the Muslims and it affected the idea of Hindu-Muslims
brotherhood badly 43.

The government was happy to see the signs of rift
between the Muslims and Hindus in July 1921. Montagu noted
with satisfaction the growing popularity of Gandhi at the cost
of Ali brothers. 44. He was in favour of the rise of rift between
Muslims and Hindus through a natural process another through
Government’s repressive policy and other underhand official
tactics 45.

Jinnah felt sympathy for the movement and still wanted
to use the event for the advancement of Indian interest of home
rule. In the summer of 1921, he left for England leaving the
entire Indian political scene at the behest of Gandhi and Ali
brothers. He planned to get certain political concession from
the British Government. In the back ground of Non
Cooperation movement, writing to The Time (London) in June
1921, he expressed his-alike views:

History has taught us that repression is the greatest
incitement to revolution, and non-cooperation is one of the
shapes that such a movement would take in India. The
intelligentsia of India must be driven towards revolution if
things are allowed to drift. Repression is the reply given by
the Government. Prosecutions and arrest and imprisonment
of some of our finest men are matters of daily occurrence all
over India. There is a deadlock. Is there a way out?

42. Lloyd to Montagu, 5 Nov, 1921, Montagu Papers, D. 523/26.
43. Ibid.
44. Montagu to Lloyd, 29 July 1921, Montagu Papers, D.523/23.
45. Montagu to Lloyd, 3, 5, 30 August 1921, Montagu Papers, D.523/23.
Repression is not the remedy. It will only make the cancer grow and make another Ireland. Conciliation and justice, so often alluded to by Lord Reading, represent the only course. To achieve this, Government must give definite proofs— we want deeds, not word.46

In order to resolve the prevailing crisis caused by the Jinnah proposed the following eight point formula:

1. The People of India feel that those officials who were implicated in the Punjab have not been punished and that men who were guilty of issuing and executing crawling orders and committing humanity, still remain in the service in the Crown. “One of the fundamental principles”, said Lord Reading, in his recent speech, “was that in India there could be no trace, and must be no trace, of Racial inequality”, He assured Indians that the British people did not indulge in any notion of racial superiority and predominance. He further declared, “there could not and must never be humiliation under British Rule of any Indian because he was Indian”. May I appeal personally that those delinquents be removed from the service of the Crown?

2. The people of India, who undoubtedly have lost faith in British justice and who stand in mortal dread of another Jallianwala Bagh, must be given tangible guarantee that such horrors will not occur. In future it is said that Government have already circulated a military manual which is sufficient to prevent a repetition of the events in the Punjab but it is a secret and confidential manual; At the same time the most difficult task of those who do not wish to see bloodshed is to regain and restore the faith and confidence of Indians in the present Government. Is it therefore not possible that this military manual may be submitted to a small committee

46 Reproduced in Bombay Chronicle, 22 July 1921.
of prominent Indian representatives, who can, after examination of it assure the people by a public manifesto that they are satisfied with its terms.

3. I would suggest that a resolution be moved in the Legislative Assembly and accepted by the Government of India that in future, any official who is found guilty of intending to humiliate an Indian as such, should be dismissed without pension.

4. There is a catalogue of long-standing grievances, and the reforms embodied in the Government of India Act of 1919, were not an adequate installment. The Secretary of State for India while introducing the Bill stated in the House that India may not have to wait for 10 years for the Statutory Commission provided there in, before substantial advance is made, as it greatly depended upon the capacity of the people. Will not the Secretary of State at once, now, make a declaration that at the end of the term of this Councils-viz, three years, complete provincial autonomy will be granted, and that in the central government, barring Army, Navy, foreign affairs and ruling princes, all other department will be transferred?

5. There can be no “home rule without home defense” and India is no exception to that. India has to spend more than half her revenue for the upkeep and maintenance of a standing army which starves all other department of the State. The Indian Defense Force Act was passed during the war, but what little progress was made under the stress of war in training of Indians has now been slackened. The citizen army is of primary importance to India. If a definite scheme is put into force without delay and a citizen army is established, it will go far to convince us that Britain really means to assist India to become free and self-governing member of the British Commonwealth.
6. The Rowlatt Act, Press Act, Seditious Meetings Act, and all repressive measures on the Indian Statute-book and old regulations should be forthwith repealed. Every Statute which contains or embodies a racial distinction between Europeans and Indians should be purged of this stigma.

7. All political prisoners should be released.

8. If the Councils were dissolved and fresh elections held, the Indian shall be convinced of England’s sincerity, and the Nationalists will concentrate on a constructive and progressive programme which concerns the welfare of the millions of human souls.\footnote{This has not yet been published in the collections of Jinnah’s speeches and statements.}

Lord Reading accepted that Jinnah’s suggestions and demands were well appreciated by the British to improve the Indian situation placed in a position of such grave responsibility and trust and he can either make India a real partner in the British Commonwealth, or bar the door and make her a rebel\footnote{\textit{Bombay Chronicle}, 22 July 1921.}. The British were very conscious that what Jinnah wanted to\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}.

In a meeting held in London in August 1921 which was addressed by Jinnah who exposed the “broken pledges to Indian Muslims” by the British, as moral and political at the cost of British honour and justice.\footnote{\textit{Bombay Chronicle}, 1 Sept 1921}
Jinnah met Montagu, the Secretary of State for India to discuss solution of the Indian political problem, but adopted a change after all. 51

On his return to Bombay, Jinnah interviewed by a representative of the Bombay Chronicle, termed the British policy of repression “as thoroughly unjustifiable”, and has “paid no heed” to what even they themselves urged upon. Therefore Jinnah warned the Government:

The non-cooperation movement is only a symptom and expression of general dissatisfaction, owing to the utter disregard of public opinion and of outstanding grievance. In my opinion, the only course open to the Government is to come to a settlement of the three questions, the Khilafat, the Punjab and Swaraj-on reasonable lines. No Government has ever succeeded in matters worse. 52

A government was not serious to understand Jinnah’s concern the Public was ready to opt any extreme to win the Swaraj. Maulana Hasrat Mohani moved independence resolution in the Congress meeting, but it was defeated as Gandhi although Gandhi legitimized his view but this attitude was heartedly annoying for those who were willing for swaraj. 53 Still Molana Hasrat Mohani announced that a declaration from 1st January 1922 of an Indian Republic called the United States of India… to be attained by all possible and proper means including guerilla warfare in case martial law was proclaimed will be issued. 54 It was an early made of reach up of non-cooperation movement.

52. Ibid.
Hindu leader to brought as “honourable settlement” between Gandhi, Government in November-December 1921 Jinnah along with Malviya had already suggested to the viceroy for a Conference between Gandhi and Government proposed to be held on 14 Jan. 1922, for an “honourable settlement” between and the subjects.

Jinnah had to play a key role in those settlement all the correspondence was to be received and analyzed by Jinnah in order to prepare a brief resume to be presented before the Conference on 14 January. However, although “the main object of the conveners was to effect a round table conference with the Viceroy on the Irish model”, but known as “the Malaviya Conference”, this conference failed to perform expected results. Yet the Committee of the certain adopted five resolutions moved by Jinnah without opposition.

Although “all the non-cooperators abstaining from the voting”57. The first three resolutions carried the same views as were already expressed in Jinnah’s 8-point formula and presented the suggestions. The fourth resolution that demands a Round Table Conference should be called as soon as possible and that His Majesty’s Government should clothe His Excellency the Viceroy with the authority necessary for the purpose of arriving at a settlement”. The fifth resolution recommended the formation of a committee of 20 leading personalities in order “to carry on all communication with the Government on the one hand and the important political organizations in the country on the other with the view of arranging the composition, the dates and other details relating

55. The Times (London), 17 Jan 1922
57. Bombay Chronicle, 16 Jan 1922.
to the holding of the said Round Table Conference.\textsuperscript{58} Jinnah continued to function as the key man on this Committee.\textsuperscript{59}

Gandhi weak position had already been exposed at the Ahmadabad sessions of the parties and he was looking for a suitable moment to step out of the movement, as the later events prove.\textsuperscript{60} He wanted to get benefits from the Viceroy and the Moderates, for shifting his stance on the Khilafat. The proposed Round Table conference help him.

By this way they could further ignore Jinnah and his allied leaders. For the Government the political influence of Gandhi and Ali Brothers had “almost vanished” and official opinion was against the Viceroy’s participation in the conference.\textsuperscript{61} Lloyd considered the Round Table Conference a trap for the British government at a time when non-cooperation movement had lost his strength.\textsuperscript{62}

The situation made it “quite clear” that the Non-Cooperation could not continue further on Gandhi’s peaceful strategy and Violence in politics was expected. In this background the burning alive 21 policemen and chowkidarson

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} For official proceedings of the Malaviya Conference see Bombay Chronicle, 18, 20 Jan and 8 Feb, 1922. Also see Jinnah’s letter to the Editor, Bombay Chronicle, 20 Jan, 1922.
4 February 1922 at Chauri Chaura in the district Gurdaspur (U.P), Gandhi called the Non-Cooperation Movement off and thus the movement came to end Gandhi was arrested on 10 March sentenced to six year’s simple imprisonment on 18th March 1922.63

After the end of Non-Cooperation Movement there arose a great debate all over the country whether freedom could be achieved by constitutional agitation by direct action”. Jinnah was of the opinion the:

Constitutional methods could good when the government itself was constitutional. The problem arose when the Government was not constitutional and could not function according to the will of the people country had achieved freedom without bloodshed. It was true that in India they had a bureaucratic. But the question in his opinion was whether the time had come for Direct Action. Speaking for himself he was of the opinion that had not arrived for Direct Action. However he had his sympathies the proposed of with Direct64.

But not an extreme action unless all the political forces of the country had been properly organized with the presence such politicians who could be relied upon.

It could be used in the case of event of the Viceroy’s or the Governor’s using of veto power against the popular will of the people reflected through such Assemblies, national or provincial;65 This action could not only have been Supported by popular move of the masses; rather it would have forced the British

64. Bombay Chronicle, 11 Feb, 1922
Government to transfer power to the elected Assemblies, Jinnah’s addressed to the Bombay Students Brotherhood on February, 1922. However, Gandhi and Ali brothers reformed to refused Jinnah’s position and ultimately were put build the Bar’s office a so called tried.