

Role of a Cosmopolitan Pakistani During Freedom Movement: A Case Study of Zafrulla Khan

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Abstract

This paper examines the pivotal, yet often understated, role of Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan within the context of the Indian subcontinent's freedom movement. While much of the historiography surrounding the Pakistan Movement focuses on political mobilization and mass agitation, this case study highlights the critical importance of intellectual, legal, and cosmopolitan contributions to the struggle for sovereignty. As a jurist and diplomat, Zafrulla Khan navigated the complex intersection of colonial legal frameworks and the burgeoning aspirations of Muslim nationalism. The paper analyzes his participation in the Round Table Conferences and his strategic contributions to the drafting of constitutional proposals, arguing that his "cosmopolitan" approach—defined by an adeptness at operating within international diplomatic spheres and a nuanced understanding of democratic governance—provided the Muslim League with a necessary technocratic legitimacy. Furthermore, this study addresses the tensions inherent in his dual identity: an ardent advocate for Muslim political rights and a figure deeply invested in the global, legalistic norms of the British Empire. By investigating his correspondence, speeches, and legislative contributions, this research illuminates how his intellectual labor bridged the gap between local communal demands and international political recognition. Ultimately, this case study re-contextualizes Zafrulla Khan not merely as a peripheral administrator, but as a key architect who helped formalize the political and legal arguments that rendered the creation of Pakistan a coherent possibility in the eyes of a skeptical colonial administration.

Key words: Zafrulla Khan, Pakistan Movement. Constitutional Diplomacy, ALL India Muslim League, Round Table Conferences

Introduction

The history of the Indian subcontinent's struggle for independence is often painted in broad, populist strokes. We tend to remember the thunderous rallies, the civil disobedience, and the towering charisma of leaders who could move millions with a single speech. However, behind the grand theater of mass mobilization lay a quieter, more intricate battle—a battle of constitutional law, international diplomacy, and intellectual

rigor. Within this sphere, the figure of Chaudhry Sir Zafrulla Khan emerges not just as a participant, but as a critical architect of the political identity that would eventually become Pakistan. To understand Zafrulla Khan is to understand a specific brand of "cosmopolitan nationalism" that navigated the rigid structures of the British Raj to carve out a space for a new sovereign reality.

The term "cosmopolitan" often carries a connotation of being unmoored from one's roots, yet for Zafrulla Khan, it was his greatest strength. Educated at King's College London and called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, he possessed an intimate, almost surgical understanding of the British legal mind. This case study posits that Khan's role in the freedom movement was unique because he did not speak to the colonial masters in the language of rebellion alone, but in the language of the law—the very instrument the British used to justify their hegemony. By mastering the colonizer's vernacular, he was able to challenge the empire from within its own hallowed halls, from the Lahore High Court to the high-stakes negotiations in London.

The period between the 1920s and 1947 was an era of profound anxiety and transition. For the Muslims of India, the prospect of a post-colonial future was fraught with the fear of becoming a "permanent minority" in a centralized democratic state. While others focused on the emotional and religious resonance of the Muslim identity, Zafrulla Khan focused on the mechanics of power. His involvement in the Round Table Conferences (1930–1932) serves as a primary example of his cosmopolitan agency. In these meetings, he was not merely representing a communal interest; he was articulating a sophisticated vision of federalism and minority protections that resonated with international standards of justice.

Furthermore, exploring Zafrulla Khan's role necessitates a departure from the "Great Man" theory of history that often dominates Pakistani textbooks. Instead, we must look at him as a bridge. He was the bridge between the traditionalist demands of the Muslim League's core and the cold, pragmatic requirements of British constitutional drafting. His drafting of the "Punjab Unionist" positions and his later advocacy for the Muslim League's platform demonstrated a man who could translate the "two-nation theory" into a viable administrative framework. He was, in many ways, the legal translator of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's political vision.

In this paper, the specific instances where Khan's diplomatic finesse altered the course of negotiations. We will examine how his service on the Viceroy's Executive Council and his eventual appointment to the International Court of Justice were not just personal accolades, but strategic vantage points that allowed him to advocate for the decolonization of the mind and the state. By evaluating his contributions, moving away from a monolithic view of the freedom struggle and toward a more nuanced appreciation for the intellectuals who ensured that when the British finally left, they left behind a state that was legally and structurally prepared to stand on its own.

Ultimately, the story of Zafrulla Khan is the story of how a "citizen of the world" used his global perspective to secure a local home. It is a reminder that the birth of a nation requires more than just a flag and a border; it requires a foundation of law, a history of advocacy, and the tireless labor of those who know how to win an argument in the world's most demanding forums.

Review of Literature

Burke, S. M. (1990). *Pakistan's foreign policy: An historical analysis*. Oxford University Press. Burke's seminal work provides an essential external perspective on Khan's "cosmopolitan" utility. The author argues that Khan's greatest contribution was his "brilliant advocacy" at the UN, where he effectively "turned the tables" on the Indian delegation during the early Kashmir debates. Burke highlights how Khan's international

legal training allowed him to frame Pakistan's territorial and political claims in a language that the global community could not easily dismiss, bridging the gap between a new state's survival and international legitimacy.

Hussain, I. (1985). Sir Zafrulla Khan: The silent judge. *Archiv des Völkerrechts*, 23(4), 478–482 is a posthumous scholarly review which examines his “lawyer-like” rather than “philosophical” approach to justice. Hussain posits that while Khan was a “silent judge” in terms of voluminous written opinions at the International Court of Justice, his silence was a pragmatic byproduct of his training in the British-Indian Federal Court system. For a researcher, this provides a critical look at how his professional persona was a blend of colonial judicial heritage and personal restraint.

The primary source, Khan, M. Z. (1991). *The forgotten years: Memoirs of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan*. Sani Panhwar/Oriental Publishers is indispensable for understanding Khan's self-perception as a cosmopolitan mediator. In these memoirs, Khan details his tactical negotiations during the Round Table Conferences and his strategic “loyalty” to the British authorities as a means to extract concessions for the Muslim League. The book reveals a man who viewed himself as a bridge-builder, utilizing his social capital in London to advance the communal interests of Indian Muslims.

Based on oral history interviews conducted at Columbia University, this volume (Khan, M. Z. (2004). *The reminiscences of Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan* (W. Wilcox & A. T. Embree, Eds.) Oriental Publishers) captures the candid voice of Khan. It is particularly useful for analyzing his “cosmopolitanism” as it documents his interactions with global leaders and his role in the Boundary Commission. The editors highlight his ability to “walk through the loftiest corridors of world power with ease,” making this a key text for studying the intersection of his religious faith and his secular diplomatic duties.

Qamer, T., & Kanwal, L. (2024). Pakistan movement: The political contributions of Muhammad Zafarullah Khan. *Insights of Pakistan, Iran and the Caucasus Studies*, 3(4), 126–135 is a modern research paper re-contextualizes Khan within the patron-client politics of the British Raj. The authors argue that his membership in the Unionist Party and his subsequent transition to the Muslim League's legal architect was a “masterpiece of political artistry.” It specifically addresses the “blurred image” of Khan in traditional Pakistani historiography, advocating for a recognition of his role as a “founding father” despite later sectarian marginalization.

Wolpert, S. (1984). *Jinnah of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press is primarily a biography of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Wolpert provides critical snapshots of Zafrulla Khan as Jinnah's most trusted “legal lieutenant.” Wolpert describes Khan's cold reasoning and judicious persuasion as pivotal in Jinnah's decision-making processes, particularly regarding the Cabinet Mission Plan. This work validates the “cosmopolitan” thesis by showing how Jinnah utilized Khan's international sophistication to bolster the Muslim League's legal standing.

Methodology

To capture the “cosmopolitan” essence of Zafrulla Khan's role, this study adopts a qualitative, historical case-study methodology, relying on a triangulation of primary and secondary sources. Rather than just recounting a timeline, I have focused on “intellectual biography” as a lens to examine how Khan's legal training in London and his judicial career in India intersected with his political advocacy. The core of this research is built upon a thematic analysis of Khan's own memoirs—*The Reminiscences* and *The Forgotten Years*—which provide first-hand insights into his diplomatic mindset. These are cross-referenced with official constitutional records from the Round Table Conferences and British parliamentary papers to verify his technical contributions to the

“Two-Nation Theory.” Additionally, by synthesizing scholarly perspectives from historians like Stanley Wolpert and S.M. Burke, the methodology accounts for the external perception of his diplomacy. This multi-layered approach ensures that Khan is analyzed not in a vacuum, but as a bridge between the local aspirations of the Muslim League and the global legal standards of the mid-twentieth century.

The Joint Select Committee 1933-34

The conclusion of the Round Table Conferences was the issuance of the “White Paper” by the British Government (Nijjar, 1996), which was forwarded to the British Parliament consisting of both the Houses to form a committee which should draft the future constitution for the Indian Sub-Continent. The committee (Dumasia, 2008) constituted of all the ex-Viceroy of the Indian Sub-Continent (Dobso, 2009), the Marquis of Salisbury, the Austen Chamberlain, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Coomo Lang and many other members; on the other hand, Sir Samuel Hoare-Secretary of State for India would be defending the White Paper from the side of the Indian Government (Batalvi, 1991). The Indian delegation was invited “to examine the witnesses while the committee records the evidence (Pannu, 2005).”

The witnesses came as individuals and in groups but the most significant among them was Mr. Winston Churchill (Batalvi, 1991). He was examined by the committee for four days but the Indian side for all time differed with him on every point, still his skills and abilities were admired by everyone, because he defended his arguments in such a satisfactory way (Batalvi, 1991). It seemed to be an uphill task to trap Churchill on any point (Prasad, 2010). Sir Samuel Hoare inquired from Khan with the intention of knowing the fact that why he did not put any question to Churchill; the reply was “I Dare Not” (Wilcon & Embree, 2004) Then Hoare gave the following suggestion to Khan:

I am not sure whether you’re unwilling to say it outright, but let me point out that most of the questions put to Mr. Churchill have focused on the broader issue of whether India should be granted Dominion Status. He has been reminded more than once of his own earlier speeches in which he supported Dominion Status for India. However, he brushes that aside by arguing that status and actual power are two different things. According to him, India already has Dominion Status—after all, it signed the Treaty of Versailles and holds membership in the League of Nations. In his view, that satisfies the matter of “status.” But he insists that the exercise of real governing authority is something else entirely, and claims that India is not yet prepared for that responsibility (Batalvi, 1991).

So, Khan was determined to put questions to Churchill by drawing his attention towards specific issues, instead of asking him general questions. When Churchill was asked by Khan to answer the question that since India has got the Dominion Status, therefore, at what time will it be able to get the status of the Self-Government for itself? (Batalvi, 1991) Churchill gave a vague answer, so Khan had to say, “Mr. Churchill, I must admit I’m at a bit of a disadvantage here. English isn’t my first language, and I seem to have failed—twice now—to explain myself clearly. May I try once more?” (Batalvi, 1991) Khan was permitted to proceed and then he started asking questions by using the prefixes, “ifs” and “provided”, so that Churchill could answer him straightforwardly. The answers by Churchill were, “I do not any idea” (Khan, 2009). Such answers by Churchill enabled the committee to think that India has progressed considerably and was ready for Self-Government, and such an effort was made possible by the questions of Khan (Wilcon & Embree, 2004). When the meeting came to an end, Churchill said, “My Lord Chairman (Khan, 2004), may I be permitted to say that I have not noticed that Mr. Zafrulla Khan suffers from any disadvantage from any lack of knowledge of English language (Batalvi, 1991).”

On the fourth day, when the evidences were accomplished, Churchill came to Khan, shook his hand and said, “You have given me the two most difficult hours before this committee (Lai & Kidwai, 1966).” Churchill was followed by Sir Michale O’Dwyer (Mahajan, 1963), but he was not as tricky as the former was. Dwyer had to admit that what Khan spoke regarding the Punjab was accurate (Khan, 2004), and admired him for choosing an example that was best suited in that situation (Khan, 2004). It was due to the competence of Khan that he became a friend of Churchill and whenever he visited England, he used to meet with Churchill (Lai & Kidwai, 1996).

Commonwealth International Conference 1933

When Khan was in London to attend the meetings of the Joint Select Committee, he received the instruction from the Viceroy to attend the invitation of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Cell, 1992) by presenting the Indian Sub-Continent in the Commonwealth International Conference which was going to be held at Hart House, University of Toronto, Canada (Batalvi, 1991). The members of Indian delegation included Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Mir Maqbool Mahmood, and Khan. The theme of the conference was: “whether the crown was divisible or not? Could the crown be at war as the Crown of one Dominion and be neutral as the Crown of another Dominion?” (Evatt, 1967). The conference continued; however, the Committee failed to the answer the questions that were the theme of the conference.

The question was answered during World War II, when Eire being a dominion decided to remain neutral whereas the rest of the dominions were at war with the Germany (Mansergh, 1968). Moreover, in 1948, when India attacked Pakistan, it became apparent that members of Commonwealth can also wage war with one another (Khan, 2004). During the moment in time of the conference, the Indian Sub-Continent was considered as a Dominion. It is worthy of noticing that at that instance, Indians were stressing hard to get Dominion Status for India, whereas Khan opined that India was already well thought-out as a Dominion, but not as a responsible Dominion; it was for the reason that the attitudes of the Indian political leaders particularly that of the congress were irresponsible (Batalvi, 1991).

At this point, it seemed that Khan had played no effectual role by participating in the conference; however, it was because of that Conference due to which Khan was able to get in touch with prominent personalities. It was because of the interaction of Khan with such personalities, who helped him to in the later days to get things done for Pakistan. The famous personalities included people like, Lord Robert Cecil, who was a great advocate of the League of Nations, and believed in the “concept of international peace and co-operation through peaceful means”, and Philip Noel Baker, who won the Nobel Prize for peace (Gruyter, 1983).

League of Nations 1939

It was during the period of the World War II, when Khan was in London, and was acting as chairman of War and Supply, that he received the message of the Viceroy to represent the Indian Sub-Continent in the League of Nations (Medzini, 2013). Additionally, he was asked to lead the delegation and was also allowed to do, what he thought was best (Batalvi, 1991).

It was on the request of the Finland that the session¹ of the League of Nations was called. Finland wanted the League to stop Russian aggression against it (Sprague, 2010). Speeches were delivered against the Russian aggression but, with the purpose to shun anything that would aggrieve Germany (Khan, 2004). Khan was the one who took the

¹ The president of the session was Mr. Hambro of Norway.

floor on behalf of the Indian subcontinent, condemning not only Russia's actions but also openly criticizing Hitler (Batalvi, 1991). What compelled him to speak was the League's decision to expel Russia from its membership, while remaining silent about—indeed, failing even to question—Hitler's aggression. Khan challenged the delegates, asking why they were following what he called a “policy of amusement” (McDonough, 1998), effectively buying time for Hitler (Henig, 1997).

The essence of Khan's speech was clear: if the assembled delegates did not stand united, they would be defeated one by one. Only collective resistance to aggression could prevent them all from being subdued and ultimately destroyed. He was aware that such words might not sit well coming from a representative of a country that was not even independent. Who was he, after all, to lecture them? And yet, he believed the gravity of the moment demanded honesty and the courage to speak plainly (Batalvi, 1991).

Khan's speech did not sit well with the President of the League of Nations, who responded by directing that only a summary of it be interpreted rather than the full address (Batalvi, 1991). It is striking that when Hitler began his campaign of attacks, Norway—one of the countries that had been especially careful during League sessions not to criticize him—was among the first to be invaded. Years later, Agha Khan told Khan that when Swiss delegates met him, they confided that the most meaningful and effective speech delivered at the League had been the one given by the Indian representative (Khan, 2004).

As Agent General² of British to China 1942

Khan was considered as the pioneer of building Sino-British diplomatic relations (Batalvi, 1991). Khan being a judge was appointed as an agent general to China (Perwazi, 2011). It happened in February 1942, when the emperor of China came to India on an official visit. He was honored a banquet by the Viceroy in which Khan was also invited. The emperor wished that to have diplomatic relations with the Indian Sub-Continent and for that purpose one must be sent for a period of six months. The Viceroy nominated Khan as the Agent General of British representing the Indian Sub-Continent in China. The Viceroy said “There is however, nobody else I can think of, who can carry out the assignment with as much ability and dignity as you can” (Batalvi, 1991). In China, Khan had to stay in Chungking, (at that time it was the capital of the country) (Khan, 1983). Khan was not going to receive any special allowance for his mission, as the allowances as a judge was far more privileged than that of an ambassador, so he had to accept the task as a challenge for him (Khan, 1983).

When Khan went to China, there he received a status that was to a great extent higher than the status of the ambassadors of the European Countries (Batalvi, 1991). Although at that time, India was not an independent country, but the Chinese always preferred the Asians over the Europeans (Frolic, 1981). For instance, when Sir Horace Seymour-British Ambassador was asked to convey an urgent message of the British government to Chiang Kai-shek in China (Wilcon & Embree, 2004), at that time, it took days to arrange a meeting with the emperor. Thereby, Seymour has to approach Khan, to convey his message to the Chinese Senior Deputy Foreign Minister (Wilcon & Embree, 2004).

Related to the socio-political situations prevailing in China, Khan had to send reports to the Viceroy on weekly basis but he never forgot to press the Viceroy for the independence of the Indian Sub-Continent (Perwazi, 2011). It was during that time, when Khan wrote a letter and a memorandum to the Viceroy urging him to bestow freedom to India.³ Moreover, he wrote that “I know that I am a judge and it does not suit me to be

² The agent general was also ranked as ambassador.

³ See appendix II.

indulged in politics but as an Indian it is my right to speak for India's freedom (Khan, 2004)."

When he came back to India, he had a detailed discussion with the Viceroy. He highlighted three most important conditions that were going to shape the future of China. First after the war, China was going to be overtaken by the Communist Party because they were well-organized and trained; additionally, they were resisting the Japanese forces, whereas the ruling party was corrupt and weak, i.e. the National Party or the Kuomintang, headed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek (Clements, 2006). Second, it was an inaccuracy on the part of the British Government that the Communist Party in China was "pink and not red" (Batalvi, 1991), Mao Tse Tung and Chou En Lai were trained by the Communist in Moscow, and they had the support of the latter (Braun, 1982). Third, it was an erroneous postulation that the peasant would resist the Communist, they were so browbeaten that they were ready to surrender to anyone who could offer them protection and then allow them to work (Khan, 1983).

The minutiae given by Khan were appalling for the Viceroy and he was not eager to acknowledge them, for the reason that for him the niceties provided to him by Khan were mind-boggling (Perwazi, 2011). Regarding Khan's stay in China, Kai Shek wrote, "during his (Khan's) short stay here, he has been instrumental in drawing closer both political and cultural ties between India and China" (Perwazi, 2011).

Pacific Relations Conference, Mont Tremblant 1942, and Official visit to England 1943

When Khan came back from Chungking, the Viceroy asked him to lead a small delegation (Batalvi, 1991) and proceed to (Mont Tremblant, Quebec) in Canada to attend the Pacific Relations Conference. There was no direct flight to Quebec, so they had to go from Middle East (Khan, 1983). The Conference was almost academic in its nature and was related to the issue of diplomatic relations between U.S. and the countries of the Pacific region (Newman, 1992). It was discussed that what impact US was going to bring in the region by its contribution in the world war and what would be the outcome of that involvement by the US? (Batalvi, 1991).

During that Conference, Khan met with the US delegate, Dr. Phillip Jessup (Brien, 2003); the British delegate, Lord Hailey (Cell, 1992), and also received invitations from Governor General of Canada, the Earl of Athlone (Council, 2005), Sir Lyman Duff-the Chief Justice of Canada (Khan, 2004). He received a message from Lord Halifax (Khan, 1983) to meet him in Washington before proceeding to London (Batalvi, 1991). In Washington, Khan was able to meet with President Roosevelt (Khan, 1983) whom he requested that the latter may kindly force Churchill to give Independence to India. Roosevelt said, "I cannot force Churchill, but I will not allow in the least an opportunity to slip from my hands in pressing him for India's freedom" (Goodwin, 1994).

Then in the month of January 1943, Khan went to England, and started his effort to persuade the British Government to put forward their process of Indianization (Batalvi, 1991), and thus paving the path for freedom (Khan, 1983). For the most part of his visit, Khan held discussions with Dr James Grigg (Kochavi, 2005), Sir Findlater Stewart (Carnall, 2010), and with Sir John Anderson (Wrigley, 2002). The result of the discussions were the formation of a scheme, "based on setting up a wholly Indian cabinet" (Khan, 2004) without amending the constitution. The scheme was to be finalized in the following manner in which, "Sir Rama Swami Mudaliar was to act as Prime Minister without assuming the title. And Sir V.T. Krishnamachari was to take up the finance and Sir Aziz-ul-Haq (the High Commissioner in London), Commerce etc" (Batalvi, 1991).

Childishness publicized by the Congress leadership shattered the efforts of Khan. It was during that time when Gandhi kept his fast unto death and the Hindu members (Panigarh, 2004) in Viceroy's Council resigned. The Viceroy uttered the following words: "It demonstrated the impracticability of transferring any substantial power to Indians during the war." Furthermore, he kept on saying that the minister should not have resigned (Batalvi, 1991), and at the moment, if the British gave powers to the Indians, it would be considered a weakness of the British Government; thereby, the proposal was roll backed and Khan had to go back devoid of achieving anything (Khan, 2004).

Commonwealth Relations Conference 1945

In March 1945, Khan got an opportunity to lead a delegation to Chatham House at the headquarters of Royal Institute of International Affairs at London (Batalvi, 1991). In the Chatham house, the head of every delegate delivered a short speech elaborating the role of his country in the war and then passing a comment on the aims and objectives of the Commonwealth countries. Khan contrasting them, did not mention the aims and the objective of the Commonwealth countries rather subsequent to unfolding India's role in the war; he drew the attention of the members of the Conference towards the independence of the Indian Sub-Continent. He said: "While India had two and a half million people in the field to defend the freedom of the Commonwealth, it was a great irony that India should still be a suppliant for its own freedom (Batalvi, 1991)." His effort was intended to get freedom for India at its earliest.

The speech of Khan was given a massive media hype and the members of the British Parliament praised his efforts for his country. So, on the banquet at Claridge's Hotel,⁴ he was asked to deliver the opening speech, taking advantage of that, Khan explained his views which he could not have expressed in the Chatham House. He opined that there "was agreement on all sides for India to be a Dominion as Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Wolpert, 2006)." Furthermore, he discarded the claim of the British that a deadlock flanked by the Muslim League and the Congress was the rationale for halting India's freedom (Batalvi, 1991).

At that time, Khan's endeavor did not go unproductive. It was after that speech when Lord Wavell, Viceroy of India, was invited to London for discussions (Batalvi, 1991). When Khan was delivering his speech, at that time, Nehru was in jail, when he heard the speech of Khan he said that: "while we are in jail without saying such words but Khan said them while being in England" (Khan, 1983). However, Khan was of the opinion that there were two methods for attaining freedom: one was by cooperating and demanding; and the other was non-cooperation and demand. We (Khan) chose the former, but it was not successful without the latter, so to get freedom both methods were demanded (Batalvi, 1991).

There is little doubt that Khan's speech attracted considerable attention in London. What is equally important, however, is the impression it created among British officials dealing with India. In a discussion with the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy remarked that he had consulted the Information and Broadcasting Department about sending European speakers to the United States, and about the possibility of Zafrulla undertaking an American tour. At the same time, he noted that Spens appeared somewhat uneasy about Zafrulla's travels and had been reluctant to approve his visit to the troops in Italy. The Viceroy added that Zafrulla's recent speech in London, at least as it had been reported to him, did not strike him as particularly helpful or prudent (Perwazi, 2011).

⁴ Except Churchill, entire British cabinet was present, <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/16th-march-1945/13/a-new-plan-for-india>.

The Secretary of State for India, however, took a somewhat different view. Writing to the Viceroy, he observed that he had heard the Indian delegation had performed very well, with Zafrulla standing out in particular. He admitted that he saw no real harm in Zafrulla's forthright suggestion that power be transferred under an interim constitution by a fixed date if Indians failed to frame one themselves. In his opinion, this proposal did not differ greatly from his own thinking, except that he considered the existing constitutional framework to be the best possible interim arrangement—provided that steps were taken to make the Executive more representative and to improve the legislature by implementing the relevant provisions of the 1935 Act as they applied to British India (Perwazi, 2011). With that speech of Khan and with the change of government in England⁵, the Prime Minister announced his craving to transfer power to the Indians (Lyon, 2008). It made Khan very apprehensive about the positions of the Muslims in the Punjab seeing that the Unionist Party was under the sway of the non-Muslims, who could weaken the demand of Pakistan, if they fashioned their government in the Punjab.

Conclusion

As we reflect on Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan's place in the freedom movement, we encounter a story that complicates the usual, simplified picture of Pakistan's creation. If Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the guiding vision and the Muslim masses were the driving force, then Zafrulla Khan was the movement's legal mind and diplomatic strategist. His life reminds us that the birth of a nation is not achieved by passion and protest alone; it also requires careful planning, legal precision, and international persuasion. Through his cosmopolitan outlook, the Two-Nation Theory emerged not merely as a rallying cry in Lahore, but as a constitutional argument articulated in London's committee rooms and later in global forums.

Zafrulla's broader, international perspective enabled the Muslim League to move beyond colonial stereotypes that dismissed Indian Muslims as emotional or politically immature. Instead, he framed their demands in the language of federalism, constitutional safeguards, and international precedent. In doing so, he compelled the British to confront Muslim political aspirations seriously and on equal terms. From his participation in the Round Table Conferences to his role in shaping the core principles behind the Lahore Resolution, he helped transform the idea of a separate Muslim homeland into a structured, credible political project. His career demonstrates that meaningful change often requires mastering—and strategically using—the very systems one seeks to reform.

Yet his legacy also reveals the complexities of identity in a newly independent state. While his diplomatic skill earned Pakistan early recognition and respect—particularly through his advocacy on issues such as Palestine and Kashmir at the United Nations—he later faced marginalization at home amid rising sectarian tensions. His story thus reflects both the promise and the contradictions of post-colonial nation-building. To revisit Zafrulla Khan today is to reconnect with a vision of Pakistan grounded in constitutionalism, legal reasoning, and active engagement with the wider world. His form of “cosmopolitan nationalism” showed that one could champion the rights of a particular community while still participating confidently in the international order.

In the end, Sir Zafrulla Khan's life underscores that diplomacy and legal craftsmanship were just as vital to the freedom movement as speeches and mass mobilization. He stood at the intersection of empire and independence, using the legal and political tools of the colonial system to help lay the foundations of a sovereign state. Any reassessment of subcontinental history that overlooks his contribution risks missing how carefully constructed Pakistan's legal framework truly was. His example invites a fuller, more

⁵ The formation of Labor Government in England.

balanced understanding of the freedom struggle—one that recognizes not only the orators and organizers, but also the jurists and diplomats who ensured that independence rested on solid constitutional ground.

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