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THE ROLE OF  
MINORITIES  
IN  
FREEDOM  
STRUGGLE

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Edited by  
**ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER**

# The Role of Minorities in Freedom Struggle

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1986



## Introduction

The Institute of Islamic Studies is devoted to the study of Islam and Muslims in particular and other religions and minorities in general. The Institute, therefore, thought it fit to organize a seminar to highlight the role of minorities—Muslim as well as other minorities—in the freedom struggle in the year of centenary of Indian National Congress. The role of minorities, in freedom struggle, though not ignored, is not highlighted either in our media and the school and college text books. It is our conviction that highlighting such a role of minorities is conducive to the promotion of communal amity and peace. The Institute of Islamic Studies thought of organizing such a seminar as it is primarily committed to the promotion of communal amity, harmony and peace.

However, there was a problem. There are religious, regional and linguistic minorities. There are Kashmiris, Telegus, Kannads, Malayalis, Tamils, and others who also can be said to have played important role in their own way in the freedom struggle. But in the Indian context, and specially considering the communal situation, it was thought more appropriate to focus on the role of religious minorities and so we chose Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians. However, we included Sindhis as they have a unique character as a religio-linguistic minority

in India. As A.J. Uttam—who presented a paper on “Contribution of Sindhis to Freedom Struggle” points out, “In fact this contribution is matchless, in as much as Sindhi Hindus have lost their land and become homeless and their Muslim brothers have become strangers in their own land due to this independence. I don’t think any other minority can claim such a unique contribution.”

In fact partition was an oddity. Linguistic and cultural identities were underplayed, if not totally ignored. Religion, both Hinduism and Islam included, was thought to be real cementing force. Hindus and Muslims perceived each other as mutually incompatible and readily underplayed their linguistic and cultural identities. However, the latter identities began to assert themselves soon after the development processes got going and acute sense of injustice developed among certain linguistic and cultural groups belonging to the same religion. The theory that religion alone is a sufficient cementing force began to crumble. Religious homogeneity does not necessarily lead to social harmony, especially if unaccompanied by distributive justice. Economic development in underdeveloped countries, experience shows, generally accompanies violence either on communal, linguistic or class lines. This is not an ideological but an empirical truth.

There was yet another problem as pointed out by Prof. M.S. Gore, Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University, while inaugurating the seminar. Prominent individuals like Tilak, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Dadabhai Naoroji and several others, Prof. Gore posed a question to the participants, participated in the freedom struggle as individuals or as representatives of their respective communities? Should we see in Tilak’s participation, the participation of Hindus and in that of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, as that of Muslims or should we think that Tilak who was a Hindu by birth and belief and Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani who was a Muslim by birth and belief contributed immensely to the freedom struggle? Or, did all of them participated in the freedom struggle as Indians or Indian nationals?

These are important questions. Is it therefore relevant to talk or discuss about the participation of majority or minority

communities in the freedom struggle? Should we talk of only Indians and not of religious or linguistic communities? Much though depends on one's point of view it should not be forgotten that social realities are highly complex. They can seldom be reduced to any single factor.

Tilak was an Indian. He was also a Hindu who used Hindu religious symbols and rituals to promote and encourage participation of the Hindu masses in the freedom struggle. Maulana Madani was a staunch Muslim and also an Indian. He was not only quite sensitive to his identity as a Muslim he cared great deal for the interests of Muslims as a community. It was primarily for this reason that the Muslim theologians headed by the Maulana played an important role during the Khilafat Movement as I have pointed out in my paper on the 'Ulama and the freedom struggle.

Much has been debated by the scholars about the significance of religious symbolism—Hindu as well as Muslim—in the freedom struggle. There are some who maintain that it was a grave mistake on the part of Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and the Khilafatists, on the other, to have used religious symbolism as it led to communalisation of politics. Again, it is oversimplified approach and ignores complex reality with which these leaders were confronted. Also, it must be born in mind that communalization of politics was not direct result of such a use of religious symbolism; rather it was product of struggle for power by the elites of these communities.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani, a conservative Muslim and a radical in politics had great respect for Bal Gangadhar Tilak who also fits the same description. Maulana Hasrat, who was also a noted Urdu poet, pays rich tributes to Tilak in his poetry and always refers to him as 'Tilak Maharaj'. Their religions and use of respective religious symbolism in politics (Maulana Mohani was also a staunch Khilafatist) did not come in their way in developing profound respect for each other. They were working for a common goal.

The communal conflict did not follow the Khilafat movement, it preceded it. Mr. Rafiq Khan in his paper on "Khilafat Movement and the Hindu-Muslim Relations" rightly points out

that "To believe that the Hindu-Muslim riots were the sequel of the Khilafat movement is historically untrue for much before the Khilafat movement was even conceived a horrible communal riot had taken place in Aara (Bihar)." Though communal riots took place even during the Khilafat movement the overall emphasis was on communal harmony so much so that as pointed out by Mr. Khan in his above paper Maulana Mohammad Ali had said that "Even if Hindus raped my wife and my mother even then I will not fight against the Hindus" and a staunch Hindu like Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya proposed that cow sacrifice need not be banned in those places where it is carried out traditionally. One should not ignore these aspects of the problem while discussing the use of religious symbolism in pre-independence political struggle for achieving freedom from foreign rule.

The Khilafat movement had a pan-Islamist dimension too. However, it was more a sense of religious rather than transnational political unity. Mushirul Hasan in his paper "Pan-Islamism versus Indian Nationalism : A Reappraisal" points this out when he says, "...when Islam seemed to fall on evil days because of the European imperial penetration into the heartlands of the Muslim world extending from Morocco to Indonesia, the heritage of the past stood forth as a symbol of community pride and distinction ; in fact everywhere Muslims were told to look to their own glorious Islamic past as the source for their inspiration, identity and unity."

No community is, socio-economically speaking, a homogeneous unit. It has class cleavages apart from others. While assessing the role of a community, one has to take these cleavages into account. It is, therefore, not enough to discuss ones Indianness, Muslimness or Hinduness; it is also necessary to take his class aspirations into account to see his role in totality. At times ones national point of view which dominates, at other it may be religio-cultural or economic point of view which might become dominant. Human behaviour is neither rigid nor monolithic (with certain exceptions of course); it is rather a function of ones social situation. Situation might transform a patriot and a nationalist into sectarian or a communal fanatic.

Jinnah's political behaviour is also to be understood as a function of changing situation. He was a patriot and nationalist through and through and also a 'western gentleman' to his fingertips. The power struggle between the elites of the two communities which became increasingly acute as the dawn of freedom drew nearer and nearer, transformed him into a sectarian politician. He was not a megalomaniac but he certainly aspired to be the 'sole-spokesman' of the Muslim community as Ayesha Jalal puts it in her latest book on Jinnah—a position which the Congress was not prepared to accept as it militated against its very concept of secularism and composite nationalism.

The role of Jinnah be better reassessed in its totality. He neither represented the interests of Muslims in India as a whole (many Muslim organizations like the Jami'a al-'Ulama, Ahrars of Punjab, Momins of north India—a community of Muslim weavers etc. refused to acknowledge his leadership) nor was he a religious fanatic as he appeared to many during the last days of freedom struggle. He was representing the interests of Muslim *slariat* classes (as Hamza Alavi puts it in his forthcoming book) as well as those of Muslim business and feudal elite. Moin Shakir discusses these aspects of Jinnah's politics in his paper 'Jinnah and Muslim Separatist Strategy'. Discussing the role of Muslim business classes he says :

There was no antagonism and contradiction between the Muslim bourgeoisie and the Hindu bourgeois interests. But the principle of competition was to work against them. The demand for Pakistan promised them domination, without competition, in the 'land of plenty and prosperity'. They were prepared to stake heavily on Jinnah's political gamble.

As pointed out earlier the last few years before independence were quite crucial. Uma Singh also examines quick developments in Muslim Separatist policies in those crucial years in her paper "Developments in the Muslim Separatist Movement 1940-47".

Another important question is how a community is structured in socio economic sense. There are some scholars who

feel it does not make any sense to talk in terms of Muslim, Parsi, Christian, Sikh or Hindu community in socio-economic sense. There cannot be Hindu or Muslim capitalists or Christian and Sikh workers. There is validity in this point of view, if we see things purely from socio-economic point of view. But ideological reality has its own validity and empirical reality its own. The communities have as much ideological and psychological sense as material sense. It might make perfect psychological sense to talk of 'Muslim capitalists' but it may be absurd to talk so in economic terms.

To understand the role of a community in freedom struggle one will have to keep all these nuances in mind. That is how struggle for power among the elites of various communities developed during freedom struggle and that is how cleavages in these communities developed. Dr. Harish Puri refers to this fact in the introductory part of his paper "Studying the Role of Sikhs in India's Freedom Struggle: Some Points for Consideration" when he says, "The partition and the events connected with it became the single most crucial factor in myth-making and stereo-typing of the role of different communities in the freedom struggle. Competition for political power, in a context requiring mobilization of large numbers, also underlined to the political entrepreneurs, the quick dividends of symbolism and mystifying action."

If we talk of a structured community only in a socio-economic sense without any reference to its religious belief and action, one cannot explain creation of Pakistan. It has often been found that socio-religious myths in short run are more determinative than socio-economic reality. These myths have given shape to many historical realities. Even the feudal or bourgeois interests secular in nature can, and do find expression through the vehicle of religion or religio-cultural identity. In fact this vehicle proves far more powerful than any other secular vehicle. In our own time the Punjab problem proves the correctness of this proposition. Prof. Sharma in his article "Akalis and the National Movement: A case of Total to Tangential And Tactical Support" gives us the necessary background of the Punjab issue as it has emerged today. He rightly draws our attention to the fact that "the Akali

Dal has all along claimed itself to be the sole representative of the Sikhs in India in the same way as the Muslim League claimed to be the sole spokesman of the Indian Muslims. The Akalis' claim is substantially, but perhaps not wholly, true. As there were many muslims in the Indian National Congress (INC) or were otherwise supporting the freedom struggle in the same way there were also some Sikhs in the INC and some Sikh organizations which were supporting the freedom struggle."

Nevertheless one can talk of religious community as a viable entity which did and do play role in our secular affairs. This role may be approved or rejected depending on ones point of view. Again it is in this sense that one would refer to the Muslims, Parsis and Christians too having played a role in our freedom movement. Prof. Shantimoy Roy, Prof. Aloo Dastur and Dr. Teresa Albuquerque discuss the role of these three communities in their respective papers. Dr. Albuquerque's paper is of interest as very little so far has been written about the role of Christians in freedom struggle. Prof. Aloo Dastur also provides us with little known information about certain aspects of Parsi community's participation. Similarly Dr. Abida Samiuddin through her contribution "Freedom Struggle and Urdu Journalism During the Nineteenth Century" has many interesting things to tell us about the role of Urdu journalism. However, it should be born in mind that in nineteenth century there was no concept of fully independent nation (except among a small group of *'ulama* who thought of driving out the British from this country) and only slowly some feelings of Indianness were emerging which are reflected in these Urdu papers of the last century. However, what is important to note is that Urdu was the language of Hindus as well as Muslims and many prominent Urdu papers in nineteenth century were founded by the Hindus.

Today free India is both democratic as well as secular. There is communal conflict in our country which often irrups in a violent form. In such a situation it could be desirable and useful to highlight the role played by some minority communities in freeing our country from the British yoke. It was with this intention that this seminar was organized by the

Institute of Islamic Studies in collaboration with the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR), New Delhi. The papers presented in the seminar are being collected in this volume with the hope that it would promote better understanding between various communities.

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## The 'Ulema and the Freedom Struggle

Asghar Ali Engineer

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru while addressing a meeting near Jami Masjid held to felicitate Maulana Syed Ahmad Madani on his being elected general secretary of the *Jami'at-e-'Ulama-e-Hind* had said that the dust under the feet of these 'Ulama is like corrylium for my eyes and kissing their feet would be a matter of great pride for me.<sup>1</sup>

Why Jawaharlal Nehru had such high regard for these divines? It was for nothing, nor this regard was mere formal manifestation in a Muslim crowd. It was deeply rooted in his personality. And the reason for such high regard for the 'Ulama was their great contribution to the cause of India freedom and unity of the country. These 'Ulama made great sacrifices for liberating India from the clutches of the British rule and later for saving it from vivisection. They opposed the partition plan tooth and nail and for this were subjected to great deal of public harassment by the and followers of the League.

We would like to throw some light in this paper on the role played by the 'Ulama in freedom struggle and as to what were their motives and why did they oppose partitioning of the country.

It would be interesting to note that the 'Ulama could not

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be won over by the Indian Muslim League of Mr. Jinnah for supporting their cause. The rift between the modernists and the theologians began from the time of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. The 'Ulama never reconciled to the British rule and they opposed any party or organisation or individuals who supported it. The Faraizi Movement led by Maulvi Shariatullah and his son Muhammed Mohsin Alias Dadu Mian in Bengal was the systematic beginning of this opposition. While Maulvi Sariatullah and Dadu Mian operated in the eastern parts of Bengal Nasir Ali alias Titu Mir struggled in western parts. These were semi-religious movements with extensive peasant support, fighting both to establish a more just social order in the countryside and to purify and revitalise Islam.<sup>2</sup> Again in the second decade of nineteenth century Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareilly started a movement which also had a two-fold object. Politically its aim was to over-throw the rule of the Sikhs in the Punjab and of the British in the rest of India, and to restore Muslim political supremacy, in the field of religion it aimed at a return to the early simplicity of Islam and at the purging of essentially un-Islamic accretions which had corrupted it during the centuries of its history.<sup>3</sup>

Shah Abdul Aziz, elder son of Shah Waliullah and his ideological heir issued a *fatwa* declaring India under British as *darul harb* (abode of war) and consistently maintained this position though he allowed learning of English and working under the British for earning ones bread (*kasbe-m'ash*).<sup>4</sup> The theologians of Waliyullahi school manifested highest degree of hostility towards the British during the war of independence of 1857 Many of them took part in it and suffered for that. Either they were executed or imprisoned or externed to Andaman or Malta. However their resolve remained unflinching.

When Indian National Congress was formed they called upon Muslims to support it. On this question they came into clash with Sir Syed who opposed extending support to the Congress and instead called upon Muslims to support the British. Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi issued a *fatwa* asking the Muslims to associate with the Congress and against Sir Syed's stand against Muslims joining the Congress. Gangohi and other 'Ulama of his ilk had issued a collection of *fatwas*

entitled *Nusrat al-Ahrar* (for the help of free people) which contained 100 *fatwas*<sup>5</sup> urging upon Muslims to fight the British.

The question arises why the 'Ulama were so uncompromisingly hostile towards the British? There were number of reasons. During the Muslim rule in India the 'Ulama enjoyed many privileges. They manned the Shari'ah courts and performed the functions of *qadis* (judges). They lost these privileges and perks with the establishment of British courts. Also, the British, not the Hindus, snatched power from the hands of Muslims. The Muslims not only lost political power but also suffered great economic setback with the introduction of British rule. The introduction of British goods brought about ruination of Muslim artisans in many Muslim centres of North India. Many 'Ulama had their roots among the urban artisans.

Sir Theodore Morison observe that while Hindus were experiencing an intellectual renaissance, the Muslims all over India were falling into a state of material indigence and intellectual decay.<sup>6</sup> Moreover the Christian missionary activities also became quite vigorous with the consolidation of British power. The 'Ulama saw in it a threat to Islam. All these factors snowballed into formidable opposition to the British power by the theologians. Also, they saw into religious revival, the only possibility of posing challenge to the alien rulers. It is interesting to note that religious revival has often played politically a progressive role. In Indonesia too, the Muslims divines played very important role in freedom movement. Recently Ayatullah Khomeini and his theologian-supporters in Iran successfully over-threw the Shah who perpetrated American imperialist hegemony in that country. Examples can be multiplied from many other countries.

However the situation was extremely complex and did not admit of any easy and straight solution. Sir Syed and his followers perceived the situation very differently. Sir Syed essentially represented upper class interests and he saw advantage for Muslims belonging to those classes in collaborating with the British only. As pointed out earlier the Muslims in North India had by and large participated in the 'mutiny' and after it was suppressed they became target of British wrath.<sup>7</sup> Sir Syed saw the interests of (upper class) Muslims lay only

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in coming closer to the British rulers and winning their hearts. It is interesting to note that like the 'Ulama he also tried to establish religious justification for this collaboration with the British.

He thus says in one of his write-ups in his magazine :

I am not on the side of those Muslims who have shown disloyalty (*namakharami*) and ill-wish (*badkhwahi*) to our Government. I am very much displeased with them and I consider it extremely bad. Because this crisis was such that the Muslims should have stood by the Christians who are people of the book (*ahl-e-kitab*) and our brothers in religion, they have faith in prophets, they have God's commands and the Book given by God and it is integral part of our faith to have faith in it. In this war where Christian blood spilled Muslim blood ought to have spilled and the one who did not do so apart from showing disloyalty and ungratefulness to the Government has also violated religious tenets. They deserve our maximum displeasure.<sup>8</sup> (my tr. from Urdu)

The 'Ulama based on religious tenets had drawn just the opposite conclusion. They held that it was the religious duty of Muslims to oppose the Government and to collaborate with the Hindus to overthrow it. And this is what they precisely did. For them it was religiously obligatory to drive the British away from the country and this was possible only in collaboration with the majority community and hence this collaboration was highly desirable. Maulana Mahmud Hasan (Sheikhul Hind) had said addressing the last session of the *Jamiat al 'Ulama* in 1920 :

There is no doubt that Allah (*Haq Ta'alah*) has made your fellow countrymen, the Hindu people who are greatest in number in some way or the other (your) supporters in achieving such a pious objective (freedom) and I consider unity and solidarity between these two communities very beneficial and fruitful and considering the delicacy of the situation I have high regards for the leaders of the two communities striving for this (i.e. unity). Because I know that if

conditions are contrary to this it would make achievement of freedom for India impossible.<sup>9</sup> (Urdu tr. mine)

Here I do not propose to say that Sir Syed did not stress Hindu-Muslim unity. He too did strive for it and even described Hindus and Muslims as two eyes of beautiful bride of India. However, his concept of unity came under strain with further developments and he began to view it from the viewpoint of upper class Muslims. Hali, his biographer tells us that in 1867 a few distinguished Hindus proposed that the Urdu language and the Persian script, which was used for writing, should be as far as possible discontinued in the courts of law, and that the Hindi *Bhasha*, written in Devanagari script should be adopted in its place.<sup>10</sup> It was then that Sir Syed began to maintain that Hindu-Muslim unity was an impossible ideal. He expressed his feelings in the following words :

When all this was going on in Benares, I was talking to Mr. Shakespeare (then Commissioner of Benares) about Muslim education. He was astonished when he heard my views and told me that it was the first time he had ever heard me talk in terms of the advancement of Muslims alone, rather than in terms of welfare of the Indian people as a whole. I replied that I was convinced that the two communities were incapable of putting their heart and soul into anything requiring mutual effort, and even though the opposition was not yet as serious as it might be, I thought that it would increase largely because of the views of the people who call themselves educated. I assured him that anyone who lived long enough would see the truth of my prediction, and while I agreed with him that it was a matter for great concern and sorrow, I was forced to admit that I had every confidence that what I had predicted would come about.<sup>11</sup>

And come about it did. Sir Syed had correctly perceived the whole situation as it was developing from his class angle. The whole development of Hindu-Muslim relations took place on the lines predicted by him and ultimately resulted in vivisec-

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tion of our country. The situation was extremely contradictory. The struggle for freedom required a strong sense of unity between Hindus and Muslims to develop whereas class interests of the educated elite required conflict to develop between the two important communities of India marring the prospects of freedom. The British were fully conscious of this. Sir John Strachey expressed it as follows : "The existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India. The better classes of Mohammadans are a source to us of strength and not of weakness. They constitute a comparatively small but energetic minority of the population, whose political interests are identical with ours."<sup>12</sup>

Sir Syed precisely did what John Strachey strategically thought. He created an educated class of Muslims which, in its own interests, began to collaborate with the British. Sir Syed pursued the objective of disseminating education among the Muslims with single-minded devotion and relegated other things to the background. His perception and priorities were quite different. He was a modernizer and in the British India all those who advocated modern reforms thought it fit to either remain neutral or not to participate in the freedom struggle. They thought sympathy of British rulers was necessary for the success of modern reform movement. From Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Ramaswamy Naicker and from Sir Syed to justice Amir Ali and Maulvi Chiragh Ali all modern reformers followed, more or less, similar policy.

However, the Muslim theologians of the Deoband School had different priority altogether. For them driving out the British rulers and freeing the country from their clutches had the highest priority, everything else being relegated to the background. They pursued this objective with single-minded zeal and devotion. They were inspired for this by their religion, they stood for its purity and considered puritanism main source of their strength. However their puritanism did not come in their way of close collaboration with the members of majority community. In fact they accorded solidarity with the Hindus the importance it deserved and they stood by the Indian National Congress even during the most stormy days of mid and late forties.

The 'Ulama came very close to the Congress (with which they were cooperating anyway since its formation) and felt a sense of solidarity during the Khilafat Movement. Sheikhu Hind Maulana Mahmud Hasan in his presidential address to the annual session of the *Jamiat al 'Ulama* in October 1920 laid down the following principle for the guidance of Muslims<sup>13</sup>:

- (1) The greatest enemy of Islam and Muslims are British rulers, and it is obligatory to boycott their goods.
- (2) If the fellow countrymen help and cooperate in the protection of Muslim community (millat) and Khilafat it is permissible to accept it and be grateful to them which they deserve.
- (3) It is permissible to collaborate with the fellow countrymen for the liberation of the country provided the religious rights are not affected.
- (4) If in the modern period it is permissible to use gun, aeroplane etc. for defence against the enemy (although these things did not exist in the medieval times) why can't joint demonstrations, national unity and joint demands be permissible for these who do not possess guns, aeroplanes etc. as these (joint demonstrations etc.) are their weapons.

The 'Ulama not only preached but practiced these principles with all sincerity at their command. The *Ahrars* (literally free people) in the Punjab led by Maulana 'Ataullah Shah Bukhari actively opposed the Muslim League and fought against it most vigorously. The *Ahrar* condemned the Muslim League as the party of capitalists and maintained that Islam does not approve of accumulation of wealth.<sup>14</sup> Chaudhari Afzal Haq, an *Ahrar* leader preferred Congress to Muslim League if it protected Muslim personal law and if the influence of capitalists on the Congress policies could be done away with.<sup>15</sup>

### 'Ulama and Composit Nationalism

The most fundamental question before the 'Ulama was of composit nationalism. Mr. Jinnah and his Muslim League

ultimately propounded the two nation theory. But the 'Ulama rejected this theory and found justification in Islam for composit nationalism. We will like to throw some light on this important question. In fact this debate had started right from the time the Indian national Congress was founded and the followers of Waliyullahi school gave a *fatwa* to join it. Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (also referred to as Imam Rabbani), as already pointed out, vigorously campaigned for common cause with the Congress in the later part of nineteenth century. It was argued later by his followers that had religion been the basis of nationalism, a learned theologian like Imam Rabbani would not have advocated making common cause with it nor would he have used the word *qaumi* (national) for it specially the very purpose of the Congress was to unite all people of India following different religions and cultures.<sup>16</sup>

It was also argued by the 'Ulama that the prophet himself sought refuge first with Abu Talib, his uncle who did not accept Islam<sup>17</sup> and then with Mut'im bin 'Adi, another non-Muslim. They also cited the Quaranic injunction, "for you is your religion for me is my religion".<sup>18</sup> A pamphlet was also published on this question.<sup>19</sup>

Later in late thirties a debate took place between Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani and Dr. Iqbal, the noted Urdu poet on the question of nationalism.<sup>20</sup> The Maulana in one of his speeches in Delhi in December, 1937 said that these days nations are based on countries, i.e. geographical boundaries, not on religion (aaj kal qaumen watan ki bunyaad per banti hain. Mazhab, alag alag hain to is se qaumen alag alag nahin mani jati). This was the time when the movement for Pakistan was gathering strength and the very basis of this movement was religious nationalism. Also, ideologically Iqbal was opposed to the very idea of nationalism. He had, in his presidential address to Muslim League in Allahabad in 1930 had dwelt upon this theme and had maintained that a Muslim whatever country he belongs to he is member of the same Islamic Nation. He, therefore, felt offended by the Maulana's concept of composit nationalism. This controversy was played up by those Urdu papers which supported the League. Iqbal composed some verses in Persian on this subject which were published by many

newspapers. In these three verses he said 'Ajam (non-Arab world) still does not know the secrets of religion otherwise from Deoband what is this strange utterances of Husain Ahmad. He said from the pulpit that *millat* (religious community) is from nation (*watan*). How ignorant he is about the status of Muhammad Arabi (the Prophet of Islam). Reach yourself to Mustafa (the Prophet) that he is the embodiment of religion. If you do not reach him it is all *Bu-lahabi* (i.e. it is all following Abu Lahab, the inveterate enemy of the Prophet).

These verses from Iqbal's pen denouncing *wataniyyat* (nationalism) on one hand and Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, on the other, for propounding this concept raised great controversy. A spate of editorials, statements and write-ups against the Maulana followed. The Maulana was persuaded by one of his followers Mr. Talut to clarify his position. He wrote a detailed letter to Talut in this regard. He told him in this letter that he does not consider it necessary to reply to all this, abuses and distortions of his views. Abuses have been hurled at him, he said, since the day he stepped into the movements pertaining to the nation and the religion. That is why to involve oneself in these controversies is to waste ones time.

Then he goes on to explain his position. He says that the meeting wherein he spoke was a political and not religious gathering. The followers of the League were determined to disturb his meeting. He, therefore, was advised not to speak about political controversies. He, therefore, while referring to the internal situation in India said that in modern times the nations are based on geographical boundaries (*watan*), not on races or religions. All those who live in England are one nation though there are Jews among them and Christians also, there are Protestants as well as Catholics. The same thing applies to America, Japan, France, etc. Many began to disturb the meeting and next day some papers like *Al-Aman* published the news that (Maulana) Husain Ahmad says that nationality is determined by country, not by religion.

The context of my speech was ignored and my views were deliberately distorted, he maintained. The Maulana said that

he never meant that religion and religious community (*Millat*) depend on geographical boundaries. Then he says that it is strange that a man of Iqbal's standing also has confused the issue. According to the Maulana Iqbal could not distinguish between the words '*qaum*' and '*millat*' although these two words have distinct meanings. *Millat* means *Shari'ah* and Din (i.e. religion) and *qaum* means a community of men and women. Iqbal confused the meaning of the two and said in his verses that Husain Ahmad made *millat* (religious community) as the basis of *watan* (country) whereas he had said *qaum* (nation) to be its basis. Then he goes on to say that by Hindustani people is meant all those who live in India whether they are white or black, speak Bangla or Urdu, are Hindus or Muslims, Parsis or Sikhs because Hindustanis (Indians) constitute a *qaum*.

The belief that Islam does not believe in racial, linguistic or geographical discrimination does not, according to the Maulana, detract from accepting the differences based on nationalities. There is no clear injunction, according to Maulana Husain, Ahmad, in the *shari'ah* which goes against the concept of *qaum* being applied to different nations. Then referring to the stark poverty of Indian people and their backwardness the Maulana says that there is no other way but to unite all the people of India irrespective of religious and other differences into a nation to fight against these evils whose basis could only be a country bound by geographical limits. Territorial nationalism is the only way out. United nationalism was the goal of Indian National Congress. It strove for it from the very beginning and it is this concept of united nationalism which has been pricking like a thorn in the heart of British rulers.

The Maulana then attacks in his letter the policies pursued by Sir Syed and later by the Muslim League. Sir Syed, he maintains, made Muslims fearful and loyal to the British. His organizations were anti-Congress. It was this policy which culminated in the formation of the Muslim League in Simla at the instance of the English rulers. The British, he says made this the basis for encouraging Suddhi and Sangathan to divide the people of India. The League, Maulana Husain Ahmad then says, has always been subservient to the British rulers and in

order to serve these masters the League leaders attack the sincere workers and true servants of Muslim community and India as well as *Jamiat al-'ulama*.

However, there is one passage in the second letter of Maulana Madani in reply to Dr. Iqbal's letter which is rather puzzling. He stated in the second letter that, "I was saying that in the present times nations are formed by *watan* (i.e. territorial limits). This is the statement of present times outlook and mentality. Here it has not been said that you should do like this. It is statement, not intention. No one has reported it as advice, nor has anyone hinted at as being command or intention."<sup>21</sup>

It was on this basis that Dr. Iqbal withdrew his objection to the Maulana's statement. In fact after having defended united nationalism so strongly, perhaps he had to soft-paddle his campaign to mollify generally highly ruffled feelings. The Muslim League followers did not refrain from attacking the members of Jami'at al-Ulama and disturbing their meetings. Maulana Madani himself was subject to their attacks though he was very prominent and internationally respected theologian and he was chief of Deoband, and internationally renowned centre of Islamic learning.

We find an account of such an attack in one of the letters of his follower Muhammad Tyeb Sahab (who later became chief of the Deoband Seminary) written to Muhammad Miyan. The letter gives very vivid account of the attack. Some extracts from the letter written in Urdu are given here<sup>22</sup> :

It is highly agonizing to send this letter to you. I am unable to restrain my emotions. Pen is unable to write what the goondas of the League have done to harass and persecute my master and lord Shaikhul Islam Maulana Husain Ahmad Saheb Madani (may his high shadow be lengthened. My heart pains and one does not know to what extent immoral and irreverent mischievous and persecutory treatment of League Muslims to a person who has fully devoted himself to Islam can go....

After the Maghrib prayer he set out for Syedpur. There a huge crowd belonging to the League Goondas surrounded

him and his colleagues and obstructed his way. With great difficulty they came out of the platform. But the Leagui stormtroopers were not allowing him to proceed further. They were bearing black flags and shouting death slogans. Many goondas were dead drunk. One leagui removed the cap from Hazrat Madani's head. Many of his colleagues received hard blows. Coachman was injured. The police was informed but it refused to take any responsibility and it became impossible to go further... .

He spent night at the station and return to Kathiyar in the morning. What happened here was most shameful and sorrowful. The Leaguis (more pupils from schools than goondas) put mud in an earthen pot and brought one garland of old worn out shoes and one bee-hive dipped in gutter putrid water and raised death slogans while waving black flags.<sup>23</sup>

This clearly shows to what extent the Muslim League had gone in denigrating the 'Ulama who were nationalist to the core and who stood with the Indian National Congress to the freedom struggle throughout. They were totally opposed to the creation of Pakistan. Why were the Muslim divines opposed to the scheme of Pakistan? Why did they so closely collaborate with the Congress and refused to cooperate with the Muslim League?

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani threw light on these aspects in his presidential address in the Jami'at al-Ulama session of 1940 in Jaunpur. About Pakistan he said, "These days the Pakistan Movement is on everyones lips. If it means an Islamic government on the lines of the Prophet (in which all Islamic laws, like the Islamic laws of punishments etc. would be enforced) to be established in the Muslim majority provinces, then it is very appreciable scheme. No Muslim would oppose it. And if its purpose is to establish some government under the British control which may be called Islamic government then this scheme is mean and coward like which provides the British with an opportunity for 'divide and rule'. Turkey was divided in this manner. Arabia was broken into pieces like this and the same process is manifesting itself in India too. It

would not be surprising if this also is being inspired by London, Oxford, Cambridge, Shimla and Delhi, as we learn through reliable sources."

"On the other hand it (the Pakistan scheme) is a great obstacle for the Islamic Solidarity, nay it is like a rock in its way. It is a great abyss on the road to national united front, it is a poisonous powder for communal war and it is deadly poison for peace and prosperity in India and it is death warrant for the Muslim-minority provinces."<sup>24</sup>

Thus we see that the 'ulama of the Deoband school used very strong language against Pakistan and considered it a deadly poison for the Muslim as well as for the country. This also shows that the real basis of Pakistan was not religion. In fact the Muslim divines opposed the scheme of Pakistan on the basis of religion. They considered it perfectly legitimate on the basis of Islam to create a composit nation. According to them the Hindus and Muslims could coexist in a free country provided the Muslims were left free to follow their personal law. This they made clear repeatedly in their speeches and writings. And who knew orthodox religion more than these divines ?

The struggle for Pakistan and its success was for more complex than it is usually realised. It was apparently based on religion. But in fact it was a struggle for power between sections of two communities. Jinnah was neither religious nor he had any love lost for it. He was primarily obsessed with power at the Union-centre and he wanted to be the Sole-spokesman for the Muslims at the Centre.<sup>25</sup> The Congress leaders whom he described as the Hindu leaders dealt with him less adroitly and the moutheaten Pakistan came into existence. In fact Pakistan had hardly any ideological base. The Muslim majority provinces the real constituents of Pakistan, were not enamoured of this unfortunate scheme. Only the Muslims of minority provinces in the north, central and western India shown some passion for it but to be left in lurch later.

The 'ulama, though many of them aspired for power and many of them fought for it also, were not obsessed with it. Nor were they backed by the rising aspirations of an emerging (but still comparatively weak) bourgeoisie like the Muslim

League. They were content politically with assurances of adequate Muslim representations in the central and provincial legislatures and religiously with adequate guarantee for freedom to profess and practice Islam and to protect their personal law. They were obsessed, if they were obsessed with the idea of driving away the British. They considered them, not the Hindus, as the real enemy of Islam. Hindus themselves were enslaved and were fighting for freedom. And the Britishers were an imperialist power which had enslaved other Islamic countries too. A free and united India could become instrumental in liberating other Islamic countries as well from the French and British imperialist clutches. The 'ulama, therefore, rightly considered the British and not the majority community in India as the real enemy of Islam. The 'Ulama thus struck alliance with the majority community to free not only India but other Islamic countries as well.

Though religiously conservatives, politically they were quite progressive as they represented the aspirations of the masses, not those of emerging bourgeoisie. Does it appear paradoxical? Well human destiny has hardly been less than paradoxical.

### Notes and References

1. See "Assam Mu'ahida aur Maulana Syed As'ad Madani", *Urdu Times*, Bombay.
2. K. H. Qadiri, *Hasrat Mohani* (Delhi, 1985), p. 40.
3. *Ibid.*
4. See *Fatawa-i-Azizi*, pp. 114-16 of S.A.A. Rizvi, "Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz's Mada-i-Ma'ash in Delhi, and the British" in Milton Israel and N.K. Wagle ed., *Islamic Society and Culture*, (Delhi, 1983), p. 136.
5. See N.L. Gupta ed., *Nehru on Communalism* (Delhi, 1965), pp. 49 n.
6. *Ibid.*
7. The Muslims in Western India perceived situations quite differently and despite repeated pleas they kept out of the fight in 1857. In fact the Muslim trading classes of Western India were beneficiaries of the British rule.
8. *R'sala Khair Khwahan-e-Musalmanan*, p. 2 of Atiq Siddiqui, *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan—Ek Siyasi Mutala'ah* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 44-45.

9. See Sheikhul Hindis Khutbai, Sadarat, Maba'a-e-Qasimi, Deoband, n.d. of *Asiran-e-Malta* by Maulana Saiyyid Muhammad Miyan Saheb (Delhi, 1976), p. 59.
10. *Hali Hayat-i-Javed*. English tr. by K.H. Qadiri and D.J. Mathews (Delhi, 1979), p. 100.
11. *Ibid*.
12. See Nehru on Communalism *op. cit.*, p. 49.
13. See Khutba Sadarat Matb'i Qasimi, Deoband quoted in *Asiran-i-Malta*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
14. See *Abe Rafta* by Chaudhari Afzal Haq (Lahore, 1960), p. 25.
15. *Musalman Kya Karen* (Lucknow, 1939), p. 17.
16. See Maulana Saiyyid Muhammad Miyan Saheb's '*Ulama-i-Haq-Unke Mujahidana Karname* (Delhi, 1939), Vol. I, p. 107.
17. This is the Sunni Contention. The Shi'ahs maintain that Abu Talib had accepted Islam but did not proclaim openly.
18. The Koran 109 : 6.
19. Risala Jawazi Shirkat-i-Congress Wa Izalae Shukuk.
20. What follows in an account of this debate from *Asiran-i-Malta*, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-86
21. See *Asiran-e-Malta*, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-83.
22. The language of the letter is highly stylistic and idiomatic, difficult of being translated literally. Where literal translation is not possible, sense has been conveyed in English. For Example *Kale-t-Ja Munh ko aata hai* has been rendered as it is very agonising.
23. See '*Ulama-i-Haq* by Maulana Syed Muhammad Miyan Saheb (Delhi, 1948), Vol. II, pp. 298-301.
24. '*Ulama-i-Haq*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-14.
25. For an excellent discussion on this see Ayesha Jalal's *The Sole Spokesman—Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

## Pan-Islamism Versus Indian Nationalism : A Reappraisal\*

Mushirul Hasan

It difficult for anyone not an Indian Moslem to realise what Pan-Islamism means to the Indian Moslems.... It is a sentiment of which the prayers for Turkish success in the Tripolitan and Balkan wars, the Relief Fund, the Medical Mission and even the Khilafat movement were weak but faltering expressions. It is not a sentiment inspired by interest, policy or worldly wisdom; it has no practical end in view.

—M.A. Ansari

Introduction to Halide Edib, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey* (Delhi, n.d.), pp. iv-v.

\* This is a substantially modified and enlarged version of my paper 'The Khilafat Movement : A Reappraisal', in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India* (Delhi, 1985 revised and enlarged edition), pp. 1-16. It may be of some value to assess its argument in the light of my earlier writings on the Khilafat movement, especially *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1916-1928* (Delhi, 1979), and *Mohamed Ali Ideology and Politics* (Delhi, 1981).

How long this provoking hurricane of injustice and trouble ?  
This delight at waiting and crying—how long ?  
How long will you take vengeance for the victory of  
Ayyub ?  
You will show us the sight of the crusaders—how long ?

—Shibli Nomani

It is widely known, though scarcely recognized, that large sections of the Indian Muslim intelligentsia have been greatly conscious of their fraternal links with their co-religionists in other countries, following their history avidly, deriving comfort in their various accomplishments, and lamenting their slow but steady decline. By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in particular, when Islam seemed to fall on evil days because of the European imperial penetration into the heartlands of the Muslim world extending from Morocco to Indonesia, the heritage of the past stood forth as a symbol of community pride and distinction; in fact, everywhere Muslims were told to look to their own glorious Islamic past as the source for their inspiration, identity and unity. This was expressed in the adventurist and revivalist movements led by Mohammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-92) in Arabia, Syed Ahmad Barelvi (1786-1831) in India, Mohammad Ali ibn al-Sanusī (1787-1859), founder of the Sanusiyyah Order in Libya, Usman dan Fodio (1754-1817) in Nigeria, and Mohammad Ahmad (1848-85), the Mahdi of the Sudan. All of them reemphasized the belief that the socio-moral revival of Islamic society required political action, an activism epitomized by *jihad*, the exertion to realize God's will through moral self-discipline and, when necessary, military combat or warfare. At another level, Islam was defended from the polemical and hostile attacks of nineteenth century Western orientalists, and against the intellectual and moral imperialism of the West. Stress was laid on the original message of Islam which had provided the ideal pattern for traditional Muslim society and remained eternally valid, and on the fact that Muslims were fully equipped to respond to the political, cultural, and scientific challenge of the West. Syed Ahmad Khan, a major catalyst for reform and

change in India, and his contemporary, Mohammad Abduh (1845-1905), in Egypt tried to show the compatibility of Islam with modern ideas and institutions.

Such currents, which gripped the Muslim countries from North Africa to South-East Asia, left their mark on an influential section of the Indian Muslim intelligentsia. They were most clearly reflected in Altaf Husain Hali's lamenting the 'ebb' of Islam in the famous *Musaddas*, in Shibli Nomani's an-Islamic anguish in the topical poem on the 'Trouble in the Balkans', and in Mohammad Iqbal's nostalgic ode to once-Arab Sicily. The intellectual content to many of these themes was given in the works of Ameer Ali, Syed Ahmad Khan and Shibli, while their political expression was reflected in the pan-Islamic concerns of M.A. Ansari, Abul Kalam Azad, Mohamed Ali, Abdul Bari, the *Shaikhul Hind* Maulana Mahmud Hasan, and a whole generation of young Muslim leaders.

Elsewhere, there were similar reactions against the aggression of Western empires, which were being felt from the 1870s and which culminated in the French occupation of Tunisia in 1871, the British possession of Egypt in 1882, the Russian conquest of Merv in 1884, the Italian seizure of Tripoli in 1911, and the Balkan war of 1912-13. Muslim responses to these developments ranged from rejection to adaptation, from withdrawal to acculturation and reform. Most notably, however, the examples of German and Italian unifications suggested the potency of movements for unity of divided territories behind a single government.<sup>1</sup> This idea formed the basis of the pan-Islamic euphoria which swept many parts of the Muslim world in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

For most Indian Muslims, the overriding consideration in their upsurge was that Turkey's Sultan was the custodian and defender of the Holy Places in the area known as *Jazirat al-Arab*. With the sanctuaries and symbols of Islam—central to Muslim belief and practice—exposed to danger,<sup>2</sup> the faithful were impelled to demand that the *Jazirat al Arab* remain under Muslim sovereignty (according to the injunctions of the Prophet) with the Khalifa as its warden. The protection of the Holy Places thus provided the rallying point for virtually all sections of the Muslim community. Money and ornaments

poured into the Khilafat fund, thousands flocked to the Khilafat meetings, and some even left the fields and factories to migrate to the *Dar al-Islam* in response to a call for *hijrat*. Students quit their studies and joined the swelling ranks of non-cooperators, while many of their elders gave up their lucrative jobs and high-sounding titles. Never before did so many Muslims unite on a common platform to fight a common cause. This unique example of religious fervour and solidarity merits serious consideration.

In explaining this outburst one must take into account the strength of the unifying powers of religious symbols in Indian Islam. Some of these symbols—mosque, *hajj*, sufi shrine—fostered a sense of belonging to a common fraternity of Islam, and thus made it easier for the pan-Islamic notion to permeate Muslim consciousness. Equally, historians will do well to reckon with the theme of 'Muslim unity' which ran through nineteenth century religion-realist movements, and was echoed by the *ulama* of Firangi Mahal, Deoband and the *Nadwat al-ulama*. The concept of a unified Islamic community eventually merged into the stream of pan-Islamic consciousness.

Among Sunni Muslims, who formed the overwhelming majority of the Muslim population, Turkey's Sultan was the *Amir al-Muminin* (Commander of the Faithful) and the protector of the Holy Places. The Khilafat was the viceroyalty of the Prophet of Islam, ordained by Divine Law for the perpetuation of Islam and the continued observance of its *sharia* (Islamic law), and the Khalifa (derived from the word '*Khalafa*'—to leave behind) was both a spiritual and temporal head. Allegiance to him was obligatory which explains why some Sultans of Delhi bore the names of Khalifa on their coins and often received investitures as legal sanction for their rule. The name of the Abbasid Khalifa, Al Mu'tasim, continued on the coins for about 40 years after the sack of Baghdad at the hands of the Mongols. It was probably an expression of the sentiment: 'The Khalifa is dead, long live the Khalifa'. The Mughal Emperors as well as some independent Muslim rulers in the eighteenth century often turned towards the Ottoman Khalifa as a source of strength. In 1785 Tipu Sultan sent an embassy to the Ottoman Sultan, and his emissaries secured for him letters

of investiture which allowed him to assume the title of an independent ruler.<sup>3</sup>

Interest in Turkey's welfare continued: each time it was involved in hostilities—the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 or the Greco-Turkish war of 1897—Indian Muslims took up the cudgels for Turkey, reaffirmed their attachment to its Sultan, and prayed for his well-being. 'If the Muhammadans of the world were compared to the human body', wrote the *Akhbar-i 'Am*, 'the Sultan would be the heart and brain'.<sup>4</sup> Anthony MacDonnell (1844-1919), lieutenant-governor of the UP, quoted to the viceroy, Elgin (1848-1914), a leaflet describing the Ottoman Sultan as *Amir al-Muminin* and *Padshah-i Mussalmanan*, and noted the 'great sympathy with Turkey partly due to incitement from outside India and partly spontaneous, and I think it has been growing for some time and is fostered in Mohammedan schools'. MacDonnell was told by the Commissioner of Agra 'that many more people than formerly have taken to wearing the Turkish *fez* and this is perhaps the straw indicating how the wind is beginning to blow'.<sup>5</sup>

The 'incitement from outside', referred to by MacDonnell, came from two distinct sources. In the first place, the British government exploited pro-Turkish sensibilities in order to secure Indian Muslim loyalty, as in 1857, and to protect their imperial interests from Russian encroachments by bolstering 'the sick man of Europe', as they did from the Crimean war of 1853-56 onwards. Then, the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II (1842-1918), sent his agents to India, as other lands, to rally Muslim support and enthusiasm for his feeble regime threatened by external aggression and internal strife, caused by nationalist movements sprung up among his Christian Balkan subjects (Armenian, Greek, Romanian, Bulgarian) in southeast Europe.

Syed Ahmad Khan disputed Abdul Hamid's pretensions. The pan-Islamic surge threatened to wreck his effort to prop up the Anglo-Muslim alliance in India; so he spoke against the Turcophilia among his co-religionists, arguing that they were legally bound to obey the writ not of an external Muslim Khalifa but of the British Indian government. Such exhortations fell on inattentive ears as the fellow-feeling for Turkey extended to far-flung parts of northern India. Nawab Mohsin-

ul-Mulk, one of Syed Ahmad Khan's most distinguished successors at the Aligarh College, learnt his lesson the hard way. When he opposed the holding of pan-Islamic meetings on the campus, he was everywhere maligned and castigated as a 'downright sycophant'.<sup>6</sup>

The most bitter criticism of Syed Ahmad Khan's views came from an unexpected quarter—from that celebrated roving reformer, teacher and political agitator, Jamaluddin ul-Asadabadi "al-Afghani" (1839-1897).<sup>7</sup> He regarded the Aligarh reformer's religious views and his educational programme as ancillaries to his political servitude to British interests, and chided him for relying on the British instead of joining hands with the Indian nationalists. Afghani considered Syed Ahmad Khan as his main adversary in India, opposed to pan-Islamism, isolating the Indian Muslims from the rest of *Dar al-Islam*, especially from the Turks, and hostile to the conception of a universal Muslim Khilafat. According to him, the reassertion of Muslim identity and solidarity were prerequisites for the restoration of political and cultural independence, and unity and solidarity were essential at both levels.<sup>8</sup>

Afghani spent the greater part of his life travelling from one country to the other (Afghanistan, India, Iran, Egypt and the Ottoman Empire) as the chief exponent of pan-Islamism. His life, one of endless wanderings, touched and deeply affected Muslims in the last quarter of the nineteenth century; his pan-Islamic vision inspired various activist groups in different lands and lives on patiently, if amorphously, in the aspirations of many Muslims.<sup>9</sup> It is also curious and relevant that the only instance where his political programme of combined radicalism, modernism, nationalism and pan-Islamism ever became a serious political agenda of a vibrant and spirited opposition was in the Khilafat agitation in India, years after his death.<sup>10</sup>

The power of Afghani's appeal was felt generally in the first decade of the twentieth century when he became a symbol of the pan-Islamic enterprise. Among those who came under his spell was Shibli Nomani who visited Istanbul in 1893, received a medal from Abdul Hamid, and parleyed with Afghani's co-worker and disciple, Mohammad Abduh.<sup>11</sup> His pan-Islamic ideas were echoed in Hali's *Musaddas*, and his strong advocacy

of the co-existence of diverse religious faiths was in accord with Mohamed Ali's idea, expressed in 1923, of the 'Federation of Faiths'. His view of a natural solidarity beyond the nation : that which binds together all the peoples of the east threatened by the west,<sup>12</sup> was developed by Ansari. At the All India Khilafat Conference held on 27 December 1922, Ansari referred to the need for an Asiatic Federation to promote solidarity among the peoples and countries of Asia with a view to rescuing them from the political and economic bondage of Europe.<sup>13</sup> This idea was first advocated by Afghani and was known to his contemporaries two decades earlier.

Afghani also influenced Mohammad Iqbal and Azad. The former became interested most of all in Afghani's endeavour to find in Islam a means of unification for resisting the domination of the West, and shared his desire to express unity on the religious basis of Muslims as a supra class and a supra-national entity. On the eve of and during World War I, Iqbal directly tied his hopes for liberation from colonial dependency to pan-Islamic solidarity. This was reflected, in particular, in his poem *Shama Aur Shair* (The Candle and the Poet), written in 1912.<sup>14</sup> In his reply to the *Shikwa* (Complaint to God) he struck the same note :

The trouble that is raging in the Balkans  
Is a message of awakening to the forgetful  
Thou may'st think it the means of vexing thy heart  
But in reality it is a test of thy self-sacrifice and  
self-reliance.

As for Azad, Afghani's influence can be seen from the time of his stay in Constantinople and Cairo when he developed close relations with the *Al-Manar* (The Lighthouse) group of Syrian and Egyptian scholars. He developed the nationalist and anti-imperialist thrust of Afghani's ideas in the *Al-Hilal*, inspired by the *Al-Urwa al-wuthqa* (The Indissoluble Link), an anti-imperialist journal published by Afghani in collaboration with Abduh. He, too, bitterly attacked Syed Ahmad Khan's attitude to the Turkish Khilafat, and urged on the authority of the Quran that *jihad* was imperative against those who had

occupied even a part of the *Dar al Islam*. Political fidelity was due to the Ottoman Khalifa. Obedience to him and compliance with his wishes was binding on the faithful.<sup>15</sup>

Azad provided greater ideological coherence to the zestful concerns of those Muslims who were beginning to come to terms with the objective reality of Indian nationalism and its ideal of a unified and powerful anti-colonial struggle. He stood strongly for inter-communal union, citing the Prophet Mohammad's covenant with some Jews as a valid historical precedent for an integrated alliance with the Hindus. He asserted that uniting with one category of non-Muslims, the Hindus, against another category of non-Muslims, the British, was obligatory. In a similar vein, Ansari, in December 1920, quoted the *Sura-i-Mumta-hanaḥ* (60 : 8-9) from the Quran to argue that Indian Muslims should behave 'righteously, affectionately and in a friendly manner towards all those non-Muslims who are neither at war with Muslims nor are they assailants intending to invade or occupy their territories'.<sup>16</sup>

This emphasis on a peaceful *modus vivendi* with the Hindus reflected Afghani's viewpoint that a religious link did not exclude national links with men of different faiths; in fact he had called upon his Indian Muslim audience to make common cause with the Hindus in what pertained to national interests.<sup>17</sup> Far from advocating a split between the two communities, as is commonly believed, Afghani advocated inter-communal oneness and defied any breach in the anti-British front. In his articles published in the Hyderabad journal, *Muallim-i Shafiq*, he evoked not only the universal Islamic but also national aspirations with special emphasis on the affinity of Hindu-Muslim interests. And just as he helped awaken Egyptian nationalism by alluding to the ancient glories of the past, so in India, even when talking to a primarily Muslim audience, he harped on the glory of the Indian Hindu past.<sup>18</sup> His appeal to take pride in the Hindu past was no different from his earlier exhortation to Egyptian Muslims to seek inspiration from pre-Islamic Egyptian greatness. In both cases Afghani appealed to an effective basis for solidarity against the foreigner.<sup>19</sup> His message inspired those Muslims who pioneered the pan-Islamic movement in the first decade of

the twentieth century and later piloted the Khilafat campaign in all its tumultuous phases.

Afghani's attempt to reconcile pan-Islamism with nationalism also carried conviction. Various theories were therefore worked out to resolve their apparent dichotomy and to remove the widespread conception that the essence of pan-Islamism implied a break with territorial nationalism. The ideologues of the Khilafat movement insisted that the sum and substance of pan-Islamism was to remove foreign domination; so their activities had an obvious nationalist dimension, and were inextricably bound with the concept of an emerging Indian nation. They also pointed out that, in spite of their pan-Islamic ambition, or fantasy as some preferred to call it, they always had their own Indian community most clearly in mind and were not oblivious to its trials and tribulations. The emblem used on the Khilafat delegation stationery—made up of twin circles of equal size and overlapping, with the word 'Khilafat' on one and the word 'India' on the other—was symbolic of their loyalty to the nationalist cause, and indicated their perception of the link between their vision of a free India and the liberation of the Muslim countries from the yoke of colonial rule. Ansari established a link between British colonial policies in India and the larger interests of the West in exploiting the weaker nations of the East and in perpetuating 'the bondage and slavery of Asiatic people'. To him it was not only a question of India's honour and freedom, but of a great struggle for emancipating all the enslaved people from the thralldom of the West.<sup>50</sup>

It has been argued that men like Ansari extended their notion of independence from foreign rule to all Islamic countries in order to restore a single Islamic state under a revived Khilafat, that their call for *jihad* had a strong traditional basis, and their anti-colonial rhetoric was merely an eyewash—a clever device for achieving narrow sectarian ends. We have tried to show that this was not the case. A close study clearly indicates that whatever may have been the unstated objectives of the Khilafat campaign, it served an objective need of mobilizing large numbers of people against the government, and, in the process, made them conscious of the importance of a harmonious communal co-existence. Muslims, in particular,

were in the forefront of this mobilization. This had never been the case before.

The relationship between the Indians and the Turks was in the nature of a compact, because both Turkey and India were subjected to colonial rule. For this reason Azad observed that the agitation in India had at first been directed towards the salvation of the Khalifa and the Ottoman empire, but now it was plain that the problem of the Khalifa was part of the larger issue of British imperialism. Khilafat workers must win India's liberty by means of non cooperation; only then would they be able to save the Khalifa.<sup>21</sup> Mohamed Ali offered the same advice : Muslims must fight for swaraj with their non-Muslim brethren, for only in this way would it be possible to achieve the Khilafat aim.<sup>22</sup>

Mohamed Ali made the most passionate and detailed attempt to demonstrate that pan-Islamism and nationalism were compatible, arguing that Western aggression against Muslim states hastened Muslim disillusionment with their traditional reliance on the British government and thereby contributed greatly to Indian unity.<sup>23</sup> His intention was to prove that, objectively speaking, his community's reactions to events in Turkey deepened their involvement in the anti-colonial struggle in India and brought them closer to the Congress under Gandhi's leadership.

Mohamed Ali further stated that the Muslims have had a pre-eminent sense of community in their *Weltanschauung*, and especially so in India, where their adherence to Islam made them unique and gave them their 'communal consciousness'. 'I have a culture, a polity, an outlook on life—a complete synthesis which is Islam,' he said at the Round Table Conference in 1930. He did not, however, believe that being a Muslim he was any less an Indian. His religious beliefs, as indeed his commitment to nationalism, never appeared to him to be incompatible.<sup>24</sup> He could—and must—be true to both Islam and India. To further prove the compatibility of his loyalty to Islam and to his country, he took pains to explain that 'where India is concerned, where India's freedom is concerned, where the welfare of India is concerned, I am an Indian first, an Indian second, and nothing but an Indian.'<sup>25</sup> There is little

doubt that this conviction was shared by many Muslims who were able to easily swing back and forth between pan-Islamic and local nationalist appeals, depending upon which was a more appropriate anti-imperialist weapon in a specific Indian situation.

The Khilafat movement has often been denounced as unrealistic on the grounds that its emphasis on Muslim values and extra-Indian loyalties stood in the way of genuine unity. It has also been pointed out that those Muslims who joined the Congress and accepted Gandhi's leadership during the Khilafat campaign were motivated by religious considerations and that their alliance with nationalist forces was of an ephemeral and opportunistic nature. The roots of this assumption lay in the unexpressed postulate that Muslims were un-patriotic because they were moved only by loyalty to the invisible theocracy of which God was the ruler, and that they had developed a nationalism of their own which was Islamic in tone and content. 'Under the circumstances,' observed the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha leader B.S. Moonje, 'how can peace and amity now grow between the Hindus and the Muslims unless either the Hindus surrender and become a consenting party to the Islamic Mission or if they are equally determined to preserve their essentially scientific, identity, separate from the one-sided Nationalism of the Muslims.'<sup>26</sup>

The debate centred round the supposed contradiction between Indian nationalism and 'Islamic nationalism' can be disregarded, for its implications, if any, were hardly discernible in the political trends of the early 1920s. What deserves consideration, however, is how the Khilafat movement, in spite of its pan-Islamic bias, merged into a general political struggle far outstripping its original limitations.

It is a lesser known fact of modern Indian history that the Khilafat committees in some areas were often indistinguishable from local Congress bodies, volunteer groups, Kishan Sabhas and Home Rule Leagues in their composition and political objectives. This imparted a purposeful political dimension to their activities. 'There is nothing to choose locally,' commented an official, 'between a gathering under the auspices of the Kisan Sabha or of the Khilafat Committee. Both move-

ments appear to have been completely captured by the non-cooperation party'.<sup>27</sup> This was not just a joyful demonstration of the newly found sense of solidarity, but an awareness of the 'extraordinary stiffening-up' of a demoralized, backward, and broken-up people taking part in disciplined, joint action on a countrywide scale.<sup>28</sup>

In several areas of agrarian unrest in UP peasant unrest was not just tacked on to the Khilafat and non-cooperation programme, but the Khilafat committees and the Kisan Sabhas provided a tangible sign of acting in unison in attacking their common identifiable enemy—the landlord—who was perceived as an ally of the government. Here lay the danger in governments' assessment, a fact referred to when the secretary of the Rae Bareilly Khilafat Committee spoke at a Kisan Sabha meeting on 6 February. 'What might have been in its way a harmful and beneficent movement,' observed an official, 'is in danger of being rapidly perverted into a vehicle for virulent abuse of and violent agitation against the Government.'<sup>29</sup> Evidence of the potentially dangerous alliance came from other areas as well. A Kisan Sabha rally at Fyzabad, held on 20-21 December 1920, was probably organised by Khilafat workers.<sup>30</sup> Local Khilafat leaders—Lal Mohammad and Maulvi Riasat Husain—addressed a similar gathering at village Salethu in Maharajganj on 2 February 1921; the meeting at village Balla in the same police station area a week earlier was organized by Amid Syed, a local Khilafat agitator.

A notable feature of many such meetings was the attempt to establish a definite link between the demands of the Kisans and the Khilafatists, on the one hand, and the attainment of swaraj, on the other; in fact, words like 'Khilafat', 'Kisan ekta', 'swaraj', 'Gandhi' were all intended to conjure up in the minds of the people a picture of bringing about a better world under the direction of better leaders.<sup>31</sup> Thus Maulvi Salamatullah, associated with Maulana Abdul Bari, declared at a Kisan Sabha gathering that the peasant interests would be protected only after the dignity and prestige of the Khalifa was restored. Kamaluddin Jafri, the Allahabad-based lawyer, linked the redressal of their grievances with the attainment of swaraj under the Congress directives. This view was expressed at a Kisan

Sabha conference at Akbarpur in Fyzabad district and was endorsed by Hafiz Alam and Mohammad Nabi of Tanda, important Khilafatists in eastern UP.<sup>32</sup>

The collaboration between the Khilafatists and groups of peasants and workers was equally pronounced in Bengal and the Punjab. In Bengal this was facilitated by the failure of harvests between 1918 and 1922, the rise in prices, the fall in the prices of jute, and the influenza and cholera epidemics. In the Punjab, on the other hand, the North Western Railway strike which was initially called at the end of April 1920 for the improvement of the workers' material conditions, subsequently began to coalesce with the Khilafat agitation as the strikers began to perceive it as a movement against a 'tyrannical and exploitative' government.<sup>33</sup>

In assessing such strands in the Khilafat agitation, it is also worth taking note of the Congress-Khilafat-League *entente*. These organizations met in the same city and around the same time; often the Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League took their political cue from the Congress and endorsed its decisions. The 1918 League session, for instance, did so, and, as in the Congress, so in the League, wrote an intelligence officer, 'the moderates have lost all control'. The same spirit prevailed a year later, though speeches made at the League platform 'were more violent in their language and defiant in their general attitude than the extremist Hindus at the meetings of the Congress'. Anti-British spirit, emphasized the government report, 'reigned supreme'.<sup>34</sup> In July 1920, the League insisted that the Congress met first so that it could recommend and decide the course of action for the Muslims.<sup>35</sup>

Such demonstrations of political unity were matched by spontaneous expressions of communal harmony. It is noteworthy that most parts of the country were free of communal violence, and that existing disputes over cow-slaughter and music before mosques were settled amicably. In Delhi and the Punjab, in particular, the Prem Sabhas and *Anjuman-i-Islam* worked strenuously to ensure the peaceful observance of religious festivals.<sup>36</sup> The spirit of the time was captured by Zafar Ali Khan in the verse :

*Aaee hain Aasman se chal kar woh quwaten  
Jo Muslim-o-Hunood ko sheer-o shakar karen*

Heavenly forces have helped to forge the bonds of friendship  
between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Or by Agha Hashr :

*Ho gaeen bikhri huee eenten baham tameer ki  
Mil gae har ek kari tooti huee zanjeer ki  
But—shikan wahdast—parast ek jism ek jaan ho gaye  
Ghul hua duniya me phir kafir Musalman ho gaye*

The disjointed pieces have been put in order again  
The links of the broken chain have been discerned  
The idol-worshippers and the iconoclast have joined hands  
There is a dinning clamour that the kafirs have again embraced Islam.

Short-lived as this unity was, the fact that it was accomplished was a sufficient indication of the strength and fervour of the nationalistic spirit of which it was the outward expression. 'The scenes that were enacted before my eyes', wrote the Secretary of the Bengal Khilafat Committee, 'made me feel that the artificial barriers that had long been preventing the two major communities of the country to come together, had been miraculously swept away by the onrush of the all-embracing non co-operation movement'.<sup>37</sup>

## II

The dramatic events which followed the collapse of the Khilafat and non-co-operation movements have been extensively covered in several historical works. Yet, there are certain aspects which call for a re-examination. To begin with, we need to qualify several generalizations concerning the state of communal relations and its impact on Indian politics and on the future of the nationalist movement. Admittedly, there was a marked worsening of Hindu-Muslim relations. The edifice of inter-communal amity built during

the Khilafat and non-co-operation days also collapsed in the years 1922-26. Yet, it would be wrong to conclude, as some historians have, that the Hindu and Muslim communities were arrayed against each other, or that the Indian society was polarized along communal lines. Though conflict and intense competition existed in some areas and among certain identifiable groups, we must not be oblivious to the fact that most Indian people continued to work on a cross-communal network, strengthened by bonds of socio-economic interests and by centuries of common historical experiences. Islam in India remained firmly rooted in the subcontinent and most of its followers were inextricably linked with the fortunes of the society they lived in. This perspective must not be blurred by the emergence of Muslim separatism in the 1940s, and the creation of Pakistan in August 1947.

The role of the Deobandi *ulama* and of the *Jami'at al-ulama* is illustrative of the vast 'reservoir' of nationalist sentiments in a powerful and influential section of the Muslim community. Drawn into the nationalist fold during the Khilafat and non-co-operation agitations, the '*ulama*-Congress alliance remained an important feature of Indian politics. This was evident during the civil disobedience movement in 1930-32 when the *Jami'at* favoured 'Muslims working shoulder to shoulder with their brethren in the fight for freedom', and its leaders joined the ranks of satyagrahis with enthusiasm. In June 1937 a number of them worked for the Congress candidate in the crucial Bundelkhand election and toured various parts of UP in connection with the mass contact campaign. In August, Husain Ahmad Madani, president of the *Jami'at al-Ulama*, appealed to his community to join Congress in the fight for freedom,<sup>38</sup> and a year later he propounded his theory of composite nationalism in *Mutahhidah qaumiyat aur Islam* (composite Nationalism and Islam). In his letters of Mohammad Iqbal he argued that the word *qaum* (community) could be applied to any collective group whether its common characteristics was religion, common habitat, race, colour or craft. It should be distinguished from *millat*, which refers to a collectivity with a *sharia* or *din*. Indian Muslims were fellow-nationals with other communities and groups in

India, though separate from them in religion. At present, he said, nations were made by homelands, as for instance England, where members of different faiths make one nation. Madani argued that freedom from British rule was necessary for the welfare of Islam, so that Muslim religious duties could be properly performed. The Muslims were not strong enough to win this freedom for themselves, but needed the help of non-Muslim communities. He wanted independence for India in order that Muslims could freely express their religious personality, enjoy a really Islamic system of education and remove corruption from their social life by abolishing British-made laws.<sup>39</sup> On 3-6 March 1939 the *Jami'at* called for cooperation with Congress 'according to Islamic principles and dictates of wisdom and foresight', and urged Indian Muslims to enlist as primary members of the Congress and participate in its activities—'as it is the only constitutional way to reach the goal of independence and achievement and protection of religious and national rights of Mussalmans'.<sup>40</sup> Madani's sympathy for the Congress and the *Jami'at* advocacy of Indian nationalism carried forth the traditions of political radicalism initiated in the twentieth century by the *Shaikh-ul Hind* Maulana Mahmud Hasan, principal of the *Dar al-'Ulum* at Deoband, and his followers.

A clear understanding of the role of the 'ulama and their impact on Indian politics must await a detailed investigation. One would only like to offer two suggestions. In the first place, it is simplistic to regard the 'ulama as standard bearers of Muslim orthodoxy and conservatism whose concerns were limited to regulating the religious and educational life of the Muslim community. Such a view ignores the range of their involvement in other spheres, especially in organizing, conducting, and leading some vitally important political movements in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Secondly, the ideological basis of the 'ulama politics needs reexamination, as a corrective to the oft-repeated notion that the *Jami'at*, for instance, had exclusive communitarian concerns and its anti colonial posture, being grounded in Islamic theology, was inconsistent with the essentially secular thrust of Indian nationalism. It is true that the 'ulama thought

and acted within the Islamic framework, but neither the framework nor their understanding of it remained constant and unchanging. It is equally true that the future of Muslims and of Islam were among their central concerns. At the same time, their communitarian concerns were limited to the religious domain and to specific issues relating to the *shari'a*, and they intervened in politics not as spokesmen of Muslims alone but of other groups as well. Their religious idiom and the use of Islamic symbols was intended to serve the secular objective of rallying the populace around the Indian national movement. This was exemplified in the political activities of the Daobandi 'ulama connected with the *Jami'at ul-ulama-i Hind*.

### Notes and References

1. Nikkie R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani" : A Political Biography* (Los Angeles, 1972), p. 130.
2. It was exemplified, for instance, in the following poem :  
*Ae barq aaj shola-fishaan kyon nahin hai tu*  
*Ae raad aaj garm-i fughaan kyon nahin hai tu*  
*Ae abr aaj girya kunaan kyon nahin hai tu*  
*Darya-i qahr aaj rawaan kyon nahin hai tu*  
*Islam aaj kufr ke narghe men au gaya*  
*Baadal siyah rang ka Kaaba pe chaa gaya*  
 O the thunderbolt why doesn't you scatter flames ?  
 O the lightning why thou wailest not ?  
 O the clouds why weenest not thou ?  
 Why is the river of curse a frozen puddle and flows not ?  
 Islam has been swamped and overwhelmed by the Unbelief  
 And the Kaaba has been engulfed by darkness.  
 Proscribed Publications (8), IOL. Also, see (142, 152, 153).
3. R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration in India* (Allahabad, 1936), p. 37; Mohibbul Hasan (ed.), *Waqai-i Manazil-i Rum : diary of a journey to Constantinople* (Delhi, 1968).
4. *Akhbar-i 'Am*, 14 March 1895, Punjab Native Newspaper Reports.
5. Quoted in Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 177. W.S. Blunt was told on the eve of his visit to India that he should not say anything against the Sultan of Turkey because

his name 'was now venerated in India as it has not formerly been'. W.S. Blunt, *India Under Ripon: A Private Diary* (London, 1909), p. 13.

6. *Jasus* (Agra), 14 July 1906; *Al-Aziz* (Agra), 28 July 1906, United Provinces Newspaper Reports.

7. Afghani was in India from 1857 to 1865. He came again in 1879 to spend three years in Bombay, Hyderabad, Bhopal and Calcutta. The purpose of his visit was to

meet with all the *navvabs* and princes and ulama and grandees of that land and to explain to them one by one the results that are manifested from unity and solidarity in the whole world and the injuries that have appeared from division and disunity; and to caress their ears with the mystery of the *hadith*, the faithful are brothers; and to express inspiring and prudent words and to attract the friendship and cooperation of the learned and the eloquent; and to breathe into them the new spirit of love of nationality and to rend the curtain of their neglect to explain to them the place of the luminous Sultanate in the world of Islam; and to reveal and make manifest to this group the fact that the perpetuation of religion depends on the perpetuation of this government. And in all the mosques of the famous cities I shall light a flame in their inner hearts by means of appealing sermons and *hadiths* of the Best of the Prophets, and I shall together burn out their patience and long-suffering.

Keddie, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-35.

8. Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (London, 1964), pp. 55-56; Keddie, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

9. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (London, 1966), p. 227; Anwar Moazzam, *Jamal al-Din al-Afghani A Muslim Intellectual* (Delhi, 1983), p. xiii, points out that Afghani's main contribution was to provide a 'broad intellectual framework for redefining the relationship between Islam and the changing world'.

10. Keddie, *op. cit.*, p. 26. Elie Kedourie has argued that Afghani's reputation and influence was to a large extent posthumous and was the work of disciples, or else of academic writers and publicists 'eager to discover trends and precursors' to magnify the importance of their subjects. Elie Kedourie *Afghani and Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam* (London, 1966), p. 3. There is adequate evidence to indicate his charisma on his contemporaries, and greater evidence of his impact on subsequent political and intellectual movements in Muslim countries. Aziz Ahmad and Keddie also write of Afghani's limited influence. According to them, the people he met exercised no political or religious influence among Muslims, and his articles, published in an obscure journal of Hyderabad, did not cause any stir at the time. But their own evidence does not warrant this conclusion; in fact, the works of Wilfred Scawen Blunt (1840-1922) point to Afghani's

influence. Kedourie's cynical view of Afghani becoming a 'British agent' is typical of his attempt to denigrate him and to underplay the role of ideology in politics.

11. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964* (London, 1967), p. 129.
12. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 118-19.
13. H.N. Mitra (ed.), *The Indian Annual Register (IAR)*, 1923, Vol. I, p. 921.
14. L.R. Gordon-Polonskaya, 'Ideology of Muslim Nationalism', Hafeez Malik (ed.), *Iqbal: Poet Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York, 1971), pp. 115-6.
15. Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture*, p. 67. For Afghani's influence on one of Azad's devoted followers, see Abdul Ghaffar, *Jamaluddin Afghani*, in Urdu (Delhi, 1941). Afghani's stay in India is referred to on pp. 12-13, 16-17, 35-37. Also, Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the religious of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (London, 1963), p. 21.
16. *Al-Ahkamul Quraniya maqalat-al Burhaniya* (Delhi, n.d.), p. 15; Pirzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. I, p. 547.
17. Hourani, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
18. Keddie, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 159-60.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 160; N.R. Keddie, *Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din "Al-Afghani"* (California, 1968), p. 59.
20. Pirzada (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 545-46.
21. W.J. Watson, 'Muhammad Ali and the Khilafat Movement' (unpublished M.A. thesis, 1955, McGill University), p. 64.
22. Muhammad Ali, *His Life, Service and Trial* (Madras, n.d.), p. 151.
23. *IQR*, 1923, Vol. 2, p. 30.
24. Mushirul Hasan, *Mohamed Ali Ideology and Politics* (Delhi, 1982), p. 115.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
26. 7 August 1926, Moonje Dossier, Pad No. 35, National Library, Calcutta.
27. S.R. Mayers to A.G. Shirreff, deputy commissioner, 25 February 1921, GAD, F. No. 50, 1921, Box No. 135, UPSA. All subsequent references, unless otherwise stated, are drawn from the same file.
28. Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 76.
29. Note on Rae Bareilly disturbances, *op. cit.*
30. M.H. Siddiqi, *Agrarian Unrest in North India: The United Provinces 1918-22* (Delhi, 1978), p. 149; Kapil Kumar, *Peasants in Revolt: Tenants, Landlords, Congress and the Raj in Oudh* (Delhi, 1984), pp. 146, 165.
31. This idea was beautifully summed up in the verses of Mohammad Haider, a school teacher in Pilibhit. He wrote :

*Jamaa do qaum ka sikka bajaa do deen ka danka  
Mohamed, Shaukat-o-Gandhi ke pairokaar ho jaa  
Swadeshi se karo raghat bidesi se karo nafrat  
ki jis se muflisee ho door aue zardaar ho jaa*

Let the respect for the nation be restored

And the trumpet of the faith heralded

Follow Mohamed (Ali), Shaukat and Gandhi

Adopt all that is swadeshi and shun that which is from outside

So that you may remove poverty and achieve self-reliance.

Proscribed Publications (43). Also, see the collection of poems in *Bulbulan-i Hurriyat* in Proscribed Publications (47). The collection was published by the Khilafat Committee in Jaunpur.

32. Police Dept., F. No. 51-N, 1921, UPSA : Note by Lakhte Husain and Jagannath, 28 January 1921, *op. cit.*
33. H. Ansari, 'Muslim reaction to socialist thought in India' (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1984).
34. Home Poll. B, January 1919, 160-63, NAI, WRDI (January 1920), Home Poll. Deposit, February 1920, 52, NAI.
35. Zahur Ahmad to G.N. Misra, 26 July 1920, F. No. 18, 1920, AICC Papers (Suppl.), NMML.
36. *Tribune*, 13 October 1919; *Fateh* (Delhi), 1 July 1920; Swami Shraddhanand, *Inside Congress* (Bombay, 1946), pp. 68-70.
37. Abul Hayat, *Mussalmans of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1966), p. 37; also, see Rajendra Prasad, *At the feet of Mahatma Gandhi* (Bombay, 1955), p. 113.
38. Mushirul Hasan, *A Nationalist Conscience: M.A. Ansari, the Congress and the Raj* (1986, forthcoming), chapter 8; also see, *Bombay Chronicle*, 3 June and 16 August 1937.
39. Hardy, *Muslims of British India*, pp. 227-28.
40. *Leader*, 8 March 1939.

## Khilafat Movement and the Hindu-Muslim Relations

M. Rafiq Khan

In the history of nations as well as in the life of individuals a failure to realise the goals set out for achievement does not necessarily imply that the attempts in that direction have proved futile. Instances are not wanting in which although the endeavour to achieve the goal originally aimed at has failed, the side achievements have been of such greater significance. The Khilafat movement launched by the Indian Muslims for the restoration of the status of the Caliph of Turkey after the end of World War I failed in realising that goal yet it generated numerous forces and trends of far-reaching importance during the course of its progress. A study of the Khilafat movement from this point of view is both revealing and fruitful for our political and socio-religious understanding.

This was quite obvious to the Muslim elite of the last decades of the 19th century as well as to that of the early decades of the 20th century that Khilafat had no more remained a living and effective institution. It was merely a relic of the past and had a certain amount of symbolic importance for those who cared to take it seriously. However, Muslims all over the world would not tolerate a non-Muslim power, particularly, a Western power to demolish this institution or to dismember the Ottoman Empire whose capital was in Turkey.

When the war between this empire and Greece started in 1897 the Indian Muslims raised funds in India and tried to help the Turkish government in every possible way. When the Balkan war took place in 1912 Indian Muslims felt restless and a number of them left this country to help the Turkish government. Under the guidance of Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan the students of Darul-uloom, Deoband abandoned their studies for several months and set out to collect funds and other materials for the Turkish forces. Some of these people raised funds from village to village during the entire war period and did not come back home until the war was over. This did not signify any political linkage with the government of Turkey. This was only an experience of religious sentiments of attachment with the people who were believed to be sharing common spiritual and moral values. Similarly when the First World War started in 1914 and Turkey was involved the Muslims of India felt perturbed and began to watch the development impatiently. Strangely enough all the Muslim sects and schools of thought who would not recognise one another as true Muslims and would often come down to blows in the mosques, got united on this question and formed a united front. The climax came after the end of World War I when the British government refused to honour the promises it had made regarding the restoration of the Khilafat in Turkey. It must be emphasised here again that the motivation behind this support for Khilafat was not political. There are conclusive proofs available from documents and events that pan-Islamism was a religious concept and not a political concept. The notification of Islam did not mean establishing a Muslim government comprising all the Muslim countries all over the region. It aimed at creating a revolution in each Muslim country for the reform of social, religious and political life in each of these countries. In countries where the Muslims shared the population with non-Muslims the objective was to co-ordinate revolutionary efforts to exterminate colonialism and other forms of exploitation and establish a genuine democracy. In other words pan-Islamism never meant establishing a unified political order in which the independent governments of the various Muslim states would lose their identities and

sovereignties. We all know that a government in exile was formed by some of the foremost pan-Islamist leaders of India whose president was Raja Mahendra Pratap and one of the cabinet ministers was Dr. Mathura Singh.

However, when the British government went back on its words the Muslims of India organised a powerful movement under an organisation named Khilafat Committee. The movement as already mentioned was actuated by purely religious sentiments and was directed against the British imperialism. Some of the top leaders of this movement, as is already known, were Maulana Mohammed Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Abdul Bari, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and other prominent Muslims.

### **Gandhiji and the Khilafat Movement**

Gandhiji had already entered upon the Indian political scene and was active in devising ways and means to forge a united front of all the anti-imperialist elements of India to carry forward the struggle for ultimate freedom of the country. He himself had fondly believed in the promises made by the British government to grant meaningful reforms in India's political set up to enable it move closer to home rule. But when the war ended what came was Rowlatt-Act and Montagu-Chelmsford scheme which was extremely frustrating and created widespread resentment. We all know the tragic events of Jalianwala Bagh and a host of other repressive measures resorted to by the government. Gandhiji was greatly disillusioned and had before him no other option but to forge a united front with all the forces which were active against the British imperialists. He saw that the Muslims were highly agitated about the Khilafat issue. There was also the issue of Jalianwala Bagh within the country itself and some other purely political issues. These purely political issues of the national character would have certainly won him the support of a section of the Hindus and the Sikhs but would have attracted little attention of the Muslims whose entire attention and energy was concentrated on the Khilafat issue which incidentally

was as pointedly directed against the British rule as the struggle based on purely political questions related to India. Gandhiji saw in the situation an excellent opportunity to unite the Hindus and Muslims against the British rule by incorporating all the issues which exercised both the major communities of India as well as other sections and classes of the people. This was however, not a question of mere political tactics. He had a genuine feeling of love and sympathy for his Muslim compatriots in the hour of their trial. We all know how firmly Gandhiji believed in the method of winning love and support from others—individuals or groups—by first offering his own love and support to the just causes of the others. Gandhi said, "Khilafat is a religious matter for Muslims—how can we remain aloof from it". It was not only Gandhi but also all the important leaders of the Hindu community regardless of their being staunchly Hindu or secular in conviction, who came forward to support the Khilafat movement. While there was the support of Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Tilak and Sarojini Naidu on one hand there was also, on the other hand, the whole-hearted support of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Swami Shradhanand and Jagat Guru Sankracharya. The result was simply astonishing. Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder against the British police and the armed forces and boycotted the British goods and institutions. This was not only at the level of the educated classes in cities and towns but also far down to the levels of villages and hamlets. Not only young men and women came forward to suffer and sacrifice their lives and properties but also old men and old women and even adolescent boys and girls felt a remarkable enthusiasm in this enormous upheaval of the Indian masses against the British rule. All through the movement which began in early 1919 and lasted upto the end of 1922, the Indian people for the first time and, it will not be a pessimistic statement to say, up till now the last time, became oblivious about who was Hindu, who was Muslim and who was Sikh or Christian. The unity between the three north Indian important communities—Hindus, Muslims and Sikh was simply miraculous and appears unbelievable today.

Maulana Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali addressed

Mahatma Gandhi with the affectionate word *Bapu*. The country resounded with the phrase *Mahatma Gandhi ka hukum, Maulana Abdul Bari ka fatwa*. This was the first time that the seed was sown for fighting for complete independence of India. Swami Shradhdhanand, the top most Arya Samaj leader was invited by the Muslims of Delhi to address them in the Jama Masjid sitting at the sacred pulpit of the mosque. October 1919 saw the peak of the movement when Khilafat day was observed all over the country jointly by the Hindus and the Muslims with great enthusiasm. Mohammed Ali gave the call of Hindu-Muslim unity and characterised the struggle as a fight for establishing a republic of India. Dr. M.A. Ansari said that the struggle for Khilafat was not contrary to patriotism and quoted the example of Mohammed Ahmed Kachalia of South Africa who succeeded Gandhi in that country after the Mahatma finally left for India. Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan said that he hated Arabic dress as it was the dress of the traitors.

The first conference of the Khilafat Committee was held on 23rd November 1919 and Gandhi was the most active member in this conference. Tilak and a large number of top ranking Congress leaders took part in the next Khilafat conference at Delhi which was held on January 20, 1920. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi his non-cooperation scheme was, "A means to undo the Khilafat wrongs, the Punjab wrongs and other injustices". Presiding over the Khilafat committee meeting held on 18 April 1920 Maulana Ahmed Saeed said that the Khilafat movement meant only non-cooperation and Swadeshi and not *Jihad* and *hijrat*. Mahatma Gandhi made an impassioned speech in the Khilafat meeting of 17th October 1919 and had with him Hindu leaders of the eminence of Swami Shradhdhanand, K.K. Malviya, Savarkar, Shanker Lal and Mohanji, etc. The sentiment of brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims had become so dominant that people forgot observance of even certain ceremonies in a conventional form. Usually the dead body of a high caste Brahmin would not have been allowed to be touched by Muslims but when the dead body of Bal Gangadhar Tilak was being taken for cremation the bier was given shoulder in turn by Mahatma

Gandhi, Maulana Shaukat Ali and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew. Maulana Hasrat Mohani who regarded Tilak as his political *guru* read a heart rending elegy standing near the dead body of Tilak on the cremation ground. The country was resounding all over by shouts of Allah-O-Akbar raised by Hindus and Muslims jointly. Gandhi was so popular among the Muslims that he and the other Hindu leaders were invited to address Muslims in the *Madarsa 'Alia* of Calcutta. On 20th June, 1922, a Muslim leader along with a number of volunteers faced the police in Aligarh in a perfectly nonviolent way. They were beaten with lathis until they bled profusely and lost consciousness. The police afterwards caught hold of their feet and dragged the bodies for nearly a furlong. And yet no one uttered even a word of insult for the police. Gandhiji gave the issue of Khilafat the central position in all his speeches and Muslims started wearing Gandhi cap which according to Lord Cliff was on one hand symbol of revolt and anti-British feeling and on other of Hindu-Muslim unity. When the Khilafatists started supporting Mustafa Kamal Pasha the Hindus and Muslims all over the country started singing *Hamara ghazi Kamal Pasha kamal apna dikha raha hai*. Gandhi wrote that Khilafat had revived the problem of India which 40 years of our effort had not succeeded to do. We see that the whole Indian problem had fully come to life along with the Khilafat movement. The need for communal amity was felt so strongly that Maulana Mohammed Ali remarked on one occasion, "Even if Hindus raped my wife and my mother even then I will not fight against the Hindus". In December 1924 he went to the extent of advocating complete ban on cow sacrifice and even as staunch a Hindu as Pandit M.M. Malviya proposed that cow sacrifice need not be banned in those places where it is carried out traditionally; all that he would like was that cows were not sacrificed in new places where they had not been sacrificed before. The intensity of love between Hindus and Muslims was so deep and the hatred felt by the British authorities for both of them was so strong that while on one hand the Muslims built a temple for the Hindus and the Hindus built a mosque for the Muslims, the British on the other hand demolished both.

### **Indians' Exile Govt. in Afghanistan, pan-Islamism and Misunderstandings**

The Khilafat movement declined and finally came to an end towards the end of 1922 when Mustafa Kamal Pasha rose to power in Turkey and declared the country a democratic republic in November 1922. However for some time the Khilafatists in India continued to keep the movement alive by shifting their focus from the issue of Khilafat to the issue of the defence of the new Turkey under Mustafa Kamal Pasha. All over the country Hindus and Muslims remained united even during this phase.

But the British Government in India was not prepared to commit suicide by allowing this scene of Hindu-Muslim unity to continue, for this was the life blood of the Khilafat. The new Governor General Lord Reading came to India fully determined to ensure that Hindus and Muslims do not remain united and instead start jumping at each other's throat by becoming fanatically engaged in elections and other constitutional issues. He knew that by diverting their attention to election politics he would not only succeed in alienating Hindus and Muslims from each other but would also defeat the Swaraj party which aimed at wrecking the constitution of 1919 from within by entering into the assemblies. The British politicians knew it very well that modern electioneering sows enough seeds to divide people and create animosities.

To reinforce the British Policy further Lord Reading and other authorities of the Government of India succeeded to a great extent in convincing a large section of the Hindu elite including some of the ardent supporters of the Khilafat movement that the Indian Muslims were really fighting for establishing a Muslim rule in India with the help of Afghanistan. They got enough material from the writings of Maulana Obdullah Sindhi and Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan to make a case that they were preparing a plan to persuade Amir Amanullah Khan to invade India and help the Indian Muslim leadership to replace the British rule by an Islamic government. However, this version was a plain distortion of the truth. What Sindhi wanted from the Afghans and the

Pathan tribals was to help the Indians as a whole to liberate this country from the British rule so that a really democratic government comes to power in this country. He had absolutely no notion on establishing a Muslim rule. The provisional government they had formed in Afghanistan was headed by Raja Mahendra Pratap. Even in India Maulana Sindhi and the Shaikhul Hind were carrying on their underground movement with the support of Hindus. They had established an underground arms factory in Rajasthan. In their effort they did seek some support from the newly established Communist state in the Soviet Union but they had no support or even a promise of support from Afghanistan or any other Muslim power. Amir Habibullah of Afghanistan was strongly pro-British and there was no question of obtaining support from him upto 20 Feb. 1919 when Habibullah died. In 1919 the situation was further confounded by the British authorities by spreading a rumour that Soviet Union was preparing to invade India and occupy it. The rumour became so effective that even as well informed and important a leader as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru virtually believed it and discussed this question with Maulana Hasrat Mohani. Hasrat Mohani was so fanatically opposed to the British rule that he would not mind if "the Russians came and deprived him of his house and property". As for the threat from Afghanistan after the death of Habibullah Khan and succession of Amanullah Khan, the falsehood became more obvious in view of the fact that Amanullah Khan was a great believer in Swadeshi and was a hundred per cent modernist. Gandhiji made untiring efforts to combat this British propaganda of an impending Afghan invasion. The poison however had spread widely and gone very deep. Maulana Sindhi's image among many Indian Hindus was not good. They felt convinced that this man wanted to establish an Islamic government in India with the help of the Afghans. Other problems also arose within the movement such as internal factionalism due to various reasons among the Muslim leaders of the Khilafat movement. Maulana Azad had been nursing an ambition from as early as 1920 to be recognised as the Shaikhul Hind of India. He had started some spade work also in this connection. Maulana Mohammed Ali was

losing popularity partly because of his loose temper and uncontrolled language, and partly because he was accused of misappropriation and embezzlement of the Khilafat fund. Over and above all these factors came the issue of the communal riot in Agra in 1923. The issue was the reconversion of the Malkhan Rajputs from Islam back to Hindu community as part of the Shuddhi and Sanghathan Programme started by the Arya Samaj. One riot led to another and large scale Hindu-Muslim clashes as a chain reaction of retaliation took place in Amethi, Sambhal and many other places, the most dreadful being in Kohat. The whole country was ablaze with Hindu-Muslim riots and this new development made the period of the Hindu-Muslim unity a forgotten dream. Gandhiji declared on 30th June 1924 that he was utterly defeated. Even Maulana Azad felt that the Shuddhi movement was doing a great damage and the event of reconversion of Malkhans in Agra was part of a movement which should not be encouraged, for it would generate reactions from other communities which would ultimately damage the cause of struggle for independence. This was proved by the emergence of the movement of Tabligh and Tanzeem led by Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew.

### **Was Khilafat Movement Responsible for the Riots ?**

Many people during the riot days and even to this day feel that the Khilafat movement was chiefly responsible for the communal riots. These people include not only the conservatives or the communalists but also a section of otherwise well meaning modern Hindus. The reasons they give are that in the first place the issue of Khilafat was a moribund issue, extremely out of date, and served only to generate a feeling of fanatic revivalism among the Indian Muslims. The second charge is that the movement created a communal solidarity among the Muslims which was perceived as a threat by the Hindus. They further allege that the movement was a part of the pan-Islamic movement aimed at establishing an Islamic government in India as a constituent of a larger federation of the Muslim countries. As for the first charge it must be clearly understood that both Gandhiji and all other Indian

leaders very well knew that the character of this movement was anti-imperialist and the Khilafat issue was merely a symbol. No one ever believed that this movement would bring into being a Muslim rule in India. To believe that the Hindu-Muslim riots were the sequel of the Khilafat movement is historically untrue for much before the Khilafat movement was even conceived a horrible communal riot had taken place in Aara (Bihar). All through during the Khilafat movement also minor clashes between Hindus and Muslims continued to take place in various parts of the country and Gandhiji emphasized the need for communal unity all along the movement. Gandhi also knew that the riots were being engineered by the British rulers. When the anti-Parsi riot took place in Bombay on 17th November, 1921 on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales, Gandhi frankly accused the British for engineering it exactly as the British were known to have done during the time of the French Revolution. As for the Shuddhi movement it is difficult to identify the forces behind it but the role that Lord Reading played immediately after his arrival as viceroy of India is quite well known. He manufactured a distorted version of Mohammed Ali's speeches and took Malviya and Chintamani into confidence by playing with their Hindu sentiments. Malviya and Sapru showed these versions to Gandhiji claiming them to be true statements. The situation became confused. When Mohammed Ali clarified his position he was quoted as having apologised. However the most persistent, pervasive and poisonous role was played by the election contests between the Swarajists led by Pandit Motilal Nehru in Allahabad and the liberals led by Malviya and Chintamani.

Papers pertaining to these elections and how they promoted animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims are available from the records of the Government of India, Department of Home (Political), from the year 1923 onwards. Even a casual look at these papers shows that the communal riots were engineered by the manipulations of election politics cleverly handled by Lord Reading and not by the Khilafat movement. Likewise in a very clever move the British government usenred that land reform legislations are so introduced

in the Punjab legislature that the Hindus and the Muslims become sworn enemies of each other. The legislations apparently benefited the Muslim peasantry and harmed the interest of the Hindu landlords. Here again Khilafat had nothing to do with the tension that was generated between the two communities and the possible riots that took place as its culmination.

It is because of the knowledge of the real situation that was responsible for the communal riots that Gandhiji never gave ear to the charge. He maintained that it was right and proper to support the Khilafat movement and that his movement was never directly or indirectly responsible for the Hindu-Muslim riots. Gandhiji said that even if he were a prophet and had the knowledge of the unseen and had known that these events would follow the Khilafat movement, even then he would have taken part in the Khilafat movement with the same zeal. For it was this Khilafat movement that awakened the nation and he would not allow it to sleep again.

## Jinnah and Muslim Separatist Strategy

Moin Shakir

In this paper an attempt will be made to understand the support structure of Jinnah and Muslim separatist strategy, with a particular reference to Muslim merchant communities of Bombay. The object would be to show that the existing imbalance view of Jinnah's role as Muslim leader and the dynamics of Muslim separatism does not explain and help to comprehend the reality of the so-called Muslim politics before 19 7. For this, it is necessary to take into account the conflicting political trends in the different parts of the Bombay Presidency which consisted of five districts of Gujarat (in 1881 the population was 2,857,731), three districts of Konkan (2,287,287), six districts of Deccan (5,315,123), four districts of Karnataka (2,807,254), five districts of Sind (2,413,823) and city and Island of Bombay (773,196). The Hindus constituted in 1881, 73.4 per cent and the Muslims 18.4 per cent of the total population of the Presidency. In Sind, the Muslims were in majority. But in other parts of the Presidency, the Muslims were generally small traders, artisans and labourers, agriculturists, sailors, and camp followers to the armies of the Mughals and Deccan Sultans.<sup>1</sup> Since the Bombay Presidency did not constitute a homogeneous unit, social, cultural, political and economic activities of the people varied from division to

division. The political developments in Sind and in different parts of Deccan betrayed not only dissimilarity but different ethos altogether. The same could be said about Bombay, Karnatak and Poona.<sup>2</sup> For our purpose, we shall confine only to Bombay.

Bombay occupied an unique place not only in the economic and political life of the Presidency but also of the entire country. Because of the opening of the Suez Canal, Bombay had become the most important port in the country. Between the 1840s and 1900 "Bombay's economic development was prodigious; not only did shipping and commerce grow, but supporting services and industries were established. By the turn of the century, Bombay city was one of the five biggest textile producing areas in the world. Apart from its economic role. Bombay developed as a great administrative, military and educational centre. All the main government offices and the high courts of law for the whole Presidency were located there.... In 1901, the city boasted the highest number of adult male literates in Western India, the highest number of English literates in the Presidency, and three of the region's seven English arts Colleges".<sup>3</sup> Besides, unlike Calcutta and Madras, Bombay's overwhelming population consisted of the immigrants from other parts of the country. In 1901, less than quarter of Bombay's citizen had been born over there.<sup>4</sup> Bombay provided numerous opportunities of acquiring wealth and prosperity to entrepreneurs from different parts of the Presidency as well as country. Enormous opportunities were available for the professional classes to accumulate wealth and property. The atmosphere of cultural eclecticism also made Bombay different from Calcutta and Madras. The Bombay city "developed its own identity; it retained its own independence".<sup>5</sup> It does not however mean that caste and communal identities were completely broken. What one notices is the co-existence of parochial solidarity with "the Strengcrass communal affiliations, secular in nature, and based on economic interest or political advantage".<sup>6</sup>

Bombay, being the most important commercial, trading and industrial centres was bound to become an important centre of politics of the country. The Prince merchants could

not be expected to be devoid of politics and political affiliations. They needed beneficial and helpful economic policies and conducive political atmosphere for the smooth conduct of their business. It meant a proper equation with the rulers and the leaders of the people. The money power could be used to manipulate political influence and economic advantage. The merchant princes of Bombay had a vested interests in promoting the political ideology of liberalism in the late nineteenth century and till the end of the First World War. The liberal doctrine reflected the political alliance of the merchants and the professional classes. It served their interests very well. Not only that their interests could be projected as the interests of the nation.<sup>7</sup> After all who else could give money in running the political organizations, conducting the agitations and contesting the elections? Those who were prominent in the national movement always looked upon Bombay as a great source of money for political purpose. This arrangement underwent a change after the First world war and with the emergence of Gandhi's leadership of the national movement.

It should be noted that the merchant princes and the professional classes displayed indifference in creating a supra communal class in the public life of the city. In fact the communal allegiances and affiliations were tolerated, respected and used for economic and political purposes. The leaders were thus rooted in parochialism but were united on those issues which aimed at promoting economic benefit and political advantage. But no subject should be raised which is objected by "the Hindu or Mohammedan delegates as a body; unanimously or near unanimously". It implied that religion, social reform, education etc. would remain communal affair. Each caste or community would handle these problems in its own way.

M.A. Jinnah's political thinking and political career should be analysed against the background of Bombay's political make up and the constraints of peculiar communal politics. Jinnah belonged to the rising Khoja trading community whose members were converted to Islam in the 15th century. They possessed remarkable mobility, occupationally as well as geographically. From agriculture and petty farming, they

moved into hawking and small scale retail activity. In the 19th and 20th centuries they achieved great success in the larger spheres of trade and commerce.<sup>8</sup> Migrating from Kutch and Kathiawar, the Khojas who represented the Bhatia sub-caste, made Bombay their headquarters.<sup>9</sup> The Khojas, along with the Sulaimani Bohras and Memons, played exceedingly important role in the education and politics of the Muslim community in Bombay.<sup>10</sup> The Muslim merchant princes and members of the professional classes believed that the sovereign remedy for the ills of the Muslim community was education on the modern lines.<sup>11</sup> They also held that within the Islamic framework necessary social reforms must be introduced. In politics they were liberals who endeavoured to bring about the unity of the leaders of other communities—Hindu and Parsi. They considered the British Raj as the 'divine gift' to the people.

The first phase of Jinnah's political life was characterized by the prevailing liberal philosophy. He belonged to the modern educated class which was "denationalised, more English than Indian"; followed the religion of Spencer and Comte; and accepted the philosophy of Bentham and Mill.<sup>12</sup> His liberal creed embodied the principle of unity of the country, rule of law, cooperation with the British government, absence of fanaticism in political and social sphere, and constitutional agitation for right causes.<sup>13</sup> During this phase Jinnah was described as a great liberal, great nationalist and "an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity".

After the emergence of Gandhi on the political scene, Jinnah broke away from the Congress. The unconstitutional methods, non-cooperation, civil disobedience appeared to him disastrous. He abhorred mass politics. In the twenties, he did attempt to bring the Hindu-Muslim leaders together but failed. In utter helplessness he left the country in 1931 and returned only in 1934. His effort to put the Muslim League on sound organizational footing did not bear fruit; even in the later half of the thirties. But from 1940 to 1948, he was undisputed leader of the Muslim community. A number of questions arises here. How did a secular leader turn into communal? What made him change? What were the factors which led him to become the prophet of disunity of the com-

munities and vivisection of the country? In the absence of the answers to these questions, many a commentators argued that Jinnah's personalities was 'enigmatic', paradoxical and a phenomenon which defied analysis. Such an understanding of Jinnah's role betrays faulty understanding of the leaders as well as Muslim politics. What is needed is to properly account for the influence of the politics of Bombay on Jinnah, support structure of the Muslim League and the aspirations of the upper classes in the Muslim community.

The Muslim leaders of Bombay who were associated with the Indian National Congress were liberal. But their liberalism was different from that of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan of U.P. and Ameer Ali of Calcutta. The Bombay leaders could not be persuaded to dissociate themselves from the Congress and to form a separate political organization. They were one with the educated classes of other communities for political purposes. They never denied utility of elections and competition, notwithstanding their support to special measures to uplift the backward sections in the educational sphere. It does not mean that they were less concerned with the problems of the Muslim community in the Bombay Presidency. They were also aware of the problems being encountered by the Muslims in other parts of the country. Not only that they clearly stated "that each one of our great Indian communities has *its own peculiar social moral, educational and even political difficulties to surmount*".<sup>14</sup> Writing to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Badruddin Tyabji made it clear that "Now I am not aware of any one regarding the whole of India as one nation and if you read my inaugural address, you will find in it distinctly stated that there are numerous communities or nations in India which had peculiar problems of their own to solve..."<sup>15</sup> The Bombay liberals subscribed to the principle that the professional or educational test should be laid down for qualifying to vote.

The liberals, all over the country agreed on the principle of collaboration with the rulers. The Bombay liberals did not have anything like the Aligarh movement of Sir Syed or lacked the profound scholarship of Ameer Ali, but there was no difference of opinion on the characterization of the British Raj.

Sir Syed's or Ameer Ali's 'modernist' activity of interpreting or reinterpreting Islam, showing that Islam is the religion of progress, freedom and democracy, ultimately boiled down to the reconciliation to the slavery and subordination to the colonial rulers. They were, rather unashamedly, the spokesmen of the upper class of the community and contemptuously looked down upon the lower classes of the Muslim community.<sup>16</sup> Still they championed the Islam's notion of equality.

Jinnah's role in the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress (1906) and in the Imperial Legislative Council bears out his interest and involvement with the problems of the upper classes of the Muslim community. One such issue was the Waqf laws. The Bombay High Court (1873) and the Privy Council (1894) had denied Muslim the right to make valid Waqfs to their families and descendants. These decisions were looked upon by the Muslim gentry as controverting Muslim Personal Law and causing ruin to the old Muslim families. The Muslim leaders like Sir Syed, Ameer Ali, Aga Khan, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Shibli Nomani felt great concern for these Waqf laws. Jinnah brilliantly piloted for Bill and the first Waqf Act (1913) was passed. Jinnah was acclaimed as a great champion of the "special interests of the Muslims". Jinnah did (1910) it simultaneously with deprecating the extension or application of the principle of separate communal electorates to Municipalities, district boards or other local boards. He also struck to the liberal posture in matters of Muslim jurisprudence, without undermining<sup>17</sup> the orthodox Muslim opinion. He declared that he was not prepared to accept any provision which was any way likely to overrule or affect the Personal Law of the Muslims.<sup>18</sup> Thus Jinnah carried forward the legacy of liberalism of the merchants-professionals combine of the last quarter of the 19th century.

Here one need not repeat the role Jinnah played in forging the unity between the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League in 1916. This should be viewed as a great success of the educated Indians in striking a remarkable understanding of the realities of the middle class dominated politics. It signified the victory of Bombay school of liberal thought. The Muslim merchants and professionals could go so far and no

further. The class interests did not permit them to accept anything which was 'unconstitutional'. They found it extremely difficult to toe the line of Gandhi and the orthodox ulema. Jinnah's resignation in 1920 from Home Rule League may be instanced here. He opposed Gandhi's move to change League's constitution and name. In the Nagpur Congress session, Jinnah said that Gandhi always caused split and disorganization and that his programme would end in disaster.

The Khilafat movement brought a large number of Muslims closer to the Congress led by Gandhiji. Jinnah and the Bombay merchants were with the Khilafat leaders but more important question was what methods to be employed for achieving the Khilafat objectives. The religious leaders, like Maulana Abdul Bari, did not favour "respectful petitions" which the leaders of the Bombay merchants passionately pleaded. For this reason the petition method was turned down. However, the Bombay leaders were not prepared to endorse the appeal of Abdul Bari for prayers, fasting and, meetings to save Islam which was 'facing ruin'.<sup>19</sup>

The Khilafat Committee (in 1920) was almost on the verge of split because of the Bombay Muslim merchants, led by Chotani, on the question of Muslim service in the army. Abdul Bari, Ali Brothers, Azad Sobhani of Kanpur, Daud Ghaznavi of Amritsar, and number of Sindhi Pirs "held that it was religiously unlawful for Muslims to serve in the Indian army, since there was no guarantee that they would not be used against other Muslim forces, and proposed circulating a *fatwa* to this effect among the troops".<sup>20</sup> The Bombay merchants were horrified at the illegality of the ulema's proposal, but were effectively put down by an appeal to religion. But in view of the need of the merchant's money, the matter had to be postponed.<sup>21</sup> But in the meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee on May 12, 1920, the Muslim merchants had no option but to resign on the issue of adopting the non-cooperation programme. Gandhiji and the Muslim Ulema won the day. This explains why Jinnah abstained from the Khilafat movement.

Jinnah's association with the Muslim League and the Congress was based on the assumption that the interests of the Hindu and Muslim bourgeoisie were identical and they could

be promoted only through constitutional methods. His loyalty to the class was firm and certain. But, after 1914, the competitive struggle between different groups of the same class was confused with religion and caste differences.<sup>22</sup> It should also be noted that compared to the Hindu bourgeoisie, the Muslims bourgeoisie were economically and politically quite weak. Its domination over the Muslim League had never been complete. The members of the Muslim business community were welcome but, unlike their Hindu counterpart, were not allowed to have their say in crucial matters. This made Jinnah's position in the Muslim League and the Muslim politics ineffective. He, therefore, resorted to his early liberalism more and more. In the twenties he wanted to repeat his performance and revive the spirit of the Lucknow pact. Even in 1937 election speeches he spoke the language of carrying the olive branch to every sister community, willingness to co-operate with any group, national self-government and unity and honourable settlement between Hindus, Muslims and other minorities; but such an approach did not bring any success to Jinnah. All his efforts to organize the Muslim League were obstructed by the Muslim landlords who were dominant in the party, for example, he was advised by Fazl-i-Husain to keep "his finger out of the Punjab pie".<sup>23</sup> Even his promises of "large election funds from Bombay millionnaires and the Raja of Mahmoodabad" could not win support in Punjab politics. Jinnah had to suffer a number of setbacks in evolving all India Muslim policy which could have given an edge to the Muslim bourgeoisie. His difficulties were many. One was the organizational set up of the Muslim League. According to Khalid B. Sayeed, in the Council of All India Muslim League for the year 1942, out of total membership of 503, there were 245 members from the Muslim minority provinces. There were as many as 163 landlords, Punjab contributed the largest share of 51, followed by the United Provinces and Bengal. Out of 25 members from Sind, 15 were landlords. There were 145 lawyers in the council. Commercial classes like merchants, bankers and industrialists were increasing, but were far from influential in terms of numbers in the council. The provinces of Bombay and Calcutta contributed a substantial share. But

a good number of army and government contractors and general merchants were to be found in the Punjab, Delhi and the U.P. groups.<sup>24</sup>

Another difficulty for Jinnah was that the landlords looked at the politics in terms of narrow class interests. They aimed at sharing power in collaboration with other regional and local groups. The nature of such alliances varied from region to region. Thirdly, the pro-British landlords were sold over to the colonial rulers. They were not very happy with Jinnah's stand on boycotting the Simon Commission and denouncing the Government of India Act of 1935. In the 1937 elections, prominent landlords refused to have any truck with Jinnah. They included Fazl-i-Husain, Nawab of Chattari, Sir Abdul Qaiyum and the Aga Khan. Even Liaquat Ali Khan aligned with the pro-British landlord oriented National Agriculturist Party.<sup>25</sup> But in the elections of 1937 Muslim League won only 4.6 per cent of the total Muslim voters.

Jinnah knew the weakness of the leadership of landlord class. Though he did not want to antagonize the landlords but at the same time he wanted to stand by the interests of the Muslim bourgeoisie. Mention may be made here of the new commercial policy of high tariffs and fostering of industries which was to cause damage to the Muslim agricultural producers of cotton and jute and favour the Hindu millowners and capitalists. When the cotton Bill was being discussed in the Central Assembly, Jinnah supported a high tariff policy which was in favour of cotton manufacturing interests of Bombay and Ahmedabad.<sup>26</sup> (Earlier he had supported millowners' demand of reducing customs duty on cotton in Bombay and abolishing cotton Excise Duty).

Jinnah was not a novice in politics. The Muslim League performance in the elections of 1937 and Congress leaders' attitude towards the League in the formation of Government made Jinnah aware of the urgent need of reorganizing the party and changing the strategy of mobilizing the people. Jinnah was sure that in his efforts he will be supported by the Bombay Muslim bourgeois class.<sup>27</sup> Jinnah now involved this class in a more effective manner. In the early forties when the British Government started suppressing Congress movement,

Jinnah got an opportunity to form the Muslim League ministries in different provinces in Assam, North West Frontier Province, Sind and Bengal. A progressive image of Muslim League was projected. Important progressive leaders like Mian Iftekharuddin, Danial Latifi, Abul Hashim etc. were associated with Muslim League. Pakistan was now projected as "the hedging off of a part of India from competition by the established Hindu business groups or professional classes so that the small Muslim business class could thrive and the nascent Muslim intelligentsia could find employment".<sup>28</sup> Nawab Bahadur Yarjung declared that "he was a Communist if Communism means to efface poverty and class distinctions and to provide bread and clothing to the poor...we have understood Pakistan in this light. If your (Jinnah's) Pakistan is not such we do not want it".<sup>29</sup> The people were promised nationalization of key industries and banks beginning with immediate nationalization of all public utility services, public control of private industry, a ceiling on land holdings, and an equalization of burden of taxation, involving the imposition of additional taxes on large land-owners.<sup>30</sup> Abul Hashim stated, "However much weakness the Congress may have for the capitalists of Bombay and however much they desire by way of doing a good turn to them to open opportunities for exploiting the whole of India under the cover of *Akhand Bharat*, Muslim India to a man will resist all attempts of the Congress to establish dictatorship in India of any coterie, group or organization. Pakistan means freedom for all, Muslims and Hindus alike. In Pakistan there will be just and equitable distribution of the rights and privileges of the state amongst all citizens irrespective of caste, colour and creed".<sup>31</sup> In Sind, G.M. Syed said, "Do not forget that Islamic society actually in existence is that in which religious head is an ignorant Mulla, spiritual leader an immoral Pir, political guide a power intoxicated feudal lord and whose helpless members are subjected to all the worldly forces of money and influence".<sup>32</sup> In the public meetings Jinnah did speak against the "exploitation of landlords and capitalists." He had been speaking of the Muslim poverty and backwardness but progress of the community was perceived in terms of

development of industry and commerce.<sup>32a</sup> He also sought the help of Muslim business families in asserting his control over Muslim politics. Isphani and Adamjee financed League papers (like the Calcutta's *Star of India* and Delhi's *Dawn*), a federation of Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industry was started in 1945 with Jinnah's blessings, and Muslim banks and an airways company were planned soon after the war.<sup>33</sup> Jinnah also set up Economic Planning Committee with leading Muslim businessmen like Hasham Premji and Mohammed Ali Habib Ahmed Isphani as its members.<sup>34</sup> He urged the members of Muslim Chambers of Commerce to work for the economic progress of the nation. It is the Muslim businessmen who substantially contributed to the Muslim League Election Fund. According to Khalid B. Sayeed, the total funds collected were about Rs. 6.7 million of which 3.6 million were for the Bihar Relief Funds, 2.4 for the election fund and Rs. 70,000 for the Muslim League Fund.<sup>35</sup> It should be noted the Hindu business class considered Pakistan as "lesser evil as compared to the inevitable 'subordination' of Hindus to the Muslim majorities in Punjab and Bengal. What G.D. Birla wrote, in this connection, is quite significant. You know my views about Pakistan. I am in favour of separation, and I do not think it is impracticable or against the interests of the Hindus".<sup>36</sup>

Religion was certainly used for political purposes. But Jinnah made it quite clear to the Muslim League Legislators (1946): "What are we fighting for? What are we aiming at? It is not theocracy—not for a theocratic state. Religion is there, and religion is dear to us. All the worldly goods are nothing to us when we talk of religion; but there are other things which are very vital—our social life, our economic life, but without political power how can you defend your faith and your economic life?"<sup>37</sup>

Jinnah being the most brilliant leader of the Muslim League and an extremely shrewd strategist, achieved the goal of Pakistan. At the same he was the most faithful spokesman of the ambitions and aspirations of the Muslim merchants class. He changed his ideological postures when the times demanded it. His abandoning constitutionalism may be instanced here.

But for promoting the interests of the merchants and the professionals, he realized the validity of democracy and secularism. He emphasized the need of giving up the theory of two-nation and assured equal rights to all.<sup>38</sup> This necessitated control of a Pakistani bourgeoisie which Jinnah could not ensure. But that is a different story.<sup>39</sup>

The above account throws some light on the development of the course of Muslim separatism in India. Why Muslim politics turned separatist? Quite a few explanations have been offered. One simplistic and superficial explanation is the irreconcilable religious difference between Hindus and Muslims. The communal historiographers both in India and Pakistan still uphold this viewpoint. There is another popular assumption of 'Muslim Backwardness' in education and in services made quite popular by W.W. Hunter.<sup>40</sup> Paul Brass refuted the 'backwardness' thesis and argued that the Muslims in the United Provinces were not significantly behind the Hindus and in many important respects were more advanced than the Hindus in urbanization, literacy, English education, social communications, and employment, especially government employment.<sup>41</sup> He suggests that Muslim separatism in the U.P. was not the result of the objective differences between Hindus and Muslims or the objective circumstances of the Muslims but was rooted in the subjective process of symbol manipulation and myth creation.<sup>42</sup> It was the movement of the Muslim elites, in order to preserve their special privileges.<sup>43</sup> Francis Robinson adds the factors of general social milieu determining politics and the imperative to confront the British domination meant in terms of a new questioning of Islam, a dilution of the Islamic quality of life and a reduction of Muslims political importance.<sup>44</sup> Anil Seal's argument is that "in so shapeless, so jumbled a bundle of societies; there were not two nations, there was not one nation, there was no nation at all. What was India?—a graveyard of old nationalities and the mother of new nationalism struggling to be born".<sup>45</sup> The Indian Communists by crudely applying the Lenin's theory of nation and nationality, justified the demand for Pakistan. What ultimately turned out to be a confusion of religion with nationality.<sup>46</sup>

The phenomenon of Muslim separatism should be analysed

in terms of the British impact not only on the different regions and the communities but also on the various classes within the different communities. The response of the different communities to the Raj was also in accordance of communal, professional and class interests. It may be mentioned here the Muslim politics, right from the late 19th century has been dominated and controlled by the upper class—the landlords and the professionals. The lower class which were ruined by the British adopted a different course of revivalism and anti-colonialism. Even where the Muslim propertied classes were adversely affected by the British Rule were not prepared to join hands with the non-elite groups, as was the case in Bengal. Certain British policies and the rise of Hindu communal interests helped the Muslim upper classes to create an artificial sense of Muslim solidarity. Uneven economic development, constraints of electoral politics and colonial interests widened the gulf between the upper classes of the different communities. But within each community, the divisions, along class and caste lines were quite deep and wide. These could be concealed by raising the issues of unity and solidarity. This is the crux of separatism. It may be argued that Muslim landlords' interests and situations varied from region to region. More often than not, they found regional organizations more useful rather than having one party or one policy. They did not realize that it was their *achilles heel*. Here the role of the Bombay-based Muslim bourgeoisie becomes crucial. Being politically and economically not quite strong, it had to pursue a policy of collaboration with the British, professionals, and the landlords. There was no antagonism and contradiction between the Muslim bourgeoisie and the Hindu bourgeois interests. But the principle of competition was to work against them. The demand for Pakistan promised them domination, without competition, in the "land of plenty and prosperity". They were prepared to stake heavily on Jinnah's political gamble. The political development in the forties convinced them that they would not lose on account of British interests, and Jinnah's determination to win. Jinnah devised his own strategy to undermine landlords' hold on Muslim politics, inducted well known committed socialists to project radical image of the

party, employed religious leaders to mobilise the Muslim-masses, in the name of religion, used the weaknesses of the Congress and exploited the absence of many options before the Government. At this critical time, Jinnah and Muslim bourgeoisie displayed great flexibility and wide perspective; but their class interests were never lost sight of. On the question of naval strike and other strikes by the working class and other popular movements, the Muslim League leaders and the Congress leaders, including Gandhi, Azad and Patel, betrayed identical class bias. They decried any share in the RIN upsurge, offered the "help of volunteers to assist the policy", and felt the necessity of "curbing the wild outburst of violence". Gandhiji condemned unity as "bad and unbecoming example for India" and stated that "a combination between Hindus and Muslims and others for the purpose of violent action is unholy".<sup>47</sup> Any revolutionary manifestation of unity of the people of different religions worried and perturbed the bourgeois leadership of both Congress and Muslim League. Jinnah did not dispute the statements of Raghbir Ahsan on "communist menace". He wrote "I do request you that when you reenter active politics you will start work with your appeal to the *millat* to rally round the standard of the (1) goal of Pakistan and (2) the ideology of *Fikr-i-Islami* as the two planks of our appeal to the electorate". He explained that "the reason why I have adopted *Fikr-i-Islami* (Islamic ideology)...is that by this alone we can checkmate and defeat the communist threat to our Islamic solidarity and integrity. Communism is now the greatest danger to Islam and the Islamic world."<sup>48</sup> Jinnah in his personality combined the roles of Gandhi and Nehru both.

The foregoing argument suggests that the course of Muslim separatism cannot be explained in terms of Muslim backwardness or Muslim elites' advantageous position. It cannot be satisfactorily analysed by assuming India as graveyard of nationalities and the mother of nationalism struggling to be born. Such assumptions ignore the nature of Indian economy which the British introduced and the effects of the British economic policies on different classes of the Indian people. Integration of Indian economy with world economy, peripheral

capitalist development, retention of the feudal classes, and imposition of the political ideology of capitalism created a number of conflicts and contradictions in the socio-cultural and politico-economic life of the people. Social ethos, cultural symbols and religious ideals were not the creators of political and economic objectives but the former were subservient to the latter. Besides, the political and economic objectives were not devoid of class content which finally determined factional, regional and other grouping in national organizations and in the national movement. This has to be explained and analysed with reference to the roles of the different classes in the Indian society. Muslim separatism was the product of the class interest of the propertied class. It was studiously cultivated, to begin with, by the feudal, professional and colonial interests. It was led to success by the Muslim bourgeoisie under the leadership of Jinnah.

### Notes and References

1. P. Hardi, *The Muslims of British India*, Cambridge, 1972, p. 7. See also Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 4-8.
2. See Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, Cambridge, 1968, ch. 2.
3. Gordon Johnson, *Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism—Bombay and the Indian National Congress 1865-1915*, Cambridge, 1973, pp. 11-12.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 113 also compare : All the tribes in Western India seems to have flocked in Bombay.... The poorer Parsi sought the home of his ancestors in the North Fort or Dhobi Talao ; the Yogi, the Sanyasi found a resting place near the shrines of Lakshmi Kali or the God of Sands ; the goanese, the native Christians were absent from cavel, the old home of early converts to Roman Catholicism, the Jolaha, weaver of silk, sought Madanpura ; the grain merchants were a power in Mandi—the Bane—Israel owned the Sammual street and Israel Moholla ; the dancing girls drifted to Khetwadi, the scarlet woman” to Kamatipura ; in the Nail Bazar lived the progeny of men who fought

under Sidi Sambhal ; in Parel, Nagpada and Byculla were mill hands from Konkan and labourers from the Deccan ; many a Koliwada, from Colaba to Sion, gave shelters to the descendant of earliest settlers ; the Musalman was a power in B ward. the Arab haunted Byculla ; and in the Girgaum the Brahmin had made his home". The Census Commissioner, Census of India, 1901, Vol. X, P. IV, Bombay, 1902, p. 152.

7. Compare : "It was Bombay men, too, good at aggregating political support who realised early the need for adequate representation of their views in England, the ultimate sources of political power in India. The parochial issues of Bombay were thus elevated at once to the highest political plane ; the interests of the city were those of the nation as well." Gordon Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
8. J.C. Masselos, "The Khojas of Bombay : The defining of formal membership criteria during the 19th century" in Imtiaz Ahmed (ed.), *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims*, Delhi, 1973, p. 2.
9. Christine Dobbin, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
10. *Ibid.* , pp. 228-32.
11. *C. mpare* :

"I find that the intermediate class, namely, non Brahmins, who are first in order on the basis of population are third in college education, third in secondary education and third in primary education. The Backward classes who are second in order of population are the fourth in the order of college education, fourth in order of secondary education and fourth in order of primary education. The Mahomedans who are third in order of population are second in order of college education, second in the order of secondary education and second in order of primary education. The advanced Hindus who are fourth in order of population are the first in order of college education, first in order of secondary education and first in the order of primary education. Now, Sir, I have given an idea of the comparative disparity in the educational advancement of the different communities in our presidency. I will, therefore, present the following figures to the Honourable the Minister of Education for his serious consideration. Taking first the primary education, we find there are :

Advanced Hindu	119 students per 1,000 of their population.
Mahomedans	92 students per 1 000 of their population.
Intermediate Class	38 students per 1,000 of their population.
Backward Class	18 students per 1,000 of their population.

That is the state of the primary education, coming to the secondary education, we find,

Advanced Hindu	3,000 in one lakh of their population.
Mahomedans	500 in one lakh of their population.
Intermediate Class	140 in one lakh of their population.
Backward Class	14 in one lakh of their population.

That is the state of the secondary education. Now coming to the college education we find,

Advanced Hindu	1,000 in Two lakhs of their population.
Mahomedans	52 in Two lakhs of their population.
Intermediate Class	14 in Two lakhs of their population.
Backward Class	Nil (or nearly one if at all).

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches*, edited by Vasant Moon, Vol. 2 Bombay, 1982, pp. 41-42.

12. See M.N. Roy, *India in Transition*, Geneva, 1922, p. 167.
13. See Moin Shakir, *Khilafat to Partition*, Delhi, 1970, ch. 5.
14. Badruddin Tyabji, quoted by A.G. Noorani, *Badruddin Tyabji*, New Delhi, 1969, p. 72.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
16. Compare : "You will see that it is one of the necessary conditions of sitting at the same table with the Viceroy, that the person concerned should have a high social status in the country. Will the members of the noble families in our country like it that a person of lower class or lower status, even if he has taken the B.A. or M.A. degree and possesses the necessary ability, should govern them and dispose of their wealth, property and honour. Never. Not one of them will like it. The seat of the Counsellor of the Government is a place of honour. Government cannot give anybody except a man of high social status. Neither can the Viceroy address him as "my colleague" or my honourable colleague nor can be invited to royal levees which are attended by Dukes, earls and other men of high rank. So Government can never be blamed if it nominates men of noble families. . . .

"In India, the people of higher social classes would not like a man of low birth, whose origin is known to them, to have authority over their life and property." Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, cited in S. Abid Hussain, *Destiny of Indian Muslims*, Bombay, 1965, pp. 36-37.

17. Compare : This council has ignored or amended Islamic Law in many respects. For instance Islamic Law of Contract is no more applicable. Islamic criminal law which remained applicable even during the British period now stands wholly repealed. The Islamic law of evidence is nowhere found in this country anymore. Over and above there is recently enacted caste disabilities Removal Act, 1850 which has the effect of abrogating the Quranic provision under which an apostate is deprived of his right to inheritance. I submit these are examples which have to follow so that we keep pace with the present social needs and requirements of the time ; for which many precedents are found in the Islamic legal history itself. There is no denying the fact that if a Hindu marries a non-Hindu or a Muslim marries a non-Muslim, many problems arise which personal laws cannot solve. Cannot these difficulties be removed by Legislation? Don't we have enough authority for legislative intervention in this

matter? . . . But if there is a good number of progressive, educated and enlightened Indians, whether Hindu, Muslim or Parsi, who want to adopt such laws, which conform to modern trends, why should they be deprived of justice, more so since it is not prejudicial to the interests of either the Hindus or the Muslims". M.A. Jinnah in the Legislative Council (1912). Cf. Tahir Mahmood, *Muslim Personal Law*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 36-37.

18. E.A. Brown, *Eminent Indians*, Calcutta, 1946, p. 31.
19. Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 73-76.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 92. The Bombay Merchants like Chotani, Faziibhai Harun (of Karachi) had been great donors for Muslim causes. The Bombay Muslim merchants also generously donated to the Swaraj Fund.
22. See Tariq Ali, *Pakistan: Military Rule or People's Power*, London, 1970, pp. 28-29.
23. Azim Hussain, *Fazal-i-Hussain*, Bombay, 1946, p. 309.
24. Khalid B. Sayeed, *Pakistan—The Formative Phase (1857-1948)*, London, 1968, pp. 206-7.
25. Sharif Al Mujahid, *Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah, Studies in Interpretation*, Karachi, 1981, pp. 25-27.
26. Khalid B. Sayeed, *op. cit.*, p. 95.
27. Compare: "Jinnah . . . had a reputation for complete honesty and was therefore trusted by the prosperous trading Gujrati and Bombay communities. . . . He often addressed meetings of Memon merchants and Chambers of Commerce and they were his principal supporters. A large number of Memon merchants were retailers and they often requested the Muslim League leaders not to publicize their contributions because they were afraid that the Hindu wholesalers would penalize them for their support to the League. The financial contributions of Muslim majority provinces were not substantial". Khalid B. Sayeed, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-8.
28. See Sumit Sarkar, "Popular Movements and National Leadership", 1945-1947, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual Number, April 1982, p. 679
29. Abdul Hamid (ed.), *Thirty-first session of the All India Muslim League*, Lahore, 1944, p. 111.
30. *Manifesto of Punjab Provincial Muslim League*, 1944, Delhi, pp. 13-14.
31. Cited in Leonard A. Gordon, "Divided Bengal: Problems of Nationalisation and Identity in the 1947 Partition". *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, July 1978, pp. 149-50.
32. G.M. Sayed, *Struggle for New Sind*, Karachi, 1949, p. 216.
- 32a. Compare: "...You know the Muslims are left behind both economically and in the social life of the people of this great land of ours—the Muslims are at the bottom compared to other communities. There is this great province of Madras. May I know what stature the Muslims have in the economic life of this Province? May be my knowledge is

very poor, but I have been inquiring since my arrival here, and I have enquired before also, and I was told that the only two industries in which the Muslims were anywhere were those of hides and skins and of beedis—in other words, *beediwallas* and *chamrewallas*!

I ask you, are you going to be beediwallas or chamrewallas, or are you going to play your part in the commerce and improvement of this Presidency?" M.A. Jinnah, Presidential Address, Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan—All India Muslim League Documents* : 1906-1947, vol. 2, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 360-61.

33. See Sumit Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 679.
34. See Jinnah's letters to I.I. Chandrigar and Hasham Premji in Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada (ed.), *Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah's Correspondence*, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 66-67 and pp 136-37.
35. Khalid B. Sayeed, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
36. Cited in Sumit Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 679.
37. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. II, p. 523. Laying down the foundation stone of building of Valika Textile Mills Ltd., Jinnah said, "If Pakistan is to play its proper role in the world to which its size, manpower and resources entitle it, it must develop industrial potential side by side with its agriculture and give its economy an industrial base". See Sharif al Mujahid, *op. cit.*, p. 643.
38. See Moin Shakir, *Khilafat to Partition*, Ch. 5.
39. For this see Tariq Ali, *op. cit.*, Ch. 1 and Raunaq Jahan, *Pakistan, Failure In National Integration* (New York and London, 1972), ch. 2.
40. See W.W. Hunter, *Indian Mussalmans* (London, 1876).
41. Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (New Delhi, 1975), p. 141.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
44. Francis Robinson, "Nation-Formation : The Brass Thesis and Muslim Separatism", *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, November 1977, p. 221.
45. Anil Seal, *op. cit.*, p. 339.
46. See the Resolution of the Enlarged *Plenum* of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, on September 19, 1942.
47. See Sumit Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 982.
48. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada (ed.), *Jinnah's Correspondence*, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

## Developments in the Muslim Separatist Movement 1940-47 : A Reappraisal

Uma Singh

The period between 1940 and 1947 has a special significance in the growth of the Muslim separatist movement. The All India Muslim League emerged as the most formidable opponent of the Indian National Congress and the sole representative organization of the Muslims. From 1940 to 1947 the demand for Pakistan dominated all the discussions regarding the constitutional advance in India. When the League put forward its demand for Partition in March 1940, the Muslim urges and aspirations were vague and unclear. Yet it is remarkable that within a span of seven years, Mohammed Ali Jinnah gave the vision of Pakistan a concrete shape and his quest culminated in the emergence of a new nation. He was to direct all his energies inexorably towards building up Muslim unity to bring them on a common platform. Nevertheless, the growth of the Muslim separatist movement was not spectacular. Yet, he was not consistently working towards the goal of carving out a separate state. Instead, during this period, he exploited every opportunity to his advantage. Pakistan became inevitable not because the League under Jinnah's leadership ceaselessly worked for it but because of the configuration of a number of forces at a particular moment of history. Though his confrontation with the Congress became more marked and

open, yet he had not become an indefatigable advocate of an exclusive Muslim nation. He remained quite flexible till 1946—only then his priorities changed and the polarization of Indian politics was virtually completed.

The creation of Pakistan would have been impossible without the whole-hearted support the British rendered to Jinnah which enabled him to frustrate the hopes of the Congress leaders to achieve a United India. The crystallization of the demand for Pakistan took place under the most unpredictable circumstances. The present paper seeks to analyse the important developments which brought about this change in the Indian political scene. The effort is to bring out and analyse in all their complexity, the multiplicity of forces that were responsible for these developments. There is no denying the fact that the British played the most important role in helping the Muslims establish a separate identity of their own in Indian politics and used it as a handy tool against the burgeoning national movement. They exploited, encouraged and helped them to reach the damaging proportions that it ultimately did in 1946-47. Their role becomes crucial because they held state power; a crucial determinant in the development of Muslim separatist movement.

The British encouraged and virtually gave open support to the Muslim League especially in its anti-Congress role and supported its efforts to acquire a mass character. The government support to Muslim separatism was complete after 1946. The Congress victory in 1947 General election had created an alarming situation for the British when the problem of meeting the nationalist challenge assumed dangerous proportions especially in the context of a world war II looming large on the Indian horizon and the growing left-wing strength in the nationalist movement.

The intensification of Muslim separatist feeling was a strong political phenomenon at this time. One cannot say that Jinnah rose to the supreme leadership of the Indian Muslims in 1937 as Shariful Mujahid has emphasized in his work on Jinnah. It was only after 1940 that he had been able to carve out for himself a niche in the top hierarchy of the Muslim separatist movement. Still there were some inherent weaknesses in

Jinnah's strategy. He had no mass base as was vindicated by the poor performance in the 1937 elections and in fact represented till the 1940's a very small section of Muslims. Jinnah did not have the whole-hearted support of the Muslim leadership in some of the Muslim majority areas. Sikander Hayat Khan in the Punjab and Fazlul Haq in Bengal posed a challenge to Jinnah's leadership. The provincial leaders were also not at all keen to join Jinnah in his quest for Pakistan nor did they subscribe to Jinnah's conception of Pakistan. Besides, several Muslim political parties and groups in the Punjab such as the Ahrars and Khaksars were not prepared to toe his line over the issue of Pakistan. So was the case in Bengal. Thus we find that the League under Jinnah's leadership was in a vulnerable position and if the Congress leadership had cared to consolidate its power among the Muslim Majority areas, the forces working not in favour of Pakistan would have been strengthened.

The demand for partition was just a political move and a bargaining counter vis-a-vis the Congress. Jinnah had been able to inflame the strong Muslim sense of separateness. His disillusionment with the Congress after 1937-39 represented a major shift in his attitude and he strongly contended that the Muslims' rights and interests could not be safeguarded in a truly federal constitution. On the 28th Feb., 1939 when he had talks with Linlithgow, the Viceroy, he laid more emphasis on the fact that in any federal scheme, the government should ensure an adequate equipoise between the Hindu and Muslim votes. Jinnah had already mentioned about having recourse to partition in case the Muslims were asked to evolve an alternative to the federal scheme. Now, he had stopped characterizing the Muslims as a minority. "Hindustan and Islam", he now, began emphasising, "represent two distinct and separate civilizations and moreover, are as distinct from one another in origin, tradition and manner of life as are nations in Europe." When Jinnah saw that 'Linlithgow was contemptuous of the Congress and was not interested in any significant constitutional advance in India, he had started giving his full co-operation and in return sought his support in order to strengthen the position of the Muslim League. He

now had no qualms about denouncing the democratic system of government for which he had laboured so hard and even confessed to the Viceroy that he had been misled by his patriotic fervour. The latter wanted to use the Muslim League as an effective barrier against the Congress.

Linlithgow was jubilant at the adoption of the Partition resolution. Obviously he thought that he could use it as a handy tool against the Congress demand for independence. He had succeeded in his strategy of projecting the widening gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims as the chief hurdle in the way of constitutional advance. His chief concern was to ensure that the Muslim League was not alienated at a time when its support was most essential to the government. He gave his full support to Jinnah and his demand for partition by remaining silent and not saying anything against it formally and advised Zetland, the Secretary of State also to do the same. This is corroborated by his (Linlithgow's) remarks in his letter to Zetland after the adoption of the Pakistan resolution by the League 'My first reaction is I confess' he wrote that 'silly as the Muslim scheme for partition is, it would be a pity to throw too much cold water on it at the moment, though clearly we cannot accept it or associate ourselves with it.' In his letter to the king Emperor, a little later, he was much more positive in his support to the partition scheme and strongly justified it from the Muslim point of view.

This plan has been adopted by the leaders of the league because it offers the sole means of escape from the dilemma in which the Muslim minority finds itself in face of the introduction of democratic institutions. They refuse to contemplate a future in which they would be in constant subordination to the Hindu majority. They are therefore, constrained to suggest the constitutional severance of the country in such a manner as to secure to them political control in these areas in which the Muslim population exceeds the Hindus. Yet the political ideal of partition was not widespread and did not show its head in these parts of North-West and North-East India where Muslims were in a majority but was evident first among middle and upper class Muslims in the U.P. where they were in a minority. Once the Pakistan Resolution of 1940 had been

adopted, it was politically expedient and essential for the League to gain a foothold in those provinces which were as Jinnah said the cornerstones of Pakistan. A strong and powerful provincialism rather than commitment to Pakistan was more pronounced among them. The key provinces were the Punjab and Bengal. Neither Sikander Hayat Khan nor Fazlul Haq as Ispahani reported gloomily "care two brass buttons whether they go over anyone's head or throw the Muslims in the minority provinces to the wolves". In Sind, there was no enthusiasm for Pakistan 'whether among those in office or those hoping to get in'. In NWFP Jinnah's desire to get a League ministry was not fulfilled. Jinnah himself told Punjabis that they hold 'a key position in the scheme for the realization in practice of the Lahore resolution'. In the Punjab Legislative Assembly, Sikander Hayat Khan denounced the Lahore resolution and harped on the complete autonomy for the provinces and Muslim opposition to an 'all powerful centre' because it threatened provincial autonomy. He stressed that 'we in the Punjab stand united and will not brook any interference . . . then only we will be about to tell meddling busy bodies from outside, hands off the Punjab.' On 21st July Linlithgow announced the names of the national defence council; the list included Fazlul Haq, Sikander Hayat and Muhammed Sadullah (the premier of Assam); all these were nominal members of the League and had been invited to the Council without any reference to Jinnah.

By the time the Cripps Mission was sent to India, Jinnah had not been able to win over any of the Muslim provinces. H.V. Hodson the Reforms Commissioner made an assessment of the Muslim opinion including some "orthodox supporters of Pakistan . . . from Jinnah downwards were of the opinion that the British would stay on in India with defence in British hands for an undefined transitional period". He felt that "every Muslim Leaguer—interpreted Pakistan as consistent with a confederation of India for common purposes like defence provided the Hindu and Muslim elements therein stood on equal terms". What is most revealing is the confession made by Jinnah; "I think Mr. Hodson finally understands as to what our demand is". I.I. Chundrigar a Leaguer from Bombay told

him that the object of the Lahore resolution was to achieve "two nations, welded into united India on the basis of equality". Jinnah himself often suggested that Pakistan with its connotations of partition was not the League's idea but the caricature thrust upon it by the Hindu press. The failure of the Cripps Mission at the centre and the absence of the Congress from political scene provided an opportunity to Jinnah to secure allegiance of the Muslim majority provinces. Before going into the political implications of the Cripps offer for the League, it is important to mention here what S. Gopal writes in his important biography of Nehru : "It is on record that on this critical occasion he was guided by patriotism." Linlithgow was keen to preserve the British rule by strengthening the League. Cripps offer gave Jinnah some ray of hope about the achievement of Pakistan. Both he and Churchill favoured a do-nothing policy and looked forward to a post-war British presence. While Churchill found solution of the Indian problem whereby "we might sit on top of a tripos—Pakistan, princely India and the Hindus, Linlithgow expected British rule to last for another thirty years. At the time of the Cripps Mission Jinnah was prepared to go to the extent of committing the League's participation in Central Government even though the offer provided only for the province to opt out of the Indian union. The constitutional deadlock that followed as a result of the failure of the Cripps Mission gave Jinnah ample opportunity to galvanize the Muslims and work for their solidarity. Between 1942 and 1945 the League formed Governments in Sind, Bengal, the NWFP and even the Hindu majority province of Assam. The Quit India Movement of the Congress led to the arrest of the Congress leaders and virtually left the political field free for Jinnah. All effective propaganda was carried out in favour of Pakistan. 'Muslim India' claimed Jinnah, "was never so well organised nor so alive and politically conscious as today". The Muslim League had established a flag, a platform displaying and demonstrating the complete unity of the entire body of Muslims and had defined its goal.

The advantages gained by the League were enormous. Jinnah was able to consolidate the League with the Congress

completely out of picture. His status within the League got strengthened. Rajagopalachari urged his High Command to give the Muslim province the option to go their own way. C. Rajagopalachari presented to Jinnah in April 1942 a formula which became the basis of talks between Jinnah and Gandhi in September. Gandhi sought an understanding with Jinnah on the issue of Pakistan. Gandhi refused to accept the two-nation theory, but agreed that after the commission should demarcate contiguous districts in the North-West and North-East of India where the Muslim population was in absolute majority and the wishes of the inhabitants of the areas should be ascertained through the roles of the adult population, if the vote went in favour of separation these areas were to be formed into a separate state as soon as possible after India became independent. This further enhanced Jinnah's prestige in the eyes of the British as well as his co-religionists. Nothing concrete came out of the talks between the two. Jinnah rejected Gandhi's offer. The districtwise demarcation of boundaries was unacceptable to him though he was to accept it in 1947. He insisted on nothing less than a 'full' six provinces for Pakistan, even though in two of them (the Punjab and Bengal) the Muslim majority was marginal. Nor would Jinnah agree to any common links between India and Pakistan for such matters as foreign affairs, defence or customs. Nor would he agree that 'marriage should precede divorce that partition should come, it at all, after the British departure and after the two parties had an opportunity to co-exist'. Jinnah used these parleys with Gandhi to his advantage and was a feather in his cap as far as his standing within his own people was concerned. Early in 1944, the Bhulabhai-Liaquat pact for Congress-League cooperation in an interim government at the centre was published. Liaquat Ali later backed out and Jinnah rejected the pact. At the Simla conference summoned by Lord Wavell in June 1945, the idea of parity was given official recognition as Jinnah started clamouring for a parity between the Muslim League and other parties. Wavell was to go out of the way to appease Jinnah. The Congress, though disliked the parity proposed by the viceroy between the caste Hindus and the Muslims, accepted it as a temporary formula for the

formation of an interim government at the centre. Wavell had also agreed not to select a Muslim belonging to the Congress. His offer to Jinnah was that out of the five Muslims chosen, four should be from the League and one from the Punjab Unionist party.

This put a formal seal on the Muslim claim that Congress was a non-Hindu secular organisation and was as much a communal party as the League. The Simla Conference could not make any headway because Jinnah insisted that all Muslim members should belong to the League and that, in an executive council, the Muslim members would have veto on all important decisions. These were the demands which indicated that Jinnah's position was growing from strength to strength. Wavell abandoned his own proposals and the conference was dissolved. The gulf between the Congress and the League became more wide and deeper.

The Congress and the League got another chance to retrieve the situation when the Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Mission's pleas despite the fact that the ideal of partition was decisively rejected by the Cabinet Mission. After having considered the diametrically opposed proposals of the Congress and the League (the former demanding a fairly strong centre and the latter demanding Pakistan including the entire provinces of the Punjab and Bengal, the Mission announced its own plan. It turned down the plan for a sovereign Pakistan 'but provided for the compulsory grouping of the six Muslim majority provinces in section B and C. Jinnah asked for a month before giving his reaction to the Mission's plan. As far as the Punjab and Bengal were concerned, Muslims had reasons to be pleased with it. Jinnah regretted that the Mission had trotted out 'Common place and exploded arguments against Pakistan' and resorted to 'Special pleadings couched in deplorable language' which was bound to hurt the Muslim sensibilities. Still, he avoided rejecting the Mission's statement outrightly. On 6 June 1946, the All India Muslim League passed its momentous resolution accepting the Mission's statement. All except thirteen Leaguers voted for it.

The League derived maximum advantage from the elections for the central and provincial assemblies that were held at the

end of the year (1946). It contributed a lot towards the strengthening of Jinnah's position and realization of his goal. The Congress was outlawed, the Government seemed too keen not to let the League down, thus the League improved its political stature tremendously. The election results showed that the League had achieved tremendous success in provinces like the Bombay and Madras where the League captured all the reserved seats. But in no province with a Muslim majority was it able to form a Ministry with unquestioned backing in the Assembly. In Assam as in the NWFP it was a Congress ministry which was sworn in. In Punjab a coalition of Congress, the Unionist and the Akalis assumed office. In Bengal the League Ministry depended on European support and in Sind the League was outnumbered by the Congress. The election results vindicated Jinnah's claim that the League was the sole spokesman of the Muslims. All the Muslim seats in the election to the central legislature assembly were won by League candidates. The League secured seventy-five per cent of the total Muslim votes cast in the elections to Provincial assemblies throughout India—a marked improvement on the 4.4 per cent it had registered in the 1936-37 elections. But Jinnah's grip on the Muslim majority provinces was extremely tenuous. Poorly organised provincial leagues had entered into terms with the old factional system; they had not won a mandate from the Muslim voters by an organisation and a programme which replaced the existing system of local influence. Local and Provincial leaders had seen advantages in aligning themselves nominally with the All India Muslim League. The above analysis shows that however impractical—vague and imprecise the concept of partition was, it had touched the emotional chord of the Middle class Muslims. Even though the Congress leaders, particularly Nehru, felt that the League's success had not been comprehensive and was the creation of the wishful thinking of the British Government yet Pakistan was a reality in 1947 and not a thought anymore. It is indeed true that for Jinnah also Pakistan had never been more than a bargaining counter because he never anticipated that the British would leave so soon. Even in January 1946, Liaqat Ali Khan told the Viceroy that the British would have to stay in India for many years. The leaders

of the Muslim League, while insisting on the creation of Pakistan had no clearcut idea as to what it involved. M.A. Isphani and Raja of Mahmudabad (who were first to meet) the Mission could not explain how they could do without a central government for atleast a small list of reserved subjects such as external affairs—defence communications and customs. Two days later, Jinnah himself was unable to explain as to what he meant by Pakistan. The main course of events which led to the success of the Muslim League and the establishment of Pakistan were mainly the opportunities of the war years—the successes in the 1946 elections and the responses to the British initiatives of 1945-47. It goes to the credit of Jinnah and his organisational skill that a politically weak and disorganised Muslim party was able to put forward a convincing claim for a separate state. It was only by mobilizing the people of the Muslim majority provinces over and above their political leaders and exploiting the religious symbols that Jinnah could finally claim that on the issue of Pakistan he had the support of the whole Muslim community.

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## Indian Freedom Struggle and Muslims

Shantimoy Roy

Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder in the Freedom Struggle. Both fought as Indians and not as Hindus or Muslims. The common Muslim people did not lag behind their Hindu brethren in courage, bravery and sacrifice. A detailed account of the participation of Muslims in the revolutionary movement and their support, solidarity and sympathy with the great revolutionaries has been given by the author in this article.

The role of Indian Muslims in the anti-imperialist liberation struggle of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries has been outstanding. On the occasion of the golden jubilee of the martyrdom of Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh and their comrades it is necessary to focus special attention on the role of Indian Muslims during the phase of agniyuga, variently called by modern historians, the national revolutionary movement of the period from 1900 to 1935. The revolutionary movement signified the following features :

- (1) It was a militant armed protest against British tyranny, sometimes in the form of counter-terrorism and sometimes as armed uprisings or their preparatory ancillary

activities. In this respect it was a continuation of the similar protest undertaken by the Wahabi revolutionaries of the 19th Century.

- (2) It was organised on an All-India basis, visualising a united Indian state, a concept that later developed into that of a Federal Socialist Republic.
- (3) Implicitly it visualised a concept of nationalism on the basis of religious tolerance of all communities, which was to be an accepted model for most of the patriotic active partisans of the freedom struggle.
- (4) It declared in no uncertain terms that the four components of the revolutionary forces, called Chaturanags, were : workers, middle classes, peasants and the army.

The advent of agniyuga, an age of militant nationalism, opened a glorious chapter of the history of the freedom struggle in India.

As the storm of the swadeshi movement subsided in the year 1907 the rumbling of another storm was heard.

Actually the idea of organising the secret, revolutionary societies was an old one. During the 18th century, 'Sanyasis' and 'Fakirs' organised the first group of secret societies. It was followed by the Wahabis of the nineteenth century. At a time in 1876, when Balwant Phadke of Maharashtra, alongwith Ibrahim Khan, a Rohilla leader, took up the thread from the Wahabis and made an unsuccessful bid to rise against the British Raj, Jamaluddin Afghani made an extensive tour contacting various brands of nationalist Muslim ulemas like Shibli Nomani, Rashid Ahmed Gangohi, Mahmudul Hassan, a fire brand fighter and teacher in the Deoband School, in order to bring them to the path of armed resistance against "infidel firangis".

The period of 1900 to 1909 also witnessed the birth of various secret revolutionary societies in India. Abhinaba Bharati in Maharashtra, Mitromela in Tamil Nadu, Atmaun-nati, Anushilan, Suhrid, Sadhana Brati, Swadesh Bandhab samities in Bengal made their appearance, while Bharatmata Samiti was formed in Punjab.

Damodar Savarkar in Bombay, Shyamji Krishna Verma

and Madame Cama in London and Paris, Aurobindo Ghosh and Nivedita in Bengal, Ajit Singh and Baba Nishan Singh in Punjab, were few of the pioneers of the revolutionary movement which was aimed at driving away the foreigners from this land. By 1909, after Alipore, Dacca and Barisal, Nasik and Tinnevely conspiracy cases the first phase of the revolutionary movement had run its course.

### **Muslim Sister of a Hindu Martyr**

At the time when the Agha Khan and Lord Sinha were competing with each other in their demonstration of loyalty to the British Raj, Khudiram Bose, a young lad of 18 belonging to the Jugantar Group of Anushilan Party, was hanged in Muzaffarpur Jail on the charge of murdering Mrs. Kannedy on 11 August, 1908. Before his arrest he was given shelter by an unnamed Muslim lady known to be the sister of Moulvi Abdul Waheed, a compatriot of the veteran revolutionary leader Dr. B.N. Dutta. Both of them worked for the liberation of India during the first world war in Germany. The legendary 'didi' of Khudiram was this Muslim lady who, braving all risks, did not flinch from making enquiries about Khudiram's welfare during the last few days before he was hanged and providing affectionate shelter earlier. Almost in the same year, 1909, Kanhailal Dutt was hanged in Alipore and Madan Lal Dhingra in London. It marked the end of the first phase. The rise of revolutionary activities centering round Deoband School was the most remarkable testimony to Muslim participation in this new phase called agniyuga in history.

In spite of the overall religious overtone that existed in all these samities. Deoband School under the leadership of Mahmudal Hasan refused to be side tracked and went into full preparation, both ideological and organisational, to liberate India from the British yoke

In India the mission had its headquarters at Deoband. Its branches in Delhi, Diaanul Amrot and Karanji Kheda, and in Chakwal of Nazarat-ul-Maarif were established with Hakim Ajmal Khan and Anwarul Mulk of Aligarh as patrons.

By the year 1910 dark clouds gathered on the international

horizon. Germany and Britain were heading toward war. Revolutionaries, both inside and outside India, became very restive. Inside India, all the parties were united under Rash Behari Bose and Jatin Mukherji. In America, at San Francisco, the Ghadar Revolutionary Party was born in 1916, with its centres in London, Paris, Brussels, Batavia and Hong Kong. Among the great stalwarts were Lala Hardayal, Prof. Barkatullah, Raja Mahendra Pratap, Heramba Gupta, Abinash Bhattacharya, Biren Chattopadhyay; Champakaraman Pillai, Dr. Mansur, Abdul Waheb, Dilip Singh etc.

The first move of an uprising on 21st February, 1915 failed, due to betrayal. There was a premature uprising at Singapore on 15th February, 1915. Singapore was free for four days. The uprising was suppressed. More than 200 were shot dead. Outside India, a small independent principality on the North-Western Frontier was chosen as the centre of activity. The followers of Syed Ahmed Shahid and Maulavi Inayat Ali and Sharafat Ali, who still continued to carry on Jihad against the British, supported this nucleus of the armed forces

Haji Turang Zai was appointed their leader. The neighbouring and volunteers from India were expected to join them. It was hoped that the Amir of Afghanistan would lead his support.

### **Provisional Azad Hind Govt. in Afghanistan**

The armed uprising was not planned as a purely Muslim affair. From Punjab the Sikhs and from Bengal the revolutionary party members were invited to cooperate. A house was taken on rent to accommodate them near Mahmudal Hasan's residence in Deoband. The preparations were carried on in secret. Obeidullah Sindhi worked at Deoband and organised the Jamait-ul-Ansar. Later, he was sent to Delhi where a second attempt was being made through the North-Western Frontier group in which the Ghadar Party and Muslim revolutionaries of Deoband School were deeply involved. As a part of this joint scheme a provisional Azad Hind Government was formed in 1916 in Afghanistan with the support of Germany and Turkey. Raja Mahendra Pratap became the president

and Prof. Barkatullah was the Prime Minister with Obeidullah Sindhi as deputy prime minister.

In the official documents of the time of the first world war, the name of Syed Obeidullah is mentioned on several occasions. Obeidullah belonged to the province of Sindh. He organised revolutionary parties in Delhi, Punjab and North-West Frontier Province and made an appeal to the Afghan government to help in their armed struggle against the British.

For various reasons it was not possible for the Afghan Government to respond. Obeidullah sent an appeal to the Russian Tsar to terminate the alliances with the British Government and to help Indian patriots in their struggle. Besides Obeidullah, Mohammed Abdullah, Fateh Mahmud, Inhammed Ali were among the Muslim revolutionaries whose names were referred in connection with the famous Silk Letters Conspiracy of 1916.

Maulana Mahmudal Hasan was one of the foremost leaders of this rebellion. He alongwith Moulavi Ansari and Obeidullah, launched an all out campaign among Muslim soldiers of the Middle East relying on the active cooperation of Ghalib Pasha, the Turkish Governor.

Miah Ansari and Sheikh Abdur Rahman of Hyderabad joined them. All the letters written in secret code on silk cloth to Mahmudal Hasan in Hesaz were intercepted by the British. Ghalib Pasha and other Muslim revolutionaries were arrested due to the betrayal of the Sheriff of Mecca. Consequently, the conspiracy failed. A large number of armymen and a good number of Muslim students belonging to the Muslim revolutionary parties were arrested and convicted to long term rigorous imprisonments.

### **Embracing each other they Marched Towards Death**

The attempt that was initiated by Jatin Mukherjee, Rash Behari Bose with the revolutionary leaders, banished abroad, like Bairen Das Gupta, Heramba Gupta, Naren Bhattacharjee (M.N. Roy), Raja Mahendra Pratap, Ali Mansur, Prof. Barkatullah and others; attracted these revolutionaries who were actively working inside the army ranks of Singapore,

Mandalay, Rangoon, Java and Sumatra. They were predominantly Muslims. In different ports and docks the Muslim seamen helped to distribute the revolutionary newspaper *Zahani Islam* and leaflets. In one of its issues there was an appeal by Envar Pasha of Egypt to Hindus and Muslims : "You are soldiers of the ranks. You are just like two brothers. The hated Britishers are your enemy. You attain greatness in participating in the crusade (Jehad) for liberation. And marching hand in hand, brothers, achieve India's freedom".

In an organised attempt the 130th Baluch Regiment raised high the banner of revolt in Rangoon, Bangkok and Singapore in January 1915. On 15 February 1915, the 5th Light Infantry revolted in Singapore. All these troops consisted of Muslim soldiers.

These revolts ended in failure. Two of the rebels were hanged and 43 shot dead. The rest of them were given transportation for life in the Andaman Islands.

In the Second Mandalay Conspiracy Case, in 1917, three rebel soldiers were sentenced to death. They were Mustafa Hossain of Jaipur, Amar Singh of Ludhiana and Ali Ahmed of Faizabad. In June, 1915, at Singapore, Kashim Ismail Khan Kansur, a merchant, was sentenced to death on the charge of forging contact with the Army camp. In March, 1915, three army men : Rasullah Khan, Imtiaz Ali and Rukhnuddin were sentenced to death on a charge of rebellion. They declined to beg mercy for their lives and, embracing one another gallantly mounted the gallows. At about the same time, in Singapore, 15 non-commissioned officers revolted. Among them Havildar Suleman, Naik Munshi Khan, Naik Jafar Ali Khan. Naik Abdul Razzak, along with their seven Sikh colleagues courted death like true revolutionaries.

In another note on the New Mohammedan Revolutionary Party in Bengal a secret police agent, writing about the All-India Muslim League session at Amritsar, stated : "Maulana Muniruzaman Islamabad of Chittagong, Assistant Nizam (Manager of Jamait-ul-Ulema, Bengal), mentioned to me that a printed letter of the provisional government of India was received by his party from Kabul, Afghanistan, and that he would show it to me if he was convinced of my loyalty.

He (Islamabad) mentioned that an army was shortly going to attack India. By his party Muniruzaman meant those people who shared the ideals of Moulvi Obeidullah Sindh".

Mahmudal Hasan became one of the moving spirits in the scheme to drive the British from this land. He was ably assisted by Hussain Ahmed Madni. They incited the Muslim soldiers to revolt. Ultimately they were betrayed by the Sherrif of Hefaz and kept in Malta fort upto 1918. More than 200 rebel Muslim soldiers were shot at Basra. Due to this revolt hundreds of Muslim youths of Punjab, North-West Frontier and Sindh were imprisoned.

In spite of social and political limitation determining the objectives of this revolutionary movement, a number of other Muslim young men came forward with their own plans. In this connection the name of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is on record in the British archival papers. In his autobiography, "India Wins Freedom", the Maulana just touched the point that he came into contact with the Anushilan Samiti leader, Aurobindo Ghosh, through Shyam Sunder Chakravarti. After his tour of the Middle-East, Afghanistan, Peshawar and Northern India, Azad organised a revolutionary society named Habibullah in Calcutta. Earlier he started a paper called *Al-Hilal*. His society was organised on the model of the Maniktala group. Muslim youth were asked to take an oath at Khidserpur kabrasthan, by touching the Koran, to serve and die for the cause of the Motherland.

Jalaluddin Ahmed, a prominent member of Azad's secret party, succeeded in organising a mixed band of Hindu-Muslim revolutionaries in Bengal. His headquarters was Tantulia (24 Parganas). The men under him were suspected to have taken a gun from a Zamindar's Kutchery in Tala in 1916 and to have murdered one Muslim suspected to be a police informer. The principal members belonging to Jalaluddin's group were Mohendra Mitra, Sachindra Datta, Saral Krishna, Syed Samsuddin and Ananta Kumar Dey, of Naloauga. Andur Razak Khan was Azad's agent for recruiting young men from among different groups of Hindus and Muslims of Jessore, Khulra, Barisal and Faridpur districts. He came in contact

with the well known revolutionary Purna Chandra Das of Madaripur.

On his release in January, 1920, Azad, according to police records, resumed his plan of organising the secret society, and in 1921 sent Fazlul Haq Shelbarshi to the Bolshevik camp at Kabul with an introduction letter. He was, however, arrested with the letter while trying to cross the North-West Border.

The revolutionary movement of all varieties, aiming to drive the British out with the support of Germany and Turkey, however, failed with the defeat of the central powers in 1918. This was, however, more than compensated when the Bolshevik Revolution took place in Russia on 7 November, 1917. The international centre of the Indian revolution shifted from Berlin to Moscow and Tashkent.

The year 1918 saw the turning point in the history of the freedom struggle in general and of the armed uprising in particular.

The October revolution, the abolition of the Khalifate consequential to the rise of Kamal Ataturk of Turkey, the rise of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in Congress politics after the death of Gopal Krishna Gokhle and Balgangadhar Tilak and Dr. Annie Besant, changed the scene wherein it became necessary for the Indian revolutionaries to reexamine the validity of armed resistance as a method of struggle.

The national situation was further surcharged by soaring prices and massive unemployment among the youths and the toiling masses, in the post-war years. Out of this situation developed for currents in the movement :

1. Rise of mass movements of the toiling people compelled by economic consideration and reflected in the growth of the All-India Trade Union Movement in 1919.
2. Politically oriented mass movements demanding democratic rights against repressive Rowlatt Act and the fulfilment of the war time pledge to grant autonomy
3. Movements demanding the restoration of the former position and power of the Khalifate.
4. Rise of the New Violence Party, and other partisan groups, known as 'revolt groups', as against the pusil-

lanimous policy of inaction by the leaders of the classical revolutionary parties, e.g. Anushilan, Jugantar, Ghadar and Deobandis, etc. The leaders of these parties had an informal agreement (except Deobandis) with the British Government, through Gandhiji, not to resort to violent methods in the immediate future. The classical revolutionary movement henceforth entered in a new phase, which witnessed the following trends :

- (1) The rise of the New Violence Party of Santosh Mitra and Dakshineswar Group ;
- (2) The Bengal Volunteers group of Dacca ;
- (3) Chittagong Republican Army of Surya Sen ;
- (4) Mechuabazar group consisting of rebels from Anushilan and Jugantar ;
- (5) Hindusthan Republican Army in North India which some time later became Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, led by Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh.

### **Martyrdom of Ashfaq Ullah Khan**

The role of the Muslim community during this phase of the revolutionary upsurge cannot be dealt with fully for want of space. In Uttar Pradesh, Ashfaq Ullah Khan became a household name along with Chandra Shekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh. He was a member of Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. Death sentence was passed on him along with three others of the Kakori Conspiracy Case. Rajen Lahiri, Roshan Singh and Ram Prasad Bismil were associated with him. It was hinted to him that a simple confession involving his comrades would secure his release. But Ashfaq Ullah scornfully rejected the proposal. The day before he was hanged, while meeting his countless relations and friends at Faizabad Jail, he told one of his sobbing relatives, "If I am not allowed to observe the last ceremony of the noblest ordeal with all dignity and steadfastness, the sanctity of the occasion will be taruished. Today I feel myself worthy of honour with the hope that a sacred and great responsibility for the liberation of the motherland has been entrusted to me. You should feel happy and proud that

one of yours is fortunate enough to offer his life. You must remember that the Hindu community has dedicated great souls like Khudiram and Kanhai Lal. To me this is a good fortune that, belonging to the Muslim Community I have acquired the privilege of following the footsteps of those great martyrs”.

On that day, standing on the platform of the gallows, Ram Prasad and Ashfaq Ullah, chanting the verses of the Gita and the Koran, courted death.

“We shall be born again, shall meet again and shall jointly fight once again for the cause of the motherland as comrades-in-arms”. These were the last words of Ram Prasad Bismil. Among others associated in different actions was Abdul Momin of the Aimaunnati group. He later became one of the active members of the Communist Party. Abdur Razaq Khan, who belonged to the Independence Party, was more closely linked with Abul Kalam Azad. They worked with Jugantar, Anushilan and all the groups on the basis of a common minimum programme, i.e. the supply of arms. But both of them were interested in the Bolshevik path of revolution.

Serajul Haq and Hamidul Haq of Hooghly long associated with Bhupati Mazumdar, one of the leaders of the Jugantar Party. They suffered long term imprisonment in the Andamans. Among the Muslim youth connected with the Jugantar Party, the name of Muksuddin Ahmed of Netrokona was well known to the Bengal revolutionaries. Other revolutionary workers were Maulavi Gyashuddin Ahmed, Nasiruddin Ahmed, his daughter Rezia Khatun, Abdul Kader of Jamalpur. They were all associated with the Jugantar Party. They suffered imprisonment and braved sufferings for the sake of revolutionary ideals. Prominent among those who belonged to the revolt group were Wali Newaz, Mohammed Ismail, Sahiruddin, Chand Mich of Kishoreganj and revolutionary workers, like Altaf Ali, who was associated with the Anushilan Party. From 1920 onwards, Alimuddin (Master Sahib), another less known by generous and courageous figure, played a significant part along with Khagen Das, Bardhan and Krishna Adhikari in organising revolutionary units on the outskirts of Dacca city, which later developed as a revolutionary party known as Bengal Volunteers. He could not continue his work for long. Poverty and starvation ultimately

threw him into the jaws of death. His organising ability and sense of revolutionary discipline were uncommon. He drew many a patriotic Muslim to his side.

### **Muslim Peasantry's Support to the Revolutionaries**

In Bogra, Dr. Fazul Kader Chowdhury spent long years in the Andaman cellular jail as a member of the Anushilan Samiti in Hill Robbery case. Mrs. Sabera Khatun of Haroa acted as hostess of many revolutionaries of Anushilan Party during thirties.

Next to Mymensingh, the revolutionaries of Chittagong had a considerable mass base among the Muslims. This was the reason why, in spite of persistent efforts of the British Government, communal riots could not be instigated after the murder of the oppressive officer, Assanullah. When the youth of Hindu families were kept behind the bars, the doors of Muslim families were open to provide shelter and food for the underground revolutionaries at great peril. In Kalarpol fighting, all the five Hindu fighters received food and care from the adjoining Muslim peasants.

Muslim peasants saved the life of Ambika Chakravarti and offered many of her comrades shelter and food after Jallalabad fighting. Eradatullah, a Muslim youth, gave all protection to the revolutionary leader, Ananta Singh, and safely escorted him to the den of the Jugantar revolutionaries in Calcutta. Mir Mohammed was one of the most active organisers who sheltered many Chittagong heroes in the midst of unprecedented terror. He was arrested and tortured but refused to divulge the secrets of his activities. He was thrown into Buxar fort which shattered his health.

On numerous occasions, Surya Sen, Kalpana Datta, Tarakeshwar Dastidar, Kali Dey of Chittagong revolt fame had to take shelter in the huts of Muslim peasantry of Chittagong villages. Even in the face of such horrible torture and agony the sad faces of the Muslim masses did not escape the attention of Surya Sen. Up to this day the tale of those patriotic Muslim peasants can be heard in the countryside of Chittagong, bringing tears to the eyes of each and every revolutionary there.

“They have lost many things in life but what they have still retained as a cherished treasure is the simple undaunted love of the Muslim peasantry”, Kalpana Datta (Joshi) said in an interview. Chittagong rebellion was the signal for a series of daring actions throughout northern India on a wider scale. Attempts were made on the lives of European and Indian officers and traitors. Political robberies also committed. In East Bengal almost all the middle class families were affected. Many youths laid down their lives smilingly.

Thousands of common Muslim peasantry shed tears in sorrow and anger for having to witness Surya Sen badly assaulted and enchained in front of Daria Police Station. When a European sergeant started assaulting Kalpana Datta, it drew spontaneous defiant protest from a paramilitary Indian Officer. Thousands of Muslim peasants expressed gratitude with silent tears in their eyes.

All these revolutionary masses raised mute protests on every occasion. No amount of malicious propaganda can wash off the undying saga of these Muslim patriots for the cause of the freedom of the motherland.

“Bhagat Singh and his companions are bound to provide the test for many fiery sermons in the days to come.”

—British Intelligence Officials  
(in their report, dated the 26th of March, 1931).

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## Freedom Struggle and Urdu Journalism During the Nineteenth Century

(Mrs.) Abida Sami Uddin

No complete and authentic history of freedom struggle, participation of a cross section of communities in it, the development of the various phases of national movement spread over more than one and a half centuries and covering all its socio-political and economic aspects is possible without a detailed study of newspapers, journals and magazines of Urdu, which gave the nation the most fiery slogan of this struggle—'Inqilab Zindabad' unparalleled in the history of any other Indian language. The dedicated services and tremendous sacrifices made for the national cause by their publishers and editors will always remain a source of inspiration to the younger generation of post-independence India. While marching ahead it is always essential to stop occasionally for a moment and have a backward look on the way paved for us by our forefathers with their blood, sweat and toil.

The first Urdu newspaper *Jam e-Jahan Numan*, which laid the foundation of Urdu journalism in India was published from Calcutta on March 27, 1822. As Persian was at that time the language of the elite, and Urdu was still the language of the bazar, soon the founders of paper were forced to switch over to Persian in May, 1822. But next year an Urdu supplement was also added. The main purpose of *Jam-e-Jahan Numan*

was to publish the news from British papers in Persian and to collect information from the regions in the Company's possessions as well as from the various other parts of the country. (Abdul Ali, "Early Persian Newspapers of Calcutta in the Bengal", Past and Present, Jan-June 1927, cited by Atiq Siddiqui in *Hindustani Akhbar Navesi*, p. 160.)

Thus Urdu journalism opened its eyes under the patronage of the East India Company in Bengal as it was the first part to come under its complete control. The foreign rulers had no profound love for Urdu; their main interest in developing this language lay in using it for their own expansionist designs. But what frightened them was the realisation that only within three decades Urdu journalism proved to be the most powerful instrument through which the nationalist Indians spread the message of patriotism and created an all-India consciousness.

The very fact that the founders of *Jam-e-Jahan Numan* were two noble Hindu souls—Hari Har Datt and Munshi Seva Sukh, while the first martyr for freedom in the history of Urdu journalism was Maulvi Mohd. Baqar, a Muslim is an indication that from the very beginning the language had a national character.

Maulana Mohd. Baqar was the father of Shamsul-Ulama Maulana Mohd. Husain Azad and is rightly considered to be the harbinger of Urdu Journalism in Delhi. With a press in his own house, he started an Urdu weekly, known as "*Delhi Urdu Akhbar*", in 1836. The Akhbar started criticising the growing indiscipline and the general deterioration in law and order in Delhi and arousing the national sentiments against the racial arrogance of the foreign rulers.

### **Delhi Urdu Akhbar**

In the beginning the tone of the comments in the paper was generally a gentle one but in spite of this, usually the truth was told. At Agra, merely on the basis of favouritism an English Officer dismissed a native employee of 25 years' standing and appointed his own man on the plea that the local people do not have the capacity to do the work. *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* wrote in its issue dated 28th June 1840 :

Indian officials have been unnecessarily given a bad name. If they get a reasonable salary like their English counterparts and their suspension and reinstatement is done by higher authorities and not by inexperienced and young collectors, magistrates and deputy collectors, the qualities that the English officials are supposed to have will surely be found in Indians. (Abdus-Salam Khursheed, *Sahafat Pakistan o-Hind Men*, p. 56.)

The tone is rather bitter in its comment on the increasing incidents of robberies blaming the Thanedar for harassing the public it wrote :

Things have come to such a pass that money is extorted from people and their neighbours through threats and now the people are even afraid of complaining against thefts and the officials are doing nothing. (*Ibid.*)

Then the revolt of 1857 took place which was much more than a mere product of the Sepoy discontent. It was a culmination of the accumulated grievances of the people against the Company's administration and their dislike of the foreign regime. For over a century as the British were gradually conquering the country, popular discontent and hatred against foreign rule had been gaining strength among different sections of the Indian society.

The spirit of leadership in the 1857 revolution was inspired by Urdu papers. This has been criticised by Garsan Datasi also :

On the occasion of the distribution of these ill-omened cartridges, Indian papers which were already showing readiness in spreading dissatisfaction took advantage of unlimited freedom and incited Indian people to refuse to handle these cartridges and persuaded them that by playing this trick the English wanted to convert Indians to Christianity. (*Hindustani Akhbar Navesi*, p. 359.)

When the Revolution of 1857 brought in its wake a brief

period of independence, the *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* got a fresh youthfulness. A rhetorical and dramatic style emerged in the presentation of news in it, which in the journalistic language of today is known as "feature". While reading such items, of news it appears that we are sitting in some corner of this Bride of Cities and watching with our own eyes this horrible game of blood and fire which certainly brought about a sense of relief in the collective life of Delhi for a few months. But if on the one hand this period was a harbinger of freedom, on the other it also brought in its train the oppression of the people of Delhi at the hands of the Telangs. Delhi people themselves ushered in an era of loot. The situation became so serious that Bahadur Shah Zafar had to issue the following *firman*s against it which was published in *Urdu Akhbar* dated May 21-24, 1857 :

Often swordsmen and musclemen oppress and trouble the people of the city and the royal servants. Before this, the Europeans used to issue whatever orders they wanted and our dear subjects were always worried and troubled. Now you trouble them and loot them. If this is your condition then having no regard for wealth or property in these last days of ours, we shall either go in the direction of Khwaja Saheb along with all the loyal subjects or move to the Kaaba of Allah so that the remaining years of our dear life are spent in the contemplation of God.

In such a situation only a courageous journalist speaks the truth, for when goondas become respectable and chaos is prevailing, common people cover their heads and sit down in a corner to save their lives and honour. (Dr. Abdus Salam Khursheed, *Karwan-i-Sahafat*, pp. 10-11.)

The *Delhi Akhbar* covered the news of the uprising extensively. Following are the extracts of the news items published in the issue of the paper dated 24th May :

*Kol.* It has been heard that four companies of Kol appeared before the king after disgracing the English, killing every Englishman they came across and allowed the

people to loot the treasury and the public looted it thoroughly and everyone grabbed what he would catch hold of. (Atiq Siddiqui, *Hindustani Akhbar Navisi*, p. 384.)

### *Lucknow*

It is reported that in Lucknow Englishmen suffered the way they feared here. It is also rumoured that the brother of the deposed king who was known to be mad has occupied the throne and the state is being ruled in his name but it is not known what the disposition of the king of dancers and the friend of music is and where is the ruler. (*Ibid.*)

### *Kanpur*

It has been reported that the condition of Kanpur is similar to that of other places. Wherever an Englishman is found, he is killed. (*Ibid.*)

### *Delhi City Proper*

The public feels greatly harassed and troubled because of the prevalent loot. The City people themselves as well as outsiders are indulging in loot and the authority of the police posts is less than one-tenth of what it was earlier. In short, every respectable and rich person is facing great difficulties these days. (*Ibid.*, p. 387.)

And then the land covered by dark clouds Delhi became like a widowed lady. *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* was closed. Its proprietor, Mohammad Baqar was shot dead but he became immortal since he was the first journalist to have obtained the glory of a martyr.

### *Koh-i-Noor, Lahore*

A few months after the annexation of Punjab, Munshi Har Sukh Rai founded *Koh-i-Noor* on January 14, 1850 in Lahore. According to Garsan Datasi its press started under the patronage of the Punjab Board of Administration—another name of

Punjab Government, and its first editor was Suraj Bhan. In its longest span of life *Koh-i-Noor* produced a number of renowned journalists. It functioned smoothly till March, 1856. Then suddenly Munshi Har Sukh Rai was arrested and imprisoned for three years, but the paper continued under the supervision of Munshi Hira Lal.

A prominent feature of the 1856 file of the paper is that it gives evidence of the great courage in its editorial comments. This is notwithstanding the fact that, in conformity with the practice of the time, along with criticism there was also a buttering of praise. For example, see the following comment entitled "Freedom of the Press" in its issue of 29th April, 1856 :

Journalists and the reporters of the country are informed that there is a proposal before the Legislative Assembly of India to pass a law whereby printers are deprived of the right of printing every matter and the government has obtained the right of obstruction and interference. So it is necessary for everyone to be united and with perfect determination plead against the enactment of such a law. Failing this, everyone would be harmed and the publication of papers would be worthless. But one is reluctant to believe that the government which has bestowed these rights would interfere with their exercise without any valid reason. (*Sahafat Pakistan-o-Hind Men*, pp. 60 61.)

*Koh-i-Noor* also published a detailed article exposing dishonesty, maladministration, nepotism and official delay. The government officials were severely criticised. It writes in its issue of 26th February, 1856 :

Now the people of Oudh are angry with the crazy administration ; thousands of candidates are clamouring for jobs and say that appointment of people from outside Oudh is unjust. Except for a few, the old employees of the king were dismissed. They were told that their rights would be kept in mind. Everyone takes pity on the king. This is notwithstanding the fact that the king showed his loyalty in

every way. Some people were annoyed at this. A mischievous landlord went to the extent of sending him a female dress with the message that it suited him since he accepted everything without argument. (*Ibid.*, p. 62.)

However during the revolution *Koh-i-Noor* sided with the establishment, and gave an extensive coverage, to the news of British victories and arrests and hangings of the freedom fighters. Later, *Koh-i-Noor* also published the correspondence between Lala Lajpat Rai and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. In these letters, Lajpat Rai showed how Syed Ahmad had gone back on all that he had preached in his former days quoting copiously from his earlier writings. Lajpat Rai wrote : "Times have changed and with them convictions. Flattery and official cajoleries have blinded the eyes of the most far-seeing, cowardice has depressed the souls of the foremost seekers of truth and high-sounding titles and the favours of worldly governors have extinguished the fire of truth in many a noble heart." [P.N. Chopra, *Role of Indian Muslims in the Struggle for Freedom* (ed.), p. viii.]

### **Riaz-e-Noor, Multan**

It was started in the beginning of 1852 under the editorship of Munshi Mohd. Mehdi Husain Khan. In 1856 he was imprisoned for seven years because of an article published against a Tehsildar.

### **Sadiq-ul-Akhbar**

Four newspapers were published from Delhi during this period, but the most popular one was that of Syed Jameel Uddin, which he started in 1854, first in Persian. Then, most probably after two years, it switched over to Urdu. (*Sahafat Pakistan-o-Hina Men*, p. 52.)

*Sadiqul-Akhbar* Delhi, played a most significant role in planting the seeds of revolt as well as reflecting the feelings and emotions of the people during the revolution.

In the Indian newspaper in general and Urdu papers in

particular, published in the beginning of 1857, news about the war between the English and the Iranian was given a limitless coverage. The matter and the tone of the presentation of news on the subject were openly anti-English. *Sadiqul Akhbar* especially published news regarding the coming of the armies of Iran and Afghanistan and their attack on India. For example :

A friend tells us that according to the report of a messenger from Peshawar, several thousand soldiers have killed many Englishmen and put the Governor of Sewat, Syed Mohammad Akbar, who is most devout on the royal throne, and after settling him well there proceeded to surround Lahore. Now the people of Lahore are besieged. We are certain that the victorious and brave army would be triumphant and the remnants of the whites who are on the verge of their graves would be buried in the graves. (Imdad Sabri, *Rooh-e-Sahafat*, Vol. I, p. 261.)

It wrote with glee that soon the king of Iran would conquer India and present the crown of India to the King of Delhi. (*Hindustani Akhbar Navesi*, p 364.)

The rays of hope produced by the flames of India-wide revolt may be clearly evidenced in the pages of *Sadiqul-Akhbar*.

"See, when God chose to make the English nation fortunate, from the east to the west, north etc. they could conquer countries without waging wars. Wherever they raised the banner of war, the kings were terrified into seeking peace. Conditions do not remain unchanged for anyone. What exists today can also become naught. God has been kind to the people of India so that the English have been destroyed by their own army, otherwise their evil intentions would have caused a lot of suffering to Indians. It has happened several times that the army has crowned whomever it has favoured . . . Thousands of white from all parts came here, the Europeans tried all kinds of strategies to conquer Delhi, but the bravery of the whites was in vain; before fate all devices failed. In every place and in every field their heads were cut down. The few that survived were also swept away with the broom of the

curse of the Almighty and the King has started wielding authority all over the country". (*Ibid.*, pp. 394-95.)

The editor of the paper, Jameeluddin was later prosecuted and sentenced to three years, imprisonment. (*Ibid.*, p. 453.)

The annexation of Oudh by Lord Dalhousie in 1856 was widely resented in India in general and in Oudh in particular, and created panic among the rulers of the princely states.

*Tilism-e-Lucknow*, which started publication on January 16, 1856 gives an account of the conditions after the annexation of Oudh in its issue of January 16, 1857 :

#### *Tilism, Lucknow*

Saturday (instability) has come to Lucknow. Robbers have created a havoc. Every incident is a matter of wonder, At the slightest nap, the head-gear is missing . . . . The government turns a blind eye to all this. The undeserving rule the roost. There are strange happenings every day. (*Hindustani Akhbar Navisi*, p. 312.)

How the masses felt about then the deposed Wajid Ali Shah ? Sentiments of the masses for the deposed Wajid Ali Shah can be gauged from the following passage of *Tilism-e-Lucknow* :

The ups and downs of the world have brought this most unfortunate time. All the subjects were crying, their heart-sickness was really distressing. Those who saw were deeply hurt, but what could the helpless people do ? They simply looked at each other and wept bitterly. (*Ibid.*, p. 314.)

Following is an extract from the 15th December, 1856 issue of another important paper of this period from Lucknow—*Sahr-e-Samri*, which had started publication in November, 1854 :

Foodgrains are costly these days. This causes strain on people's minds. Foodgrains are so expensive that even the heavens have been pauperised. There is no relief from the pangs of starvation, penury has affected the sense of satis-

faction of all kinds of people. Everyone who hears this sheds tears at their plight. There are no sources of livelihood and their search is in vain. The burden of suffering has turned the wheatish colour of people's faces into blue. The government has turned a blind eye to all this and people feel helpless to do anything. (*Ibid.*, p. 314.)

Commenting on the role of Urdu papers a little before the revolution Dr. Abdus-Salam writes :

It would perhaps be wrong to expect the newspaper of the period to reflect the public opinion. Nevertheless the Delhi Urdu papers wrote in favour of the Indian employees of the Government and criticised the police officers. The manner in which *Koh-i-Noor* appealed to all the papers of the country to maintain the freedom of the press and the way in which both the Lucknow newspapers exposed the anarchy and corruption that prevailed after the annexation of Oudh, give evidence of their courage and they deserve to be praised. (*Sahafat Pakistan-o-Hind Men*, p. 84.)

This had become possible as Indian press was freed by Charles Matcalf in 1835. But the nationalist press took full advantage of it. Urdu papers played an active role during the revolution too, as special mention has already been made of two papers of Delhi—*Urdu Akhbar* and *Sadiqul Akhbar*.

Through the period the attitude of the English papers remained very hostile. Munshi Mohammad Azim brought out an English newspaper—*The Punjabi* from Lahore, the editor of which was an Englishman. It wrote :

We have learnt that many native papers are being circulated among the soldiers. But when a native paper is full of religious emotions, its nature changes. We have been constrained to write this because our attention has been drawn to a newspaper which was being read by our army men. If published the news of the troubles in Barrackpur in such a manner that it could lead to mischief. (*The Punjabi*, Lahore, March 1857.)

The special targets of attack of *Lahore Chronicle* were the Indian Muslims :

Now there is no doubt about the fact that the conspiracies of the Muslims were at the bottom of the revolt and they deserve to be severely punished, since so long as there are Muslims they neither can nor will change their opinions. (8th July, 1857.)

English papers constantly demanded censorship on the vernacular press. With the beginning of revolution, Lord Canning implemented on June 12, 1857 the Act known in the history of journalism as Canning Act. Consequently, stringent action was taken against a number of papers. As Urdu papers owned by Muslims were on the forefront during the revolution they were the main targets of British revenge. Consequently under the Canning Act Muslims in particular were expelled from the field of journalism for some time.

### **Expulsion of Muslims from the Field of Journalism**

What Mr. J. Natrajan has written in the history of Indian Journalism in this connection on the basis of government reports is as follows :

As soon as revolution broke out, all the papers of the north-western provinces stopped publication. (p. 68)

In 1853 the number of Urdu newspapers was 35. In 1858 their number came down to only 12 out of which 6 were old and 6 new. The editor of only one of these twelve papers was a Muslim. (*Ibid.*, p. 54.)

### **Urdu Journalism After the Revolution of 1857**

A new phase of journalism started after the revolution which gave a severe jolt to the British administration in India. Indian society, economy and government all underwent significant changes in the decades following the revolt. The Parliament Act of 1858 transferred the power of government from

the East India Company to the British Crown; things improved a little. Newspapers started criticising the new regime, but in a mild tone. The Vernacular Press Act of 1878 was repealed in 1882 because of widespread protest in which Urdu papers played an active role. The period also witnessed the full flowering of national and political consciousness and the growth of an organised national movement in the country; Indian National Congress was born in December, 1885.

It was at the beginning of this period that Munshi Naval Kishor started publishing *Oudh Akhbar*, from Lucknow in 1858, which became a daily in 1874. *Oudh Akhbar* got a long life of 90 years. It was a secular paper and always followed a moderate policy.

*Oudh Akhbar* laid stress on Hindu-Muslim unity. For example, in one of its issues (dated 8th August, 1835) it wrote :

Our condition is that if something unfortunate happens to Tom, Dick becomes happy. When one community is facing disaster the other celebrates it. It is because of this unfortunate disunity and mutual prejudice that we have come to such a pass and only God knows what it will lead to. (*Sahafat Pakista .-o-Hind Men*, p. 105.)

Muslims were complaining against the administration of the state of Kashmir. They asked the British Government to intervene in the matter. Objecting to this, *Oudh Akhbar* wrote in its issue of 16th January, 1880 as follows :

We were greatly surprised at the opinion of some Punjab newspapers that the governorships should be assigned in such a manner that half of them should be Muslim and half Hindus so that Muslims do not have any cause of complaint. We do not agree with such opinions, since if these are accepted, it would greatly affect the administration of Muslim and Hindu states, and the way Muslims complain even though the complaint is on wrong principles, Hindus will also demand that in Muslim states there should be Hindu ministers and governors. Opinions should always to be

based on principles which produce good results rather than do harm. (*Ibid.*)

The following passage presents the trends of political struggle of the time :

According to royal declaration Lord Litton confirmed it in Delhi Darbar that civil and military offices will also be given to deserving Indians but they are hedged by such restrictions which virtually amount to deliberate denial of this privilege to Indians. According to law of Manu, Hindu Rajas used to take one-tenth of produce; Muslim Kings made it one-fourth, but the present position is nearly of half. More than that Hindu Rajas and Muslim Kings collected the revenues in terms of agricultural production. So the subjects were not exploited. Now they have to pay the revenues in terms of money, even though they are not in a position to maintain their families. Then there are other harassments such as military expenditure, Arms Act, a huge army of Indian aristocrats, Vernacular Press Act and the last one is of income-tax. (*Ibid*, p. 105.)

An Englishman humiliated an Indian Mukhtar on the ground that he was putting on English shoes. This shameful incident was reported in the issue of *Oudh Akhbar* dated 6th March, 1876 :

An Officer from a European country went to the extent of maltreating a Mukhtar who had appeared before him in English shoes by making him put his shoes off and put them on his head and to remain standing like this for some time, saying to him, "Now perhaps you understand that such a conduct annoys us." ... We feel greatly sorry for Indians who put on English shoes.... It is a matter of great shame that a person has been dishonoured in such a way and the height of shamelessness would be if even now all the noblemen, lawyers and Mukhtars do not appeal against this incident unitedly. To respect or insult one person is respect or insult to all. It would be proper that until the matter is-

settled completely people should not put on English shoes. Are Indian shoes not available? If they are not good it would be better to go barefoot. (Imdad Sabri, *Rooh-e-Sahafat*, Vol. I, pp. 309-10.)

### **Tarikh-e-Baghavat-e-Hind**

This monthly was founded by Dr. Mukand Lal from Agra in July 1859. It especially gave the news and details of the first war of independence of 1857 (Maulana Imdad Sabri, *Tarikh-e-Sahafat-e-Urdu*, Vol. IV, p. 119). The historic announcement of Nana Sahib in which he gave a call to all Hindus and Muslims that "following firmly their own respective religions, they should come for joining the services", was published in it in the form of an advertisement (Jamna Das Akhtar, *Ajkal*, Sahafat Number, Nov.-Dec. 1983).

*Khairkhuah-e-Khalq* was started in 1860 from Ajmer and according to Garsan Datasi was the first Urdu paper of this region. It published articles against disarming Indians, and forcible conversions, and was ultimately banned (Imdad Sabri, Vol. II, pp. 148-49).

### **Qasim-ul-Akhbar, Bangalore**

A well-known poet from Bangalore, Munshi Mohammed Qasim Najam, started it in 1865. Dr. Abdul Haq (Madras) was full of praise for the printing quality as well as standard of articles published in it. For example, the following extract from its issue of 20th August, 1875 with reference to the educated unemployed is worth noting :

As the number of English schools is fast increasing, people in general get the impression that the official object is to provide us government jobs through educating us in English. So they do not learn any art of earning their living. When they do not get these jobs, they become penniless and frustrated. It reminds us of what an official remarked a few days before. It is easier to get English educated people these days, than to get a groom. When this is the

situation now, what the future has in store for us. (*Sahafat Pakistan-o-Hind Men*, p. 155.)

*Akmal-ul-Akhbar*, started coming out from Delhi a short time after the 1857 revolution in 1866. Its proprietor was Hakim Mohammad Mahmood Khan and editor Munshi Behari Lal, Pandit Brij Mohan Dattatrya Kaifi has given several quotations from this paper. For example, discussing the budget entitled "The Accounts of the Government of India". It wrote :

Without any doubt those who are the well-wishers of the government and wish for the well-being of the people would never like this budget since such a system is worthless under which even in a year free of warfare the state treasury should be impoverished and payment of one after another tax should make the condition of the poor people worse.

A Joke, "According to the *Pioneer* of Allahabad it is commonly held in the West and the North of the country that the new tax has been levied due to the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh. We pray to God to make the Queen Empress love her sons so much that she does not send them to India in the future." (*Ibid.*, p. 149.)

Sir Syed started on 30th March, 1886 the *Journal of Scientific Society/Aligarh Institute Gazette*. It contained one column in English and one in Urdu. Sir Syed generally wrote editorials himself ; though he was loyal to the government, he was quite vocal in criticising official arrogance and violation of law and justice in favour of the whites. (Imdad Sabri, *Tarikh e-Urdu Sahafat*, Vol. II, p. 247.)

The following motto was printed on the top of the front page of the *Journal of Scientific Society* :

It is political prudence to grant the freedom of the press and it is upto the free subjects to maintain this freedom. (Abdus-Salam, *Khursheed Karawan-i-Sahafat*, p. 85.)

**An assessment of the material of the Journal of Scientific Society/  
The Aligarh Institute Gazette**

In 1870, a mad Englishman killed three Indians at Shah-jahanpur. When asked the reason for this act of his he replied that when he saw the memorial to the Europeans killed during the Mutiny at Kanpur he was filled with anger against the Indians and he killed the first three Indians that he saw.

Commenting on this incident, Sir Syed's Journal, *Scientific Society* (Aligarh), wrote the following in its issue dated 12th May, 1876 :

It is a very sad thing that the foolish European killed three innocent Indians as a reprisal for the cruelty perpetrated by some other people during the disturbances of 1857. We remember to have given our opinion to the effect that such memorials would keep the grudge alive for ever and would promote disturbances. So we express our opinion that in the interest of peace and order it is necessary that the governments should demolish all such memorials. (*Ibid.*, p. 91.)

The Penal Code of 1860 provided a new scope to the murderers and several whites took shelter behind such clauses of the Code after killing Indians and escaped scot-free. In its issue of 15th November, 1876, the "Journal *Scientific Society*" wrote as follows :

With the rule that killing a person under provocation and killing some one with a non-murderous implement do not amount to deliberate murder, things have come to such a pass that cruel people have been greatly emboldened to give vent to their grudge and get away after murdering a person. Everyone used the excuse of provocation but still they were in some danger (of being punished). But after the killings of three persons in Shahjahanpur with a murder instrument went unpunished none even cares of the instrument of murder. A watchman was killed at Lucknow with a gun. But if in the future in such matters, the motives of the doctors and the juries were favourable, there would be a

great scope for a murdered man being declared sick and a murderer under the influence of intoxication and rivers of the blood of Indians would start flowing. (*Ibid.*, p. 92.)

The Aligarh Institute Gazette twice criticised most boldly the conduct of the English officials belonging to the ruling race :

However skilful in learning and arts may Indians become and however honest and well-charactered they may be, they would remain dishonest and uncivilised in the eyes of the English and however guilty of misdemeanour the English may be, they would remain as gentle as ever. (September 23, 1875 issue.)

A quotation from the article entitled "Why do people hate Government Administration" :

Now we shall take up the causes relating to administration. Apart from other things, it is because of the discourteous conduct, cruelty and injustice, and, if we speak candidly, very often it is due to the villainy of the officials that Indians prefer to die rather than face them and go to them. (March 31, 1876 issue) (*Ibid.*, p. 94.)

When English armies invaded Ethiopia, India was partly burdened with the cost of this war. Commenting on this, the Aligarh Institute Gazette wrote that this War had no connection with India and hence it was not proper to burden the country with its cost. (*Ibid.*, p. 95.)

"Forcible Salutation" is the caption of another interesting editorial of the journal of *Scientific Society*.

It is said that an English Magistrate caught hold of the reins of the horse of a candidate and said, "If again you don't get down the horse on seeing me, I shall punish you severely".

Commenting on this incident, Sir Syed says :

It is clear that it was not his being a candidate but rather hi

being an Indian that was the cause of his humiliation. Besides, it has often been noticed that however respectable and gentle an Indian may be, if he is going in buggy or tamtam, and he greets an ordinary Englishmen passing by, the Englishman does not respond to the greeting. Such casual behaviour on his part not only establishes the discourteous and arrogant nature of the Englishmen but also shows that Indians are regarded as extremely base and perhaps they are not considered worthy to be respected until they wash away the black spot of their Indianness from their foreheads. (May 5 1876, Vol. 10, No. 26) (Cited in *Sahafat-Pakistan-o-Hind Men*, p. 118.)

### **Agra Akhbar**

Maulvi Khwaja Yousuf Ali started it on 1st January, 1868. The paper was also critical of the government policies and was always forth right in its comments.

Discrimination between the blacks and the whites increased to such an extent that the Government started contemplating the guarding of white criminals by white policemen. Commenting on this the paper *Agra Akhbar-o-Hayat-i-Javedani* (Agra) expressed its frustration as follows :

For a very long time we thought that in the reign of the Empress of India there is no discrimination between the whites and the blacks and they are treated as equals. But alas, the following piece of news has changed our opinion in this respect. Not only has it changed us at once but our hearts have burst out in sighs. O readers, listen to the piece of news :

We learn from a respectable newspaper that the Government proposes to have white policemen to guard white criminals. Alas, this racial prejudice has transformed the thinking of our wise and prudent Government! How much is the Government concerned with earning the goodwill of the Whites ! We are sorry to say that a large number of Indians have been ruined at the hands of the whites, many of whom have massacred the Indians. But it does not matter. Many of them were acquitted by courts. Alas, alas ! O unfortu-

nate India ! When will thou rouse thyself from thy ignorance? (*Karavan e-Sahafat*, p. 93.)

### **Akhbar-e-Am**

It was started on January 1, 1871 from Lahore. Pandit Mukund Ram and Pandit Gopi Nath were its proprietor and editor respectively. Though loyal, it was also critical of the racial discrimination. In its issue dated 15th May, 1871 Akhbar-e-Am, comments :

An English newspaper informs us that the Chief Court of Punjab has awarded life imprisonment to a boy of thirteen years who had pushed another boy into a well. Hardly a few days before, a white boy killed a black one by pushing him into a ditch and was given only one year's rigorous imprisonment. In fact this is real justice! (Imdad Sabri, Vol. 2, p. 391.)

Its editorials were short, but comments were plain and sharp. On Ilbert Bill it wrote in its issue of 12 May, 1883 :

Lord Lytton agrees with Englishmen in India that these Englishmen will have to suffer great humiliation, shame, trouble and ruin with the passing of the Ilbert Bill. But with folded hands, cap in hand and slapping our cheeks, hitting our heads and with a full throated voice we beg to submit that it is an absolutely wrong notion, since in many places and regions Englishmen are subordinates of Indians. Indian decide the local civil cases involving Englishmen, who regularly attend the courts of Indian officials, cap in hand and are indebted to Indians to the tune of lakhs of rupees and perform *tamashas* before Indian at two annas per head, and still do not feel humiliated. Now this disrespect attaches only to the presence of Indian officials in the courts. (*Sahafat Pakistan-o Hind Men*, p. 169.)

Here is another sample of its news (14th April, 1883) :

A Lecturer of a Lahore Law class has passed a law that no one should come to his court in Indian shoes. (*Ibid.*, p. 168.)

*Oudh Panch* was started in January, 1877. Nadim Sitapuri is of the opinion that though it was not the first paper of its type, there are reasons to believe that in 1877, when the first issue was published there was none to equal it.

*Oudh Panch* used to present politics in the garb of humour and the device was most effective. The following is an extract from its issue of September 11, 1877 :

Blessed are the black who are maltreated for theirs is the comfort of the heavens. Blessed are those who pine for the Civil Services for they receive oral consolations from the Government. Blessed are hungry and thirsty victims of famine for they would be honoured with embracing the Christian faith, thanks to the priests. Blessed are the hard-hearted since some sycophant newspapers would call them kind-hearted. Blessed are those that are harassed for their righteousness for the roots of their truthfulness would become strong (*Sahafat Pakistan-o-Hind Men*, p. 131.)

Listen, in the words of *Oudh Panch*, the tale of the humiliation of a respectable Indian, published in the 20th February, 1877 issue of the paper :

Munshi Abul Muzaffar Sahib, Mukhtar of the courts of Partapgarh in the province of Oudh was going to the Karbala on the *Ashra* day of *Moharram*. As ill luck would have it, he was riding on horseback. When on hearing the sound of a carriage coming behind him, he looked back, he saw that Mr. Gains, the Assistant Commissioner of the District was coming with a police party. Thinking that it would be discourteous on his part to go ahead of an officer, this cultured Mukhtar reined his horse in. When the procession of the Sahib Bahadur passed, he saluted him most courteously. His intention was to fall behind after saluting the officer. But in response to this salutation and courtesy on his part, the Sahib Bahadur asked him to salute him after getting down from his horse and the poor Mukhtar did as he was told to do.

**Oudh Panch**

Those who are looking for the causes behind a lac of familiarity between the Indians and the English may kindly note down this piece of news in their pocket books. When can these Englishmen get a chance of making people get down from their horses to salute them obsequously ? They can give vent to this aspiration of theirs only in India. (*Rooh-e-Sahafat*, Vol. 1, pp. 317-18).

*Qaisur-ul-Akhbar* was a weekly founded by Munshi Sirajuddin Ahmad Khan of Ghazipur in January, 1877 from Allahabad.

In those days, freedom of expression was not common, but from time to time *Qaisur-ul-Akhbar* made sarcastic comments. At Buxar, an English lady was going in a horse carriage. On hearing the sound of some musical instrument the horse stopped. The lady herself entered her bungalow. The groom fell down and his face hit ground, the horse started running, seriously injuring several men, women and children, commenting on this, in its issue of January 20, 1878 the paper wrote as follows :

Real justice is hardly likely in this case since a *Mem Sahib* (an English lady) will be the defendant and only ten or fifteen women and children have been injured. Killing five or ten Indians is permissible for everyone of the English race, while *in this particular incident* no one was killed. (So it hardly matters) (*Karavan-e-Sahafat*, p. 49.)

In 1877, the Anglo-Indian newspapers of the continent started a campaign aimed at the enactment of a special legislation to curb the Urdu newspapers since those newspapers incited people to disturbance and rebellion. Here is one such comment (September 16, 1877) :

Now as a random sample we mention a few incidents and the comments of the Urdu newspapers on them which these English newspapers deem to be incitement to disturbance and rebellion. Doesn't a matter like this deserve criticism from the Urdu papers—that when Indians appear at the Civil Service

Examination they are not appointed and even if after thousands of hurdles they are appointed they are removed from service for no reason whatever. If the district officials commit one excess after another on poor, helpless Indians, is it incitement to disturbance to demand justice? They want the doors of justice to be closed on Indians and they deem demand for justice as rebellion. The English newspaper want Indians to look upon Englishmen as Gods and expect that their obedience should go beyond the limits of humanity, that aristocrats belonging to noble families should suffer humiliation at the hands of petty English officials but should not even heave a sigh lest they should be charged with rebellion and lack of courtesy. (*Ibid.*, p. 50.)

Commenting on the caption, "The Insolence of Indian Newspapers" in the issue of the famous Allahabad Newspaper *The Pioneer* dated 27th October, 1877, *Qaisur-ul-Akhbar* writes that "this newspaper (*The Pioneer*) is ignorant of the views of the people since it does not appoint any Indian correspondents and so it misleads the government. In a long editorial in the issue of 24th March, 1878, it protested against the Vernacular Press Act and contradicted the statement in *the Pioneer* that the editors of Urdu newspapers had only read *Gulistan* and *Bostan*." (*Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.)

### **Ahsan-ul-Akhbar**

It was also a weekly. It started from Allahabad on 6th January, 1878 by Haji Mohammad Kabirul-Haq. In comparison with the above mentioned paper it was quite moderate; its main emphasis was on publishing news without comments. The following is a sample of news item which appeared in its issue of 31st March, 1878 :

Jam-i-Jamshed has published a report in its issue of 31st March that according to its correspondent, the traders of Surat, agitating against the licensing tax, tore down the announcements regarding the tax and threw these into a well, rendered the police helpless and seven thousand people

held a demonstration. Quoting the *Times of India*, it published the news that there was complete strike in the city for four days, an English Assistant Magistrate was insulted, one man was killed and a few were injured. (*Ibid.*, p. 52.)

These reports are significant in view of the fact that in those days such demonstrations were not common.

### **Hindustani, Lucknow**

In 1883 *Hindustani* was published from Lucknow. In the beginning it was a weekly and then it started coming out twice a week and still later thrice a week. According to Chakbast, the paper *Hindustani* was not issued for commercial purposes only but achieved dignity by following Western principles and established its own rule of conduct. In the province, *Hindustani* was considered a champion of the Congress Cause. In 1888, when Sir Auckland, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Raja Shiv Prasad started their campaign against the Congress, *Oudh Panch* and *Hindustani* supported it. In the same way, when the annual session of the Congress was about to be held at Lucknow in 1899 and Muslims raised their voice against it, *Hindustani* and its contemporary *Advocate* strongly supported it. (*Sahafat Pakistan-o-Hind-Men*, p. 141.)

### **Khum Khana-i Hind**

Maulvi Ahmad Husain Showkat founded this paper in 1883 published from Meerut. It strongly advised Muslims to join the Indian National Congress. In its issue of June 1, 1888, the *Akhbar*, pleading the cause of Congress, blamed Sir Syed saying that loyalists see the seeds of revolution in the demand of human rights and consider it an act of sedition. (Jamna Das Akhtar, *Sahafat Number. Ajkal*, Nov.-Dec. 1933.)

*Paisa Akhbar*, was another popular paper of this period. It was founded by Munshi Mehboob Alam in 1887. Maulvi Sahib openly supported the freedom movement, advocated the

boycott of foreign goods and blamed the British for exploiting India. (*Ibid.*)

Lord Litton implemented Vernacular Press Act in 1878. Urdu papers strongly protested against it. Consequently it was repealed in 1882 but even after that police started harassing the publishers. Munshi Mehboob Alam was in the forefront in protest against this behaviour and criticised the policy in the issue of January 30, 1893 of *Paisa Akhbar*.

### **Mushir-e-Dakan**

This important daily was first started as a weekly in 1887 named as *Daccan Panch* after five years it became a daily with the name *Mushir-e-Dakan*.

For a long time the paper published short editorial notes instead of long editorials. In its February issue of 1898 it passed the following remark :

We are sorry to hear that the wound that Mr. Pluden the Resident sustained in the nose when he fell down from his bicycle in Nilgiri has not yet been healed and that he is suffering from fever because of it. If the nose of the Resident is dearer to him than his high job [as Resident why doesn't he go to England for its treatment? It is better for him to have a nose on his face than to enjoy the blessings of the high post of Resident. It would be surprising that if the condition of his nose remains as it is, he may be compelled to go to England. At any rate, we have great sympathy for Sahib Bahadur's nose and pray to God for his safety.

In one editorial, *Mushir-i-D .kan* expressed its regret at the fact that English Officers who do not know Urdu are appointed to the post of the Municipal Commissioner and demanded that no Englishman should be given this post who does not know Urdu at all. (*Sahafat Pakistan o-Hind Men*, pp. 163-64 )

The founders of *Mushir-e-Dakan*, the late Krishna Rao and editor Mujib Ahmad Tamannai ; apart from having close

friendly relations, had great attachment, love and brotherly feeling for each other. So *Mushir-e-Dakan* was a standard bearer of Hindu-Muslim unity as well as its representatives. The founder of *Mushir-e-Dakan* was a Hindu and all his Assistants were Muslims.

### Vakil

Towards the end of the nineteenth century *Vakil* started its publication from Amritsar as a weekly in 1895. For a long time it was famous as a spokesman for the rights of the Muslims. Many great personalities were associated with it. Maulana Azad worked for it for some time. Among all the Urdu papers of this time, *Vakil* was regarded as the most sober and serious paper having most weighty opinions on national affairs. When post offices were given extraordinary powers to stop the undesirable material from reaching its destination, *Vakil* wrote an editorial against it in its issue of January 31, 1898 :

Government wants to give post offices the right to detain the material considered seditious, but the question is who is going to decide whether the material is seditious or not? Post offices have no dearth of persons who can sacrifice and suppress the rights of their own countrymen in order to get some concessions from the government. Is it safe to give such liberty in the hands of such persons? (Imdad Sabri, *Rooh-i-Sahafat*, p. 397.)

In short if we study in detail these newspapers and journals of the second half of the nineteenth century one feature becomes obvious that what antagonised the people most was the racial arrogance of the new masters and their exploitation of the country. The feelings, aspirations, frustration and anger of the people found full expression in Urdu journalism. Urdu papers and journals wrote extensively on the high-handedness of British officials, violation of the rule of law, restrictions on the freedom of the press, discrimination in civil and military services, growing unemployment, resentment

against imposition of income-tax etc. and helped promoting communal harmony—a pre-requisite for freedom struggle.

In the beginning the tone was mild. Later it became bitter and partition of Bengal gave it a new and violent turn. All this helped in the full flowering of an organised national movement which ultimately won freedom for the country in 1947.

But unfortunately the contribution of Urdu journalism, the immense sacrifices made by its editors and establishments have not received a deserving tribute. Most of the papers are not available because of our negligence and the few of them that are available are now crumbling and forgotten piles here and there in a state of constant decay; soon this rich national heritage of ours is going to be lost, a heritage which would have inspired the younger generations irrespective of the differences of caste, creed and religion.

#### **Papers and Journals Referred**

1. *Jam-e-Jahan Numan*, Calcutta, 1822
2. *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, Delhi, 1836
3. *Koh-i-Noor*, Lahore, 1850
4. *Riaz-e-Noor*, Multan, 1852
5. *Sadiqul Akhbar*, Delhi, 1854
6. *Tilism-e-Lucknow*, Lucknow, 1856
7. *Sahr-e-Samri*, Lucknow, 1856
8. *Oudh Akhbar*, Lucknow, 1858
9. *Tarikh-e-Baghavat-e-Hind*, Agra, 1859
10. *Khairkhwah-e-Khaliq*, Ajmer, 1860
11. *Qasim-ul-Akhbar*, Bangalore, 1865
12. *Akmal-ul-Akhbar*, Delhi, 1866
13. *Akhbar Scientific Society*, Aligarh, 1866
14. *Agra Akhbar*, Agra, 1868

15. *Akhbar-e-Am*, Lahore, 1871
16. *Oudh Panch*, Lucknow, 1877
17. *Qaisur-ul-Akhbar*, Ghazipur, 1877
18. *Ahsan-ul-Akhbar*, Allahabad, 1878
19. *Hindustani*, Lucknow, 1883
20. *Khum Khana-i-Hindu*, Meerut, 1883
21. *Paisa Akhbar*, Lahore, 1887
22. *Mushir-e-Dakan*, Hyderabad, 1887
23. *Vakil*, Amritsar, 1895

## Studying the Role of Sikhs in India's Freedom Struggle : Some Points for Consideration

Harish K. Puri

When India became independent in 1947, it was also divided by communal hatred. It appeared to some people, it has been divided to validate the theory of two nations and religion as the determinant of a nation. Currency of a bad theory is dangerous. The partition and the events connected with it became the single most crucial factor in myth-making and stereotyping of the role of different communities in the freedom struggle. Competition for political power, in a context requiring mobilization of large numbers, also underlined to the political entrepreneurs, the quick dividends of symbolism and mystifying. The Hindu Mahasabha and R.S.S. based Jana Sangh were certainly demolished in the very first elections. However, their quiet incursions in the minds of men appeared to have been deep. The Muslims, in particular, 32 million of whom had chosen at that time to reject the logic of Pakistan and assert that free India belonged to them by right as much as to any other Indian, were invested with a guilt of partition. The role of other religious minorities also came under a cloud. On the other hand, their separate sense of loss and the generation of fresh fears in post independence India tended to chart out and strengthen identities defined by religion subordinating or obscuring cultural and class identi-

ties. The events of the past were therefore perceived and interpreted in the context of the concerns and interests of the present. It was not something new or surprising. What is important for us to remember, however, is that the perception of the past had a crucial influence on the future of a society. Any complacency or failure in confronting a wilful or unwitting distortion of the recent past and the role of minorities in the freedom struggle, may have very bad consequences both for the minorities and the country. The present attempt by Asghar Ali Engineer is, therefore, a timely corrective towards objective understanding of the past.

We must, however, consciously guard against delusions and pitfalls in such an exercise. Any discussion on the role of Muslim, Sikh, Christian or Hindu community betrays a certain assumption that we are talking of people whose ideas and behaviours are primarily defined by religion to which they belong. Further, there is always the possibility of a less guarded treatment of such a community as a monolith. The danger of such an assumption cannot be over-emphasised. In fact that is what the communalist historians might welcome. Since every community is an arena of social conflicts it is only natural that diverse interests and sections within a community should manifest conflicting social and political orientations and pursue divergent courses of action. In fact, sections which rebel against a political regime and those which stand up and fight in its defence are products of the same society. Their divergent roles could be understood only with reference to their social situations and the historical context. No large scale generalisations regarding the role of a whole community would be justified if the focus was mainly on the activities of only a particular section. Further, the role of no community or a section may necessarily remain consistent or uniform. Shifts in objectives, strategy and tactics take place in response both to the changing objective situation as also the subjective perception of the leading elites in a section and leading sections within a community. Study of the role of a religious minority community during the freedom struggle is therefore an unenviable venture. The risk of misleading over-simplification needs to be consciously avoided. Keeping that in mind, it

may be appropriate to take up some points for consideration which emerge from the following brief survey in relation to the study of the role of Sikhs in the freedom struggle.

The Punjab was annexed by the British in 1849. The Kingdom of Lahore, under Ranjit Singh and his imbecile and feuding descendants, has been generally viewed as Sikh rule and Ranjit Singh as the crown of the Khalsa. Khushwant Singh, a well known historian of the Sikhs, however, found it was nothing of that sort. Ranjit Singh was no believing or observing Sikh. "He was not only secular, he was also superstitious. He 'accepted Hinduism in its brahmanical form.'"<sup>1</sup> With over 90 per cent of his subjects belonging to the Muslim and Hindu faiths, he could not afford to be sectarian. However, the two wars which led to the fall of that Kingdom were described by all as "Anglo-Sikh Wars" and British officers invariably referred to it as a War with "Sikh nation". Khushwant Singh in fact described the second war as the Sikh's "National war of independence."<sup>2</sup> Myth-making was evident. But the Sikh rulers of Cis-Sutlej states were on the side of British. Conflicting power interests led to conflicting roles.

At the time of the revolt in 1857, the British rulers discarded the policy of disarming the Punjabis and decided to recruit large number of soldiers from this province. With the successful suppression of the "Mutiny", began a period of imperial romance between the Raj and the Sikhs and Punjab became the "army barracks of Pax Brittanica". By 1918 nearly one-fourth of the Indian Army was of "bearded Khalsa."<sup>3</sup> The ruling image of the British Government, among the Sikhs, was that of an unparalleled benefactor under whom the Sikhs enjoyed greater prosperity and honour than they ever did including the rule of Ranjit Singh.<sup>4</sup>

The reason for that romance lay in the economic and administrative changes, as also the colonial reconstruction of a special racial tradition of the Sikhs, mainly in aid of military needs of the empire. Construction of new irrigation canals, introduction of a capitalist market economy and selective policies provided new facilities, opportunities and honour to the landed aristocracy and the small but ambitious educated section of the rising middle class. At the same time the

increasing indebtedness and alarming rate of alienation of land<sup>5</sup> affected the small peasant to whom army recruitment provided valued opening. The British reconstruction of the Sikh image and the rewards of adapting to that led to a certain process of internalisation of the new conceptions of the community.

The Singh Sabha Movement launched in 1873 emphasised on a boundary demarcation of the Sikhs from the Hindus, educational facilities, a fresh construction of symbols and interpretation of the past of the community, as also loyalty to the State. Last year a scholar found that a document *Prem Sumarg* of 1701 reprinted in 1874 and accepted by even intelligent historians as a significant source on Sikhs of the period of Guru Gobind Singh underlined a distinct consciousness of separate identity and, more than that, placed loyalty to the state above religion.<sup>6</sup> What Hobsbawm recently described as the "invention of tradition" was part of the making of a new culture in the given circumstances. Whereas a certain awareness of separate religious identifications was prevalent among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Punjab at the time of British annexation, communal identity and organised effort at boundary demarcation was the result of socio-economic changes and deliberate policy of the rulers. Scholars found that upto the end of 1880s there was hardly any idea among the Sikhs of their distinction from the Hindus. Paul Brass talks of the confusion caused to the census authorities during the Census of 1881 and 1891 when, on an apparently surprising enquiry, many respondents answered they were "Hindu-Sikhs" or "Sikh-Hindu". "Since of the British saw the two religions as distinct, they expected the believers to see things the same way, and they ultimately enforced their conceptions in the census by refusing to record such ambiguities."<sup>7</sup> So by a certain convergence of interests of the leading elites in the Sikh community and the colonial rulers the ruling British image of the Sikhs, upto around the end of World War I, was of brave and loyal people whose support was a key to the glory of the empire. Let alone other incidents, even after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, when the Deputy Commissioner gave his evidence to the Hunter Commission, he mentioned only Hindus and Muslims among the alleged

rioters. The Sikhs were singled out for appreciation for providing "a great deal of local help".<sup>8</sup> Actually, on the initiative of Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Head Priest of the Golden Temple specially honoured General Dyer, gave him a *Saropa* and initiated him as a Sikh.<sup>9</sup> Historians, therefore, hurried to make broad generalisations about the role of the Sikh community during this period disregarding the character of the class which played leading role at that time, and the deeply anti-imperialist movement of the Kukas, the Bharat Mata Society led by Ajit Singh and the Ghadar movement.

The Gurdwara Reform Movement which was launched in 1920 and attracted the support and appreciation of all nationalist forces for the determined and successful anti-British ethos of the fight by the Sikh masses could not have emerged without a long simmering discontent with the rule.

The militant anti-British character of the Namdhari Movement, when it came to be popularly known as the Kuka Movement developed soon after the British occupation of Punjab. Composed almost entirely of lower caste Sikhs from among the artisan class and poor peasants, this movement for social reform came to challenge the vested interests in the community including Mahants of Sikh temples and became the first radical challenge to the British rulers in Punjab. Interestingly the Singh Sabha Movement was launched by the threatened vested interests, some of whom had started by denouncing the Kukas as "mortal enemies of the Sikhs" and by promising and giving to the government all help in suppressing the Kukas.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the "Punjab Unrest of 1907", which was spearheaded by Ajit Singh's Bharat Mata Society, alternatively called *Anjuman-e-Mohibban-e-Watan* was a secular, political struggle of the peasantry against the destructive economic policies and laws of the British government. Peasants from all the three communities fought together and because it was confined largely to central Punjab larger numbers came from the Sikh peasantry. They were exhorted to boycott government service and the courts. Alongside the resolve not to pay taxes, they also decided not to allow their grains to be exported from Punjab. Finding some evidence of its political propaganda in the Sikh regiment,

the Lt. Governor of Punjab Denzil Ibbetson, Panicked; had nightmares of the repetition of Mutiny, this time even by Sikh regiments, and asked for extraordinary powers to crush the movement; measures which later invited ridicule from Lord Morley.<sup>11</sup>

The Ghadar movement organised by Lala Hardayal among Punjabi immigrants on the Pacific Coast of North America was a revolutionary terrorist movement, large majority of the activists being from the Sikh community. Interestingly, however, not only did the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims work as comrades in their ideological propaganda and activities, they condemned sharply and squarely the divisive religious and communal groups and individuals. They came in direct confrontation with the ruling Sikh institution of the time—the Chief Khalsa Diwan. “We were neither Punjabis, nor Sikhs. Our religion was patriotism”, stated its president Baba Sohan Singh Bhakana.<sup>12</sup> When they came to India—reportedly 8000 of them—and started preparing for an armed revolt at the beginning of the World War, the existing leading bodies of the Sikhs not only declared them as anti-Sikhs or fallen Sikhs but also gave to the government all help in tracking them down. Forty-two Ghadarites were sentenced to death and over 200 to long terms of imprisonment. Over 90 per cent of them were from the Sikh community. In all the three movements, the participants came from the lower strata of peasants. These examples challenge the myth of loyalty of the whole community and point to the pitfalls of generalisations.

The Gurdwara Reform Movement conclusively demolished the earlier carefully cultivated British image of the Sikhs. However, the new cultural selection imposed by the British was getting gradually internalised and in the political struggles in which the Sikhs participated, there was a fairly marked incorporation of a programme of ‘cultural nationalism’. One part of the reason for it lay in the fact that colonialism which was perceived as a new cultural domination was likely to be confronted in the idiom of a ‘cultural nationalism’. Another part of it lay both in the demographic character of Punjab province and a certain steady dose of communalisation of

society and politics including that of the Congress in this province, particularly after introduction of separate electorates. In 1921, the population ratio of the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs was 51.05, 35.06 and 12.38 respectively.<sup>13</sup>

Soon after the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, there emerged in December, 1919, a new organisation, Central Sikh League, which challenged the position of Chief Khalsa Diwan, and formally decided to collaborate with the Congress Committee and the Khilafat Committee in intensifying the Non-cooperation Movement in Punjab.<sup>14</sup> With the formation of Shiromani Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, the Gurdwara Reform Movement was aligned with Gandhian Non-cooperation movement. When the important struggle for the keys of Golden Temple succeeded, Gandhi sent a wire to Kharak Singh, the leader of the Central Sikh League and President of SGPC: "First Battle for India's Freedom Won. Congratulations." Those who joined this movement largely came from the lower middle and lower strata of the Punjab peasantry which was feeling economically distressed after the first World War. The most decisive display of the Gandhian spirit of non-violent struggle in the face of the most brutal atrocities by the police was witnessed during the Guru Ka Bagh Morcha. Support of nationalist forces was enlisted and "active liaison was established between the S.G.P.C. and other nationalist organisations like the Indian National Congress, the Khilafat Party and the Central Sikh League."<sup>15</sup> Not only did the Congress place its appreciation of the Akalis on record, conduct an inquiry into the police beating of Akalis—through Srinivas Iyengar Committee, important Congress leaders like Madan Mohan Malviya, Hakim Ajmal Khan visited the scenes of the morcha to express sympathy and support and sent Congress volunteers to help. Later on Jawaharlal Nehru, A.T. Gidwani and K. Santhanam went to witness the Jaito Morcha and give support. All the three were arrested and put in jail by the State Government of Nabha. This movement continued even after Gandhi withdrew his movement after the chauri chaura incident. Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew actually struggled to get the Congress to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement in 1923 to keep the Akali struggle as a part of all

India struggle against the British. Prominent leaders of the Central Sikh League and Akali Dal were also members of the Indian National Congress.<sup>16</sup> The Akali movement shattered the myth of the proverbial loyalty of the Sikh soldiers to the British Raj as also the myth that Sikhs were given to be violent by tradition. The loyalist feudal leadership of the Sikhs was now replaced by that of "educated middle class nationalists."<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution, prominent Ghadarites made a trip to Moscow, attended the newly set up Toilers of the East University and, on return, set up the Kirti Party in 1926 and launched the Communist Movement. Its leader Sohan Singh Josh who was elected President of the All India Workers and Peasants Conference in 1928 had been an active participant in the Akali Movement. Bhagat Singh had earlier launched his Bharat Naujawan Sabha with a view to fight communalism and organise radical youth. In the series of peasant struggles waged in the Punjab the largest number of participants and leaders naturally came from the Sikh Community. However, most of them fought at the same time the prevalent sectarianism and communalism of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Arya Samaj section of the Congress, the Muslim League and sectarian tendencies in the Akali Dal. Bhagat Singh, in his later days, wrote a fine passionate piece on "Why I am an Atheist".<sup>18</sup> All these patriots came from the Sikh Community, yet they would have strongly resented being categorised as mainly "Sikhs" or "Hindus" fighting for Indian freedom. They were primarily nationalists.

Among the parties claiming to be the champions of Sikh interests, only the Chief Khalsa Diwan group, later called the Khalsa National Party, remained a persistent and stout supporter of the British Government. All its members and support came from the small rich agriculturist class of Sikhs. The Central Sikh League and Akali Dal had upto 1927 in particular very close relationship with the Indian National Congress. Thereafter their collaboration with the Congress was not so consistent. The somewhat shifting and sometimes conflicting relationship with the Congress resulted from a contention between the Indian nationalist urges on the one hand:

and felt needs of protecting and promoting the perceived interests of the Sikh community on the other. In a situation of accentuating communalism after Montford Reforms, which left the Sikhs of the said three groups dissatisfied with the weightage given in the face of a statutory majority of Muslims in the province they wanted the Nehru Committee either to stand for a complete end to communal representation or include in its scheme a weightage of 30 per cent seats in the legislative council. The Nehru Report left them dissatisfied.<sup>19</sup> However, given assurance of good intention, both the organisations joined the anti-Simon Commission agitation and the historic session of the Congress at Lahore in 1929 in a big way. When the Congress authorised Gandhi to be its sole representative at the Second Round Table Conference Tara Singh handed over to him their demands also, ostensibly appointing him as the spokesman for the Akali demands too.<sup>20</sup>

When the Congress decided to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Akali Dal and the Central Sikh League were very enthusiastic and offered services of 5000 Akalis. In an all Parties meet held at Lahore, Akalis were in the forefront. When several eminent Hindu, Muslim and Sikh Congress leaders decided to set up a "War Council", Master Tara Singh, who was a member of this council which included K. Santhanam, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Maulana Abdul Kadir, Dr. Muhammad Alam and Dr. Satya Pal, was later appointed "Dictator of the War Council". Tara Singh was himself arrested and, according to him, out of 7000 satyagrahis arrested in the agitation in Punjab 3000 were Sikhs. It was appreciated that proportionately the largest number of participants came from the Sikh community.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, The Praja Mandal Movement in the East Punjab States was actually launched by the Akali Dal in July 1928. Whereas by 1938 it came increasingly to be dominated by the Communists it remained essentially a movement of the Sikh peasantry.<sup>22</sup>

The relationship among the various political groups was a surprising mosaic. Akalis and Communists could be and many were at the same time members of the Congress. All the Sikhs elected on the Congress ticket in the Legislative Council

election of 1937 were members of the communist party. Interestingly, with the approval of other parties, Baba Wasakha Singh, a former Ghadarite and a prominent Communist leader, was elected President of the SGPC in 1936-37.<sup>23</sup> You talked of Nationalist Sikhs who had deeper relationship with Congress Party and Khalsa Nationalists—the polar opposite. The Akali Dal contested separately in alliance with the Congress in the election, but thereafter joined up with the Congress group in the Punjab legislature. Whereas their leader Sampuran Singh was chosen as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party they also became instrumental in getting Mian Iftikhar-uddin elected as the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress.

When the Second World War started, the Akali Dal found itself in a dilemma. Its leaders decidedly wanted to join and strengthen the anti-imperialist forces, yet did not wish to harm what they considered to be the interest of the Sikhs who would gain by recruitment to the army. The Khalsa Nationalist Party and the Hindu Sabha had already announced their support to the government in the War. So had the Sikh untouchables.<sup>24</sup> But the Akali and Congress leader Sampuran Singh strongly rejected at that time the idea of supporting the War effort unless the British made a commitment of granting complete independence to India after culmination of the War.<sup>25</sup> Kharak Singh and Tara Singh were fiercely opposed to the Khalsa Nationalist Party and when the latter talked of returning Punjab to the Sikhs after the war, Tara Singh strongly condemned the notion of "Sikh Rule" and called for nothing less than complete freedom for India.<sup>26</sup> Even at the Akali Conference in early 1940 they stood their ground. However, by September of that year, they veered round to the idea that war provided 'golden opportunity' for Sikhs. Tara Singh was expelled from the Congress and in 1941 the Akalis joined their former arch enemies, the Khalsa Nationalists, in setting up "The Khalsa Defence of India League" to vigorously carry a recruitment drive. Part of the reason given was that support for the Unionist Party might be a stronger bet to counteract the Pakistan move.

The situation became further intriguing when Cripps

Mission's proposals came. The Akalis reacted by calling for Azad Punjab province within a United India, followed by the Sikander-Baldev Pact by which the Akalis agreed to join the Unionist Party led coalition.

The Central Sikhs League was however opposed to all the doings of the Akali Dal during the period and there was soon a split in the Dal leading to a well organised anti-Azad Punjab conference. The section led by Udham Singh Nagoke and Ishar Singh Majhail not only refused to leave the Congress but also participated in the Quit India Movement of the Congress. However, the Cabinet Mission Plan showed to the Akalis the counter-productive nature of their dubious strategy and they once again veered closer to the Congress and could not be lured even by the overtures of Jinnah after the Mountbatten plan was accepted by all parties.

Whereas the Akali Dal and to some extent even the Central Sikh League continued to be deeply concerned, in varying degrees, about the said interest of the Sikh community and from 1940 onwards appeared at times to compromise their position particularly they were never any less concerned about India's freedom and unity.

Meanwhile as the War progressed, the INA formed by Subhas Chandra Bose attracted a very large number of Sikhs. A Colonial government given to panic on news of disaffection in the army knew full well that they could not hold India if the sword held for its defence was turned against it. Despite the fact that large scale recruitment of Sikhs had been manipulated, the British government could no more rely on the support of the Sikhs. Actually after 1920 the Sikh Community was almost conclusively anti-British and valiantly struggled for the freedom of India—an India in which they could live with honour. Their disaffection contributed in no small measure to the British decision to withdraw.

In the light of the survey, a few points as under are presented for consideration in a study of the role of Sikh Community :

1. Colonial domination was often perceived as cultural domination. So the opposition to it was largely crystallised in cultural or religious idiom. All colonial rulers

tended to divide the people. In India the most prominent division they perceived was religious and so that was accentuated. The dynamics of anti-British struggle was therefore likely to take a zig zag route with an overlap of pan-Indian nationalism, cultural identity and narrow communal considerations. These were not necessarily antagonistic, even though these, nevertheless, manifested tensions.

2. The period of India's struggle for freedom was also precisely the period of formation of a separate identity for the Sikhs. The two developed together, complimented one another and sometimes appeared to pose problem of priorities. Further, like in any dynamic community, the response and reaction to colonial domination were bound to be different and differently expressed by different interests within the same community.
3. The British consolidation of power in Punjab and to some extent in the Indian sub-continent was largely based on military support of the Sikhs and gradually strengthened a belief in their loyalty to the State. It also had an underlayer of fear. Whenever there was some bit of disaffection among the Sikhs—the British had nightmares of mutiny. After 1920 when the Sikhs decisively exploded the myth of loyalty, it sounded the beginning of the end. Their experience of what followed after the end of World War I, must have been a warning of what they were likely to face at the end of World War II. Both the British and a wide variety of Indian activists used to say the Sikhs had saved the British empire and if they joined the nationalist forces against the British, the end of British domination would not be far. So when they turned against the British, the contribution of the Sikhs in freedom struggle became prominent and decisive. While studying the contribution or role of a community it may be necessary to see the dynamics of political activities in the context of local demographic situation and character of the competition for political power between different classes.

As normal in all parties, conflicting roles emerged from clash of interest of different classes and of leadership.

4. The contribution of a community may not be measured with reference only to its closeness or distance from the politics of the Indian National Congress. The Congress in Punjab with extremely weak mass base, was dominated by a small Hindu urban trading class. Given the structure of Punjab society, the peasantry was the most numerous and decisive force. Those who belonged to the Sikh community were predominantly rural and peasants. Their contribution in the freedom struggle can be seen largely in movements other than those led clearly and decisively by the Congress.
5. Nor conversely may it be seen in terms of the role only of a political party which claimed to be the sole representative or spokesman of the whole community. There can be none. In the case of Sikhs, Kukas and the Singh Sabha leadership, both claiming that position regarded each other as anti-Sikh. The hadarites were regarded as anti-Sikh by Chief Khalsa Diwan. After 1920 there were at least three such parties—the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Central Sikh League and Akali Dal—each one of whom claimed to be the only true party of the Panth. The very recourse to All Party Sikh Conference pointed to the hazards of generalisations on the basis of the role of one or the other.
6. A significant role was played by those who belonged to the community but rejected primary identification by religion or mixing religion with politics. How and where do we place the contribution of Bhagat Singh, the Gbadarites, the Communists, the Praja Mandalists, and then devout Congressite Sikhs ?

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## Akalis and the National Movement : A Case of Total to Tangential and Tactical Support

T.R. Sharma

Before we examine the attitude of Akalis towards the Indian national movement two points need to be clarified. One, that the Akali Dal has all along claimed itself to be the sole representative of the Sikhs in India in the same way as the Muslim League (ML) claimed to be the sole spokesman of the Indian muslims. The Akalis' claim is substantially, but perhaps not wholly, true. As there were many muslims in the Indian National Congress (INC) or were otherwise supporting the freedom struggle in the same way there were also some Sikhs in the INC and some Sikh organisations which were supporting the freedom struggle. The Central Sikh League (CSL), for example, was very active in the freedom struggle right since its inception. On the other extreme there were other Sikh organisations like Chief Khalsa Dewan (CKD) and Sikh Defence League (SDL) which were quite pro-British in their approach. Therefore, it would be a category mistake to use the two terms—Sikhs and Akalis—interchangeably as some scholars like Fauja Singh have attempted to do.<sup>1</sup> This is so because while all Akalis were Sikhs all Sikhs were not Akalis. As such an analysis of the role of Akalis in the freedom struggle is not quite the same as an analysis of the role of the Sikh community as a whole. Of course, the Akalis constituted from 1920

onwards the most articulate and probably the most dominant section of the Sikhs. Two, that the AD has not always been a monolith. Many a time it has had overt or covert groups and factions pitched against one another. Therefore, it would be appropriate to take note of various contradictory positions that simultaneously existed in the Dal and their relative strength from time to time.

## I

### **The Background**

The birth of Akali Dal was the result of a certain historical situation whose roots go as far back as 1857 or perhaps 1849, if not earlier. The annexation of Punjab took place in a manner which rendered the Sikhs highly hostile both to the East India Company and the British Government. But the 1857 mutiny forced the raj to depend on the Sikhs. The mutiny left the two major religious communities—the Muslims and the Hindus—suspect in the British eyes and thereafter the raj began to increasingly lean on the Sikhs for support and strength of British empire in India. Certain processes were consciously set in motion by the white rulers to sharpen the religious polarisations between the various religious communities in India. Special attempts were made to drive it home to the Sikhs that had a identity of their own, distinct from the Hindus. The socio-cultural divide between the Hindus and the Sikhs was emphasised in many subtle ways. The Sikhs began to be recruited to the British army in larger numbers. According to T. Patrie Sikhs in the Indian army were studiously encouraged to regard themselves as a totally distinct and separate nation. In due course, the Sikh soldiers became an affective means of spreading this message of separate identity of the Sikhs in the rural side of Punjab. Many British scholars like Trumpp, Mzcauliffe, Griffen and Bingely studied the Sikh faith and tradition and tried to establish with the help of Sikh scriptures and religious practices that there existed some inherent antagonism between them and the Hindus. They also created a scare that gradually Sikhism would lose its separate identity and merge in

the vast ocean of Hinduism. In furtherance to this attempt the British Government in the first census held after the mutiny in 1868 began to enumerate the Hindus and Sikhs separately.

In the early 1860s opposition to these attempts began to gain momentum. The most manifest protest to defeat the attempts of the raj to woo the Sikhs and create a divide between Hindus and the Sikhs came in 1870s in the form of a Kuka movement led by Baba Ram Singh. One prominent and consistent feature of this movement and, in fact, of many other movements launched by various sects of Sikhs since then has been that initially these movements began as mere socio-religious reform movements but, in due course, sometimes by accident and sometimes by design, they got transformed into political movements against the British Govt. This is equally true of the Kuka movement.

In quick succession the Kukas attacked the slaughter-houses at Lahori Gate (Amritsar), Raikot (Ludhiana) and Malerkotla. The British Government came on the Kukas with a very heavy hand and many of them were imprisoned and executed. At Malerkotla alone 165 Kukas were tied to the mouths of canons and blown to pieces in 1872. In order to counter this threat from the Kukas the raj thought of creating some support base within the Sikh community. Consequently, there emerged in 1873 a Singh Sabha movement, and CKD a little later. It was an attempt to institutionalise Sikh loyalty to the British raj which the Kukas had shaken.

The Singh Sabha represented the Sikh elite and landed and priestly aristocracy. It was founded by Jagirdars like Thakar Singh Sandhuwalia who had submitted a memorandum to the British against Baba Ram Singh and his Kuka movement. The British Government quickly blessed and patronised it. A second Singh Sabha was set up in Lahore in 1877. In the next few years branches of Singh Sabha were opened all over Punjab

Simultaneously with the birth of Singh Sabha, the entry of Swami Daya Nand and his Arya Samaj movement in Punjab (ironically at the invitation of some Sikhs) accelerated the process of Hindu-Sikh divide. Certain observations of Daya Nand in his book *Satyarth Prakash* (Light of Truth) about

Guru Nanak Dev greatly annoyed the Sikhs. In 1883 Khalsa Dewan a pro-British group was established at Amritsar with a view to counter Daya Nand's influence. Three years later another Khalsa Dewan was opened at Lahore. The Khalsa Dewans popularised Bhai Kahn Singh's book *Hum Hindu Nahin* (we are not Hindus). In 1902 the two Khalsa Dewans merged to form the CKD. It began to be recognised by the British as the most representative body of the Sikhs. The CKD represented the feudal-aristocratic elements of the Sikhs.

The collaboration between the British raj and the Sikh aristocracy which began soon after 1857 continued right upto the beginning of the present century. However, the Sikh middle class was not a part of this collaborationist combine. Rather it was being increasingly drawn into national movement. There were many reasons, major and minor, for this. The partition of Bengal which accelerated the over-all tempo of the national movement and radicalized it was one such season. The British attempt to communalize Indian politics by introducing separate electorates in 1909 to appease the muslims was another. In addition to these two developments at the national level there were some developments in Punjab which created new polarisations on the social canvas of the province. Growing indebtedness of Punjab peasantry and alienation of peasants' land first to the moneylender and after the passing of Land Alienation Act of 1901 to the big landlords and the colonisation Bill which put new burden on the peasantry led to gradual polarisation in the rural side. The Minto-Morley Reforms which granted separate electorates to the Muslims but not to the Sikhs also angered the upper strata of the Sikh community. The acquisition of the land of Gurdwara Rakab Ganj in New Delhi offered another provocation to the Sikh masses. In addition to it, a larger number of small and medium Sikh peasants had migrated in search of greener pastures to Canada and the USA and many of them suffered humiliation which created a sense of revolt in them. Two immediate events which occurred in 1919 catapulted the Sikhs into the mainstream of national movements. The first was the introduction of Dyarchy which granted separate electorate to the Sikhs. With about 13 per cent population they got 19.1 per cent

representation in the legislative council. This measure marked the beginning of new competitive politics for the Sikhs which forced them to seek electoral adjustment with other political parties and groups. Given the complex religious demography of Punjab the Sikhs had to align with one of the two communities. The relations that had historically prevailed between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs the latter could only think of aligning with the Hindu-dominated INC rather than with the muslim dominated and pro-British Unionist Party. The second immediate reason was the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar on April 13 in which many innocent Sikhs and Hindus lost their lives. Moreover, the electoral politics necessitated the politicization of Sikh masses and their mobilization on a mass scale. The CKD because of its class nature and its pro-British stances was incapable of doing it. A more dynamic organisation than the CKD only could do so. The Akali Dal rose to the occasion.

It is a strange coincidence of history that the Sikh politics acquired a mass character about the same time that the INC politics did. While it was the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the national scene and his non-violent, non-cooperation movement of 1920s that massified the Congress politics in the case of Sikhs it was the Gurdwara Reform Movement launched by Akali Dal that massified the Sikh politics. The objective situation in the 1920s was such that these two mass movements began to reinforce each other in such a manner that the Akali Dal was drawn into the non-cooperation movement and the INC was drawn into the Akali-led movements.

National movement in India in 1920s was almost synonymous with the INC—an umbrella organisation under which people from various parts of the country and from various walks of life representing diverse socio-economic interests converged in the great yajna of national liberation. The INC not only spearheaded the national movement at this critical juncture but also gave it a definite direction and thrust. It was the mainstream in which many sub-streams—big and small—merged and gave it its strength. On the other hand, the Akali Dal represented, to begin with the interests of a definite community. It was a sub-stream which had its own specificities

and yet it became a part of the mainstream of national movement. It is this interaction of the Akali sub-stream and the INC mainstream that one must comprehend in order to fully understand the role of Akalis in the national movement.

## II

### **The First Phase : The Akalis in the Thick of National Movement**

The Akali Dal was born on December 14, 1920 at Amritsar with the launching of Gurdwara Reform Movement.<sup>2</sup> The movement had three basic aims : (i) to purify the Sikh religious institutions from the Hindu influence ; (ii) to emancipate the Gurdwaras from the control of hereditary and corrupt Mahants, and (iii) to consolidate the general strength of the Sikh community. In essence it was the second objective which was of critical significance and its fulfilment could, in due course, automatically lead to the fulfilment of the first and the third objectives. But the task of emancipating the Gurdwaras from the control of hereditary corrupt Mahants was not as easy as it might, in the first instance, seem. The Mahants belonged to the powerful landed aristocracy and enjoyed full protection and patronage of the British. In 1920 a proclamation was issued from the Akal Takht (highest seat of Sikh authority) that a committee would be set up to manage and control the affairs of the Gurdwaras. Accordingly, Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) was born. The full import of this proclamation was that while in the management of Gurdwaras it attacked the dominance of the Mahants, in the affairs of the Sikh community as a whole it attacked the dominance of feudal aristocratic elements. The Akali Dal constituted the advance guard for effecting this liberation and take-over of the Gurdwaras.

Soon after its founding, the Akali Dal launched various morchas (agitations) to take over the management of Gurdwaras. The first such morcha which started in 1920 related to the keys of golden temple. After a nerve breaking drama the morcha turned out to be successful. This success considerably

added to the popularity of the Akali Dal among the Sikh masses. Next year i.e., in 1921 the Akalis assaulted the Nankana Sahib Gurdwara. Here, the Mahant offered stiff resistance with the help of government and about 130 Akalis were killed. The third morcha was launched at Guru-Ka-Bagh in Amritsar. In all the three morchas the Akalis were successful and the Gurdwaras were wrested from the control of Mahants. On a slightly different issue there was a morcha at Jaito but here the movement got a setback.

To begin with, the Akalis had visualised that the Gurdwara Reform Movement will be only religious, but, in due course, thanks to the attitude of the British Government, it became increasingly political.<sup>3</sup> This happened because the movement which was primarily directed against the Mahants turned into a movement against the British Government. After all, Mahants constituted one of the mainstays of the British empire and the Government came forward to defend them. Penderal Moon has argued that Government had to support the Mahants because their control of Gurdwaras had legal sanction. This is no doubt true. However, it seems that in addition to the legal position there was also a political dimension to it. The British Govt. supported the Mahants because it was afraid of growing power of the Akali movement which had politicised and drawn into its fold a vast body of Sikh masses who had till then, generally speaking, remained aloof from politics. This massification of the movement generated grave fears in the raj circles. The fears loomed when the Akali movement began to lend support to the non-cooperation movement launched by Gandhiji.

There was another aspect of the Akali movement. It was a middle class movement and was not only anti-Mahants and anti-government but was also directed against those organisations of Sikh aristocracy who were owing loyalty to the British raj.

By the time the Akalis successfully wrested the control of some Gurdwaras from the Mahants they had been fully woven into the national movement. The British Government finally yielded by enacting a Gurdwara Act on July 7, 1925. Management of all the Gurdwaras in Punjab was entrusted to

the SGPC. The Govt. did so in order to arrest the growing collaboration between the Akali Dal and the Indian National Congress. Alongwith enacting the Gurdwara Bill the Akali Dal was declared an illegal organisation.

One very significant feature of Punjab politics during the pre-independence period is that despite the Rowlatt Act, despite general dissatisfaction with the Government of India Act 1919 and despite Jallianwala Bagh massacre the INC was not as strong in Punjab as in some other provinces of the country. The hold of pro-British Unionist Party led by Sir Chhotu Ram was so much in Punjab that the INC found it extremely difficult to make inroads and gain a strong foothold. It is not my contention that INC did not exist at all in Punjab. It also not my contention that there was no support for INC among the Sikhs. Quite the contrary. In fact there was a central Sikh League which was lending full support to the INC. My contention is the INC in the province was a weak organisation consisting largely of urban middle class Hindus. The two other communities—Muslims and Sikhs—never came in its fold in a big way though relatively speaking the Sikhs joined it in larger number than the Muslims. Therefore, once the Akalis launched the Gurdwara Reform Movement and gained popularity among the Sikh masses and once the movement against the Mahants turned into a movement against the British Government and once it drew into its fold the vast body of the Sikh masses, the INC began to lend its whole-hearted support to the Akalis. In many cases the Congress leadership actively associated itself with the various morchas launched by the Akali Dal. In some sense it began to own the Gurdwara Reform movements. In doing so, the Congress saw an opportunity of gaining mass support in Punjab which, till then, it had not been able to gain due to the hold of Unionist Party. As soon as the Akalis won the morcha relating to the keys of Darbar Sahib Gandhiji sent the following telegram to the Akali leader Baba Kharak Singh, "First battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations."<sup>4</sup> Other leaders of the INC also congratulated the Akalis on their success.<sup>5</sup> A meeting of the Congress Party at Amritsar on September 17, 1922 appreciated the Akali movement and assured it all its support. The party

also set up an enquiry committee under Srinivas Iyengar to enquire into atrocities perpetrated on the Sikhs at Guru-Ka-Bagh. In its report the Committee held the British Government guilty of excesses. The party also supported the Jaito morcha and many Congress leaders participated in it. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, A.T. Gidwani and K. Santhanam were arrested at Jaito.<sup>6</sup> Likewise the Akalis also extended their whole-hearted support to the non-cooperation movement. A Satyagraha Committee was set up at Amritsar. The Congress Party also set up an Akali Satyagraha coordination Bureau to coordinate the activities of the two parties. Master Tara Singh, then Secretary of the SGPC ordered that *rumalas* (scarfs) to be used in Sikh shrines should only be of Khadi cloth. He also ordered that *Kraha Prasad* (flour pudding) in the Sikh shrines be prepared with Indian sugar only.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, during the course of Gurdwara Reforms Movement the Akalis also began to collaborate with the INC and supported its non-cooperation movement. This collaboration between INC and AD was facilitated by the fact that the British raj had by then become a common enemy of both. There was an added factor insofar as the British Government around this time began to put the Muslims in a dominant position in the administration in Punjab. In such a situation the Sikhs who constituted about 13 per cent of the population of the province had to lean on the Congress Party in order to safeguard their legitimate interests.<sup>8</sup> Even the Hindu dominated INC was keen to resist this Muslim domination because it felt that the interests of the Hindus in Punjab would be ignored. Moreover, their minority character in Punjab created a perception among the Hindus which could not be reconciled with their all-India perception, where they were the dominant community. After all, numerically the Hindus were only one-third of Punjab's population. This minority perception was also shared by the Sikhs. On the other hand, the Muslims who were a minority in the country constituted nearly 55 per cent of the population of Punjab.<sup>9</sup> Thus, there was some mutuality of interests between the Hindus and the Sikhs both of whom were in minority in the State. Of course, the perception of Punjabi Hindus was not quite the same as that of

the Sikhs because the former were a minority in Punjab but majority in the country, while the Sikhs were in minority in both. This made Akali-Congress collaboration imperative for both parties and suited their respective interests, though in varying degrees.

It may be mentioned here that even before the Akali movement began, the INC had been trying to rope in the Sikh masses into the national movement. At its Nagpur session (1919) it had assured them that their interest as a minority would be protected in any scheme of Swaraj.<sup>10</sup> Mahatma Gandhi had unequivocally supported the Sikh demand for adequate representation in the Punjab provincial legislature.<sup>11</sup> In response to these attempts of the INC an important organization of nationalist Sikhs—the Central Sikh League (CSL) was born on December 8, 1919. The League which represented the educated Sikh middle class extended full support to the Congress-led national movement. The resolution on non-cooperation movement which was adopted at the Calcutta session of the INC in September 1920 received a very positive response from the CSL. At its Lahore session on October 18, 1920 which was attended by 1200 delegates and 6000 visitors, the CSL endorsed the Calcutta resolution. Jawaharlal Nehru and many other important leaders of the INC attended the Lahore session of CSL. Baba Kharak Singh who presided over the Lahore session moved a resolution urging the Sikhs to participate in national politics and give up their pro-British stance. Interestingly, when Sewaram Singh of CKD opposed this resolution he was hooted down by the audience as "Sarkar da Mamma".<sup>12</sup> The CSL also endorsed the programme of Council boycott. It also supported the Swadeshi and national education programme of the INC. During the non-cooperation movement Baba Kharak Singh with 26 nationalist Sikhs issued a manifesto on behalf of the CSL and called for 1000 satyagraha volunteers.<sup>13</sup> In 1921 when the Prince of Wales was to come to Khalsa College, Amritsar to declare it a Sikh University in a bid to win back the Sikhs, the nationalist Sikhs led by Prof. Niranjana Singh opposed the visit. They built so much pressure that the visit had to be cancelled.<sup>14</sup>

In fact the CSL and the INC were so close that many Sikhs were simultaneously the members of both. So much so that many Sikhs were members of all the three organisations—the INC, the CSL and the Akali Dal. Baba Kharak Singh was simultaneously President of the CSL, the Akali Dal and the provincial committee of the INC. Sardar Singh Coveeshar was secretary of all the three.

Keeping in mind the roles of the CSL and the Akali Dal one can say that the former was largely nationalist and only marginally interested in the religious affairs of the Sikhs. On the other hand, the Akali Dal was initially interested in religious affairs of Sikhs. Its opposition to the British Government and its support to the national movement became possible in the course of Gurdwara agitation. The Akali Dal had to reconcile the religious aims of the Sikhs and the political aims of the freedom movement. So long as these two objectives—national liberation and emancipation of Sikhs—went hand in hand the Akalis were active in national movement, but when the two became irreconcilable or when they had to choose one of them and they often opted to fight for their communitarian goals.

With the coming of Gurdwara Bill the Akali politics took a new turn. The Dal leadership got divided into two groups. One group led by Mehtab Singh and Baba Harkishan Singh became supporters of the Govt.'s Gurdwara Bill but the other group led by Master Tara Singh, S. Gopal Singh Qaumi, S. Bhag Singh and Master Sujan Singh rejected the Gurdwara Bill and continued their opposition to the British government.<sup>15</sup> The first election to the SGPC in 1926 provided an opportunity for a trial of strength between the two groups. Master Tara Singh group won the SGPC elections and thereafter the AD whole-heartedly engaged itself in organising opposition to the Simon Commission, call for which had been given by the INC. Baba Kharak Singh and other Akali leaders urged the Sikhs to boycott the Commission. The demonstration against the Commission at Lahore was jointly organised by the CSL, the Akali Dal and INC. And it was so successful that it went down in history. The Akali Dal may have had its own reasons to support the INC's call for the boycott of Simon Commission

but whatever these reasons might have been the Akalis showed great enthusiasm in organizing demonstration against the Simon Commission.

## **Phase II : Akalis on the Periphery of National Movement**

The Akali Dal continued in the mainstream of national movement for a short while even after the Simon Commission boycott. When in 1927 at its Madras session the INC decided to prepare a swaraj constitution in consultation with other political parties, the CSL nominated Baba Kharak Singh, S. Mehtab Singh, Master Tara Singh, Gyani Sher Singh, S. Amar Singh and Mangal Singh to take part in the All Parties' Conference held on February 12, 1928.<sup>16</sup> Here, a pertinent question arose about the quantum of Sikh representation to the provincial and central legislature. The INC was opposed to communal representation in Punjab and Bengal but the Akalis were keen to have separate electorates. They demanded 30 per cent representation to the Sikhs in the Punjab legislature. This was far out of proportion to the Sikh's numeral strength and could be given only by reducing the representation of the Muslims and the Hindus for which the latter two communities were not prepared.<sup>17</sup>

The Nehru Report which addressed itself to this question was not able to sort it out. It only said that "a very potent factor to be taken into account is the presence of a strong Hindu minority with Muslim majority and Sikh minority."<sup>18</sup> Obviously the Nehru Report with this evasive approach did not satisfy the Sikhs. Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh and Gyani Sher Singh vehemently criticised the Nehru Report. Master Tara Singh sent a telegram to Moti Lal Nehru saying "Regret. Sikh rights have been overlooked by Nehru Committee".<sup>19</sup> However, Mangal Singh who represented the Sikhs on the Nehru Committee signed the Report. Master Tara Singh was highly critical of him for having done so.<sup>20</sup>

To consider the Nehru Report an all party meeting was held at Calcutta in December, 1928. Master Tara Singh with a deputation of some other Sikhs met Gandhiji to plead the case of the Sikhs but no solution to the satisfaction of Akalis

could be found. Consequently, the Akali Dal withheld its support to Nehru Report and quit the all Parties Conference. Thereafter, the Akalis became critical of the Congress Party as well as of the Nehru Report. Some Congress leaders like Mahatma Gandhi conceded that full justice had not been done to the Sikhs in the Nehru Report.<sup>21</sup> Like the Akali Dal, the CSL was equally critical of Nehru Report. In his inaugural address to the 1928 session of CSL at Gujranwala, Baba Kharak Singh asked the Sikhs to throw the Nehru Report in the dust bin.<sup>22</sup> However, when at the CSL session in October, 1929 the question of cooperation with the INC was taken up the opinion was divided. The select committee favoured cooperation with the INC but Baba Kharak Singh's group was opposed to it. It even threatened to boycott the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress. The meeting adjourned *sine die*. The CSL and Akali Dal were all set to boycott the Congress session at Lahore.

The INC was worried at this attitude of the Akali Dal and the CSL. It rightly realised that it would become difficult to hold the annual session of INC at Lahore in 1929 without the active support the CSL and the Akali Dal. Gandhiji and other Congress leaders appealed to the CSL not to boycott the session. On the eve of Lahore session Moti Lal Nehru and M.A. Ansari met Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh and listened to their grievances. They assured them that a solution to the satisfaction of the Sikhs will be found. Thereafter, Master Tara Singh and a number of other Dal and CSL leaders participated in the Lahore session of INC in their personal capacity.

When Gandhiji launched the civil disobedience movement on March , 1930, the Dal and the CSL decided to support it. But Baba Kharak Singh was opposed to it. He and his supporters were adamant on the colour question (question of saffron colour in national flag). However, the INC did not accept their demand. Still the Akali Dal supported the civil disobedience movement. Services of 5000 Akalis were offered for the movement. When a "War Council" was set up on April 14, 1930 Master Tara Singh was included in it. Later on he was appointed "Dictator" of the "War Council".

He was arrested when he attempted to take a jatha of 100 men to Peshawar to offer Satyagraha. On May 6, 1930 on the occasion of hartal against Gandhiji's arrest a clash took place between the police and the satyagrahis in Delhi which became famous as "Sisganj incident". After this incident the Akali participation in the civil disobedience movement increased. As a protest against the incident the SGPC launched a boycott campaign and picketing of foreign clothshops. Out of 7000 satyagrahis who courted arrest in Punjab more than 3000 were Sikhs. Like INC, the Akali Dal also boycotted elections to the Punjab Legislative Council in 1930.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the Akalis kept away from the First Round Table Conference held on November 12, 1930. In fact, S. Ujjal Singh and S. Sampuran Singh who attended it were not authorised representatives of the Akali Dal.

On the eve of Second Round Table conference in 1931 the Dal demanded a special position for the Sikhs in any future set up. Before Gandhiji set out to participate in the conference as the "sole" representative of the INC, the Dal led by Master Tara Singh presented him a charter of 17 demands.<sup>24</sup> Among other things, it demanded the following :

- (a) 30 per cent representation for the Sikhs in the Punjab legislature and administrative services of the province ;
- (b) One-third share to the Sikhs in the Punjab ministry and Punjab Public service commission ;
- (c) Punjabi as the official language in the Province ;
- (d) Five per cent representation to the Sikhs in the Central Legislature ; and
- (e) One Sikh member in the Central Cabinet.

After the failure of Second Round Table Conference the British Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, announced the Communal Award on August 16, 1932. The Dal was highly critical of the award which gave the Sikhs only 19 per cent representation as against 30 per cent to the Hindus and 51 per cent to the Muslims. The Dal leadership called a Panthic Conference at Lahore where an oath was taken that the Sikhs would oppose the communal award. In order to organise opposition

to the Award a Council of 17 members was formed. It was dominated by Master Tara Singh group. But it failed to launch any effective agitation because of factionalism in the Dal. There were sharp differences between him and Baba Kharak Singh. As a consequence of this failure to build effective opposition to the communal award Master Tara Singh left the Dal and joined the INC. Other important leaders of the Dal like S. Amar Singh Jhabhal, S. Sardul Singh, S. Mangal Singh, Gyani Hira Singh, Master Sunder Singh Lyallpuri, S. Gopal Singh Qaumi, and Gyani Gurmukh Singh Musafir also left the Dal. They did not support the Dal's agitation against the Communal Award. Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke and his supporters were also lukewarm in their opposition to communal Award because they were not prepared to displease the INC. The choice of S. Avtar Singh Gujranwala against Baba Kharak Singh and Sir Joginder Singh weakened the position of Akali Dal. The formation of Central Akali Party further weakened the Akali agitation against the communal award.

Once the election were announced under the Government of India's Act 1935 the Akali leadership came closer to the INC. It decided to contest elections on a joint Congress-cum-Akali ticket.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the INC and the Akali Dal formed a joint front against the Unionist Party. They cooperated inside as well as outside the legislature. The moderate Sikhs organised under Sir Sunder Singh Majitha to enter the election arena. They formed a new party called the Khalsa National Party. It captured 18 out of 33 Sikh seats. The Dal contested 14 seats and the INC contested 10. The Unionist Party won 96 seats in a House of 175. The Akalis won 7 and INC only 8 seats. The resentment of Sikhs against INC was ventilated in the defeat of Akali Dal candidates in some prestigious seats against Sunder Singh Majitha, Joginder Singh Mann, S. Naunihal Singh Mann and S. Ujjal Singh. It was a big setback to the Dal. S. Sunder Singh Majitha joined the Sikander Hayat Ministry.

### **Phase III : The Akali Dal's Vacillating Attitude**

In 1940 the INC demanded that the British Govt. should

declare its war aims if it was keen on getting the support of Indians in the British war effort. This demand was supported by the Dal. But at the same time it did not want the Sikh position to suffer in the matter of army recruitment.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it adopted a vacillating attitude. Master Tara Singh wrote a letter to Gandhiji explaining that he could not advise the Sikhs to give up army ranks as they were followers of Guru Gobind Singh and were a martial race. He also pleaded his inability to mollify the Sikhs because they had been let down by the INC at the time of communal award. This position of the Dal gradually brought the Sikhs close to the British Government. All moderate Sikhs rallied round Master Tara Singh. Even Gyani Kartar Singh began to support the British war effort. Mahatma Gandhi did not like this stand of the Akalis and wrote to Master Tara Singh that his association with the INC was a source of weakness both to the Congress and the Sikhs. After receipt of this letter, Master Tara Singh resigned from the INC. Thereafter, Akali Dal started its independent political activity. Around this time in the same breath the Dal was talking of united India and was also demanding Sikh state in case the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan was conceded. The Khalsa National Party representing conservative and relatively pro-British elements was supporting the Unionist Party and Sunder Singh Majitha was a member of Sikander Hayat Khan's Govt. His death in early 1941 led to Sikander-Baldev Pact and paved the way for latter's entry into the Govt. Baldev Singh was not in the AD but was acceptable to the Dal. The Akalis who had already gone close to the British Govt. because of their refusal to give up army ranks now went still closer not only to the British Govt. but also to the Unionist Party as well.

However, Udham Singh Nagoke faction of the Dal did not approve these moves of Master Tara Singh. Instead, it wanted to support the INC. When Nagoke was elected President of the SGPC, Master Tara Singh resigned.<sup>27</sup> Around this time Khalsa Defence League was also formed. This organisation satisfied the aspirations of moderate Sikhs who were in favour of helping the British war effort. In a limited way, even the SGPC lent its support to the

British war effort. This naturally took the Dal out of the mainstream of national movement. Moreover, the Akalis were very much perturbed over the Cripps proposals but the INC did not take any serious view of Akalis' resentment nor did it try to reassure them in any way. Rather, the Rajaji's Formula confirmed the Akalis' doubts that their interests were likely to suffer at the hands of the INC.

In spite of the strained relations between the INC and the Dal many Akalis supported the individual civil disobedience movement launched by Gandhiji. Master Tara Singh took the position that he would not personally offer individual satyagraha as desired by the INC but would also not oppose any important leader of the Dal from offering it under the banner of INC.<sup>28</sup> Niranjan Singh Talib, Sardul Singh, Dalip Singh Gill, Udham Singh, Ranjit Singh Mastana and other leaders of Akali Dal offered satyagraha. However, the Dal did not officially participate in it. By and by the Akalis lost enthusiasm for the individual civil disobedience movement and their participation became less and less.

A serious rift occurred in the Dal in 1942 when Gandhiji gave his 'Quit India' call. Udham Singh Nagoke, Gurmukh Singh Musaffir, Darshan Singh Pheruman, Baba Labh Singh and their supporters whole-heartedly joined the Quit India movement. But the section of the Dal led by Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh did not fully participate in the movement. The differences in Dal did not relate only to Quit India movement. Equally sharp differences also existed on the question of future status of the Sikhs. On July 7, 1943 the Dal raised the demand for Azad Punjab. But Akali leaders from west Punjab like Sampuran Singh Lyalpur and Buta Singh Sheikhpura did not support it because the West Punjab districts to which they belonged had no chance of being included in the proposed Sikh State. The nationalist Sikhs also opposed the demand for Azad Punjab. The Central Akali Party also opposed it. There were sharp differences between Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh on the issue. On March 4, 1944 Master Tara Singh resigned from the Dal in protest against the activities of Baba Kharak Singh and others. On August 5, 1944 Jinnah tried to woo the Sikhs

and declared that they were a separate nation. On August 20, 1944 an All India Sikh Convention was held at the Teja Singh Samundri Hall where Gyani Kartar Singh moved a resolution for a separate Sikh State. On October 14, 1944 at an Akali Conference at Lahore Master Tara Singh named four enemies of the Sikhs : Communists, Britishers, Mahatma Gandhi and Jinnah. On March 10, 1945 the SGPC also endorsed the resolution for a separate Sikh State.

The Cabinet Mission Plan placed the Sikhs at the mercy of the Muslim League, or at least so they thought. Therefore, the Sikhs again began to drift towards the INC. When Jawaharlal Nehru formed the national government he included Sardar Baldev Singh as defence Minister in his cabinet. This paved the way for the Dal to improve its relations with the INC. By this time the withdrawal of the British from India had become almost certain and the Congress-led freedom movement had turned into Congress-led national Government.

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of above account one can say that the support of Akali Dal to the national movement has been varying from time to time. Generally speaking, it has been contingent on relative historical tactical considerations. In the 1920s this support came in good measure. What made this support possible and necessary was the Gurdwara Reform Movement. The British Government's opposition to the Gurdwara Reform Movement put the Akalis in the lap of the INC. Hence the Dal joined the non-cooperation movement. On the other hand, the INC supported Gurdwara Reform Movement.

On the question of Nehru Report and Communal Award the Akalis were quite unhappy. While they were keen to support the freedom struggle they were not prepared to sacrifice the Sikh interests.

The vacillation that the Akalis showed during 1940-45 period was imposed on them by the objective situation. While they were eager to fight for national freedom they could not sacrifice the interest of the community. They wanted to

maximise their bargaining power. Master Tara Singh followed a policy of winning for the Sikhs the position of a balancer.

During these fateful years of Indian history the Akalis were all along at the crossroads. They were torn between the interests of the community and the interests of the country. So long as the two interests could be reconciled the task of Akalis was rendered easier but when they were irreconcilable then their task was very difficult. Keeping in view their minority character and the fact that they did not constitute majority in any district of Punjab this stand was understandable.

### Notes and References

1. Fauja Singh, "Akalis and the Indian National Congress, 1920-47," *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. XV, No. 2 (October, 1981), pp. 453 ff. The author who is a well known authority on contemporary Punjab history has provided a mine of information in this article. I have immensely benefited from his article and have liberally borrowed information from this article. Also see, Balraj Madhok, *Punjab Problem : The Muslim Connection* (New Delhi, 1985).
2. The founding fathers of the movement were : Baba Kharak Singh, Bhai Kartar Singh Jabbar, Teja Singh Samundri, Mehtab Singh, Master Tara Singh, S. Sardul Singh, S. Amar Singh and S. Bhag Singh. For details see, Harcharan Singh Bajwa, *Fifty years of Punjab Politics* (Chandigarh : 1979), p. 21.
3. For details see, Prem Uprety, "The Sikh Disturbance of 1922-25", *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. XII, (Oct., 1978).
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7. *The Tribune*, June 10, 1921.
8. *Census, Punjab Report, 1921*, Part II, p. 22.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Congress and the Problem of Minorities.*
11. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XX (1921), pp. 462-63.
12. Fauja Singh, *op. cit.*

13. *Ibid.*
14. Kapur Singh, *Sachi Sakhi* (Jullundur, 1972), p. 52.
15. Bajwa, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.
16. Fauja Singh, *op. cit.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Kirpal Singh, "Genesis of Partition of Punjab", *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. V, No. I (Oct., 1971).
19. *Tribune*, August, 17, 1928.
20. *Tribune*, August, 25, 1928.
21. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 315.
22. *Tribune*, October 28, 1928.
23. Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*
24. In fact the Akali Dal wanted to send its own representatives but the dispute between Master Tara Singh and Gyani Sher Singh made it difficult.
25. Bajwa, *op. cit.*
26. Fauja Singh, *op. cit.*, Also, Bajwa, *op. cit.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. Bajwa, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

## Parsis and Nationalism

Aloo J. Dastur

The Parsis are not merely India's smallest minority barring the Jews, they are also a dwindling community. The census of 1951 listed them as 120,000; the last census, 1981, puts them around 80,000. They are spread all over the world but their homeland for the past over 1350 years has been India, and the largest numbers reside in Bombay. Their contribution to the growth and wealth of the city is not insubstantial.

There is a story, perhaps apocryphal, which bears narration here particularly since we are talking of nationalism. When the first group of Parsis wearing their long, ankle-length garments and strange headgear landed on the shores of Sanjan in Gujarat in 785 A.D. the local people were naturally both curious and suspicious. They took them to their ruler who wanted to be assured that they were not unfriendly or inimical. The Parsi head-priest asked Jadhav Rao to send for a pot of milk and some sugar. He put the sugar in the milk and stirred it and returned the pot with the sinde challenge that the sugar be separated from the sweetened milk. The Rao was pleased and granted them asylum, laying down four conditions : they would use the language of his kingdom, they would not bear arms except at his command, their women would adopt the dress of the Hindu women and they would

perform their wedding ceremonies after sunset, a custom which survives to this day.

Thus the Parsis gradually came to be integrated into the social fabric but their religion and religious practices were respected. The purpose for which they left their original homeland, Persia, was realised. In return the Parsis fulfilled the conditions. In course of time Gujarati became their mother tongue, their women took to the local costume and the vast majority of wedding ceremonies still take place after sunset. About taking up arms at the behest of the ruler the first chance came their way when Sanjan was attacked during the Muslim invasion of Gujarat; Parsis blood mixed with the rest in repelling the invaders. It will not be an exaggeration to say that from that day to this the Parsis have given of their best in the defence of the country and its people. Small, microscopic in numbers, their contribution to the making of modern India is indeed great.

Starting out as a farmers and herders in the villages of Gujarat they began to move out to other parts, first of Western India, as further waves of immigrants came to escape religious persecution in Persia. Ultimately a majority of them moved South and settled in Bombay. Here they found their metier and prospered and shared their prosperity in the growth of Bombay. Among the first to start the cotton textile industry was Dinshaw Petit. Wadias were the great ship-builders in the Bombay harbour. Earlier in Surat Dhanjibhai Sabavora was the head-builder in Surat. The first shipping companies for coastal trade were founded by Parsis along the Western Coast.

While these activities were confined to Bombay City and Bombay Presidency Jamshedji Tata dreamt dreams of prosperous India. The first was the great adventure in Bihar the first steel plant in the country. When a Chancellor of the University of Bombay publicly deplored that there was a dearth of institutions of higher learning in India Jamshedji Tata took up the challenge and ordered a blue print of what is the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. He died before the institute was built but his sons took up the issue as a matter of trust and fulfilled the wishes of the father. He

was a Captain of industry, a pioneer in the field of scientific and technical education. Hydro-electric schemes, cotton textiles, the hotel industry—all bear the Tata name.

On a smaller and limited plane, Godrej is another name to contend with. Ardeshir Godrej and his brother Phirozeshah took Gandhiji's call for Swadeshi literally and began contributing by starting out with soaps and steel. Today Godrej has a reputation for quality and reliability and is free from association or collaboration with multi-nationals.

In Western India the Parsis were the first to be touched by Western liberal thought and perhaps by the renaissance in Bengal. The nineteenth century threw up a host of great Parsis who have left their mark on the development and modernisation of Bombay.

They soon took to English education and opened Schools. The Parsi Girls' School Association was founded in 1858 by stalwarts like Dadabhai Naoroji, Naoroji Fardmaji, and Sorabji Bengalee. It continues into the present day and manages two schools which are now cosmopolitan. Ten years earlier Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy had started a Parsi Benevolent Institute for boys, it also is still extant, with the difference its class-rooms are filled by pupils of all communities.

Behramji Malabari led the struggle for social reform and worked diligently for women's welfare and girls' education, not only among the Parsis but others as well. His lasting contribution is Seva Sadan which looks after the economic needs of women and runs schools for children of very moderate means.

If Parsis led in economic regeneration and education, they were not far behind in the political arena. Here the most prominent name is that of Dadabhai Naoroji. He had come up the hard way—teacher, social reformer, Municipal Councillor. Throughout this journey in public life he had one daily thought, as his biographer states, India. The alleviation of economic poverty and social degradation was his primary concern. His book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* was a landmark in our literature on economics. But he had his priorities right. In a letter to Malabari on 15th December, 1887 he wrote :

....by all means fight for the merit of your cause (social reform), but why unnecessarily discredit and discourage other important movements ? One thing you may remember, that no people who are politically debased will ever be, and ever have been, socially high. It is the political elevation which will give that backbone and stamina, that manliness which would give strength and courage to carry social reforms....

Can one quarrel with the priority laid down  
Or again a year later to Dinsha Wacha :

We are Indians, and India is one mother-country,  
and we can only sink or shine with, and as Indians.

Or to Hume :

It is desirable that Native States should be allowed to take an interest in, and help, the Congress and even, if they choose to find delegates. The Native States have their own wants and grievances, and a body like the Congress and other public associations can alone take up political questions.... A solidarity of this kind between all the people of India is a thing to be desired....

This, decades before the formation of the All-India States Peoples Conference.

A liberal at heart and by temperament and intellect he could not reconcile himself to unfreedom. And he wanted India to be free. When he was elected Congress President for the third time in 1906 he gave out the call :

This birthright to be "free" or to have freedom is our right from the very beginning of our connection with England when he came under the British flag....

On this Lokmanya Tilak forged his memorable slogan Swaraj is my birthright as I shall have it.

Dadabhai was the first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament. His rationale was :

... nothing can be reformed until Parliament moves and enacts modifications of the existing Acts, but one single genuine Indian voice is there in Parliament to tell at least what the native view is on any question.

Two other Parsis, Sir Muncherji Bhowmagree and Shepurji Sakletwalla also became members of Parliament. But the three spoke 3 different tongues—Dadabhai represented the liberals, Bhowmagree the Conservatives and Sakletwalla—he was called Comrade Sak the Communists. But they all spoke up for India and its rights.

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was known as the Lion of Bombay. His contribution to the municipal administration of the city can hardly be measured; it is no overstatement to say that he is truly the father of municipal government in Bombay. He worked for decades to make the Municipal Corporation self-governing and the Act of 1886 owed substantially to him. He resented and resisted Government orders which impinged upon municipal independence.

They were told that they were a body possessing rights of self-government in the interests of the city. This did not mean that they were allowed to govern themselves only when their views were in accordance with the wishes of another body. It was clear that self-government meant government according to the convictions and best intelligence of the body possessing it.

He was sent to the Supreme Council where again he distinguished himself.

The year 1885 that witnessed the birth of the Congress saw in late January the birth of the Bombay Presidency Association on the initiative of Pherozeshah, Talang and Tyabji, the aim being to educate public opinion in England about the real conditions in India, and also to educate Indians on political issues. He was elected President of the fifth session of the Congress at

Calcutta. In all this endeavours he wanted and actually did put the rulers in their place. Just one example of his pride in being Indian when taunted that it was a small microscopic minority in the Congress :

We have also proved that, in spite of our education, and even with our racial and religious differences, the microscopic minority can far better and far more intuitively represent the needs and aspirations of their own countrymen than the still more microscopic minority of the omniscient district officers, whose colloquial knowledge of Indian language seldom rises above the knowledge of English possessed, for instance, by French waiters at Paris hotels, which proudly blazon forth the legend "*Ici ou parle Anglais.*"

Sir Dinsha Wacha was the third Parsi to be the President of the Congress and his forte was economics.

Outside and away from the Congress a position of pre-eminence legitimately belong to Bhikhaiji Cama. She designed and stitched the first national flag and unfurled it at the stuttgart Socialist Congress. She worked with Savarkar in England and suffered exile. In the history of nationalism she ranks with the revolutionaries but in patriotism and love and service of the motherland she stands at the summit.

Coming nearer to our days, the Home Rule League had a front rank leader in B.P. Wadia. But Parsis at every level from leader to volunteers participated in the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements of the twenties and thirties. Burjorji Bharucha was Secretary of the Indian National Congress for a few years and worked with Jawaharlal Nehru. Another outstanding figure was Khurshed Nariman who came to prominence when he exposed the corruption involving Harvey in the construction of Sakkar Barrage. He became Bombay's hero when he won the defamation suit filed by Harvey. He headed the Bombay provincial Congress Committee for a number of years and had the great honour and privilege of being the first citizen of Bombay to break the Salt Law in Bombay. He

also served the City well as a Municipal Councillor and Mayor, as a legislator and above all as a man of the people.

Dadabhai's grand-daughters Goshiben Captain and Pervin Captain worked with Sarojini Naidu in establishing the Rashtriya Stree Sabha. Its political wing, Desh Sevika Sangh counted among its number several women who took to the constructive programme outlined by the Congress, picketed liquor and foreign cloth shops. They went to jail, the first being Perin Captain. The youngest sister, Khurshid Naoroji, more adventurous than the elder sisters, worked with the Khudai Khidmatgars in the North-West province and was very close to Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan. She spent several years in jails.

Another who deserves a niche in the pantheon of Parsis is Muthuben Petit. Born to wealth and ease and comfort, she gave it all up and served the adivasis in South Gujarat for over 40 years till her death. Her share of an affluent family went into the ashrams she established.

One contribution of the Parsis to nationalism is worth recording. At the Round Table Conference when leaders vied with each other to seek benefits and advantages for their respective religious groups and begged for reservations, the three Parsis nominated or invited by the British Government were Sir Pheroza Sethna, Sir Cowasji Jehangir and Sir Homi Mody. They were also tempted to ask for reservation. Their attempt was failed by Burjorji Bharucha, who under the auspices of the Parsi Rajkiya Sabha convened public meetings of Parsis in several parts of Bombay and moved resolutions against reservations or any other privileges for the community. He cabled these resolutions to Lord Sankey, the chairman of the Round Table Conference, Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister, Mahatma Gandhi and the three Parsi members. Thus was the move foiled.

In the constituent Assembly, Sir Homi Modi again raised the issue of reservations for the Parsis in Parliament and he was opposed. The wisdom of the Chairman of the Minorities Committee, Vallabhbai Patel, prevailed and reservation were done away with. The advantage was waived by the community when the second Parliament had three Parsis as its

members. Naushir Bharucha from Bombay on the Socialist ticket, Minoos Masani from Gujarat Swatantra Party and Homi Daji from Indore representing the Communist Party. What a bonanza for a microscopic community !

It is only fair to recall here that it was Dr. Homi Bhabha who was practically the first scientist who talked at world Conference in Atomic Energy of the possible uses of Atomic Energy for peaceful purposes. His Western colleagues were then sceptical. His dream has partially come to be realised though he did not live to see it.

The Parsis have been in the mainstream and not only form a sense of self-preservation. Being enterprising, adventurous they want to live well. They find that their religion is well protected. For the rest they have to go along with the others in trade, business, commerce, industry, education, science and technology.

# The Role of the Christians in the National Struggle for Freedom

Teresa Albuquerque

Although the Christian Community did not play a leading role in the movement to free the country from British rule, single individuals have played their part, and viewing freedom in the context of an assurance of rights under a democracy, it will be seen that the Christian contribution has not been insignificant. Moreover, in the liberation of Goa, Christian effort has been considerable.

This paper seeks to examine the question with special reference to Bombay.

## I. Initial Participation in the Congress

The early sessions of the Indian National Congress secured a representation of Indian Christians that was far in excess of the community's ratio to the total population.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Kalicharan Banerji of Bengal, Madhusudan Das of Orissa, C.G. Nath of Lahore and Peter Paul Pillai of Madras actively participated in the proceedings. And during the 1888 session at Bombay a number of educated Indian Christian women—Pandita Ramabai, Trimback and Nikambe—were conspicuous by their presence. We are told that European missionaries even encouraged their people to attend the Congress meetings.<sup>2</sup>

Rev. T.E. Slater, C.F. Andrews and E. Greaves, distinguished for their work among the educated classes urged Indian Christians to take interest in the politics and participate in the Congress. Wrote Rev. Greaves in 1910 : "would to God that Indian Christians might be found in the very forefront of the national movement."<sup>8</sup> But gradually, keeping pace with the Government cooling off of its patronage to the Congress began and this enthusiasm declined. It may be noted too that by its service in the fields of education, medical relief and humanitarian works, the Christian community had earned sympathetic consideration of Government. Besides, for political reasons, British rule was not patronising to the minorities. Hence when Legislative Councils were established around the middle of the last century, representation was found for the Christian minority by nomination of its popular leaders in each Presidency. Lulled thus into complacency, few Christians ventured into the mainstream of political life in the early years.

## II. Rising Nationalism

In the first decade of this century, in Bengal, Upadhyaya Brahamabandav (1861-1907) founded a daily paper *Sandhya*, which turned revolutionary and fanned the agitation against the partition of Bengal and "gave nationalism a mass appeal that anticipated Gandhiji by decades".<sup>4</sup> This Hindu, who turned Catholic about 1888, was a fiery nationalist. Yet probably for being no politician he has been neglected by historians generally. But he was acclaimed by Bipin Chandra Pal who stated "of all men, it was he who imparted a militant character to our Swadeshi movement"; and Hemendra Prasad calls him "the high priest of the boycott". Inspired by Tilak, in 1905 he even inaugurated the Shivaji festival in Bengal. The following year he was responsible for publishing and printing the extremist paper *Bande Mataram*.

In Bombay Joseph Baptista, another great Indian Christian nationalist, was among the first to openly challenge repressive measures of the British imperial policy. In 1894, as a young engineering graduate in the Forest Department of Bombay

Presidency, he had to suffer the ignominy of relinquishing his post for bringing to light the malpractice of a British colleague.<sup>5</sup> This incident having sharpened his repugnance to blatant injustice, when he pursued the study of Law at the Inns of Court, he publicly denounced the Government of India's action against the freedom of the press—and thus won the respect and life-long friendship of Lokmanya Tilak. Enriched by exposure to the British political system, the Irish struggle for liberty and the labour agitation in England, Baptista returned home in 1899 as an advocate of the High Court of Bombay. But though he proved his legal acumen, he jeopardized a lucrative career at the Bar by pleading in Court that V.D. Savarkar's arrest was illegal, by staunchly upholding Tilak's case in England against Valentine Chirol and by deploring Government's decision to deport the pro-Indian editor, B.G. Horniman, without a trial.

Like most level headed nationalists during that early phase, Baptista did not dream of severing the British connection. In 1910 he suggested to Tilak the idea of Home Rule, but it was shelved temporarily. As the right-hand man of Lokmanya to whom he had proposed the concept of Responsive Co-operation, Baptista presided at the Provincial Conference at Poona and first publicly mooted the suggestion that while Great Britain was involved in the war, India would demand Home Rule and assist in bringing the conflict to a successful end. When Home Rule was established in 1916 Baptista was actively involved in the promotion of the scheme and it was observed : "Just as to the Parsi Dadabhai Naoroji, India is indebted for the concept of Swaraj, to the Indian Christian, Joseph Baptista, she is indebted for the concept of Home Rule".<sup>6</sup> In fact, Baptista has been called the Father of the Home Rule movement in India. Deputed to England he succeeded in getting Home Rule adopted as a plank by the British Labour Party platform and prophetically declared that independence of India would be obtained by the labourers of England. However, with the untimely death of Tilak and his own disillusionment with the Congress, in 1920 Baptista receded from active politics but kept promoting nationalism specially to his own community through the local press. Just before his death in

1930, in the face of British atrocities to curb the non-cooperation movement, the veteran nationalist was even willing to court imprisonment. In the Congress movement as shaped by Gandhiji after 1921, Catholics as a body kept out. However, a few-scattered individuals like Masilamani Pillai of Tuticorin, Jerome A. Saldhana of Mangalore, C.J. Varkey of Malabar, Joaquim Alva and Peter Alvares and Gilani of Allahabad played important part.

Joseph Baptista was almost a lone voice in the wilderness for few in his community shared his enthusiasm. Bemoaning this circumstance the *Anglo Lusitano* the Goan mouthpiece, lamented: "the leaders of Indian Catholics—appear to be guided by a desire to move along a line of least resistance".<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that as a fall-out of the early Portuguese conversion policy Indian Christians underwent a total disorientation. Their adoption of an alien language, dress, way of life and culture integrated them with the ruling class but isolated them from their fellow countrymen. Furthermore, among Catholics who formed the major segment of the Christian community of Bombay, Goans predominated numerically.

Denied a proper livelihood under the Portuguese in Goa, they had come to Bombay in search of work; and being on the sufferance of the British Government they could not with impunity bite the hand that fed them.

But like all other Indians, the Goans too were shaken by the horror of the inhuman massacre of Jallianwala Bagh.<sup>8</sup> And as Aloysius Soares who, till then had taken pride in considering himself a citizen of Goa not a British subject, put it: "1919 was the great divide. For in that fateful year things happened which turned me into an Indian...from a Goan I envolved into an Indian even though owing to a historical accident I continued to be an alien". This was because in 1918 the Bombay Government declared Goans in the city to be aliens, and they were debarred from the right to vote.<sup>9</sup> Their affinity lay with Goa, not British India.

Another very substantial reason which held back Christian initiative was the policy of the church. Very much under the domination of an alien hierarchy that instilled into the faithful an unshakable obedience to "constituted political authority"

the community was repeatedly restrained from active participation in the national movement by positive dictates from the ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>10</sup> To quote one instance: at the time of Indian disillusionment over the Montford Reforms the Catholic official organ, *The Examiner*, declared "we strongly advise Catholics not to throw themselves into any party... . If ever there was a body of men earnestly devoted to working for the greatest possible good of the people committed to their charge, it is the Government of India as it has existed for the last quarter century or so".<sup>11</sup> And it firmly assured Catholics that their Bishops would act should their religion be threatened. The same dampening attitude was evident also in the ruling of the Anglican Church in Bombay.<sup>12</sup> In protest against this instance of colonialism the Christa Seva Sangh Ashram, Poona, had been set up in 1922.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile in the Punjab the Indian Christian community (mainly belonging to the Church Missionary Society and the Scottish Mission), though largely from the landless class was branded as anti-national, and attacked. And further, when the mission authorities got Government to form a Punjabi Christian Regiment—which at the Armistice of 1918 consisted of 2600 recruits—the community was further removed from Hindu/Sikh Society and displayed little enthusiasm for nationalist activity. Although the horror of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre rekindled the flame of nationalism, the Christians found themselves caught in the frenzy of violent reprisals against the missionaries and came to encounter a political situation in which the forces of communalism became even stronger than those of nationalism. Hence the Congress did not seem to present the only alternative to British Rule. During the non co-operation movement E.L. Ralia Ram, the Christian leader, defined the role of the community as peace-makers. Even during the Quit India phase, except for sporadic instances, Christians were generally passive yet sometimes became victims of communal violence because they gave shelter to their Hindu, Muslim or Sikh neighbours.<sup>14</sup>

In Madras the situation was very much the same. Early in this century, under the inspiration of a German Alsatian

Catholic priest, a group of laymen headed by Pragasa Mudaliar and L.B Swamikannu Pillai founded the Catholic Indian Association in order to protect the public interest of Catholics in the State. In response to its pleas, several Catholics were opted into Madras Legislative Councils after 1919. And two even became Presidents of the same body. However, after the massacre K.T. Paul the active National General Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. who believed strongly in the correctness of the British connection came to loathe many aspects of that connection. Despite his boundless respect and sympathy for Mahatma Gandhi, he did not fully approve of satyagraha and the non co-operation movement.<sup>15</sup> Yet he too acted as peacemaker during the Civil Disobedience movement. And in 1930 he was instrumental in laying before the Governor-General a joint letter signed by a number of British missionaries urging a reconciliation with Gandhiji.<sup>16</sup>

### III. The Communal Crisis

The concept of communal representation created by the Morley-Minto Reforms had ushered a counter movement in Bombay. In 1909, came the intersocial Association. In 1918 St. Xavier's College had its first Hindu/Muslim gathering; and under the auspices of the Bombay Students' Brotherhood and the Indian Christian Association, a concerted move was made to foster inter-communal unity, particularly amongst college students. While the tempo of nationalist activity heightened, Christians were naturally infected. But the majority still looked for clerical directives; the *Examiner* edited by a British Jesuit emphasised only loyalty to the Government. So while most Christians were at the cross roads, the community took on the role of pouring all over troubled waters.<sup>17</sup> Rev. James Kellock, Principal of Wilson College later recounted "I remember in the early twenties when communal riots were raging in Bombay, Gandhiji organised "peace carriers" carrying representatives of the different communities to tour the parts of the city where the trouble was...our task was to keep standing upright in the swaying jostling vehicle as it bumped over the uneven roads on the outskirts of the city, while we

held hands with the other members of the lorry's team and chanted 'Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi, Jewish unity ki jai'.<sup>18</sup> But all were not so passive. In 1926 Aloysius Soares, a young college professor was thrown into the political arena. Greatly appalled at the general political backwardness and apathy of Catholics "which if mistaken as support to the ruling power could endanger the future of the church and community, the Jesuits of Bengal had decided to launch a first-rate Catholic newspaper that would create a national consciousness within the country and draw educated Catholics into the mainstream of Indian nationalism before it was too late."<sup>19</sup> Accordingly in 1927, *The Week* came into being; and in the following year when Bombay became its base, Soares became its editor. In his hands the paper was the unofficial organ of the Liberal Party. By its impartial stand on burning issues it came into skirmishes with Government and ecclesiastical authorities; and finally in 1932 due to repression by the former it had to be closed down. But not before it had achieved its purpose; for it reached directly or indirectly the Catholic world, at least which the Indian National Congress did not, and projected a favourable image of Gandhiji and the young Indian nationalists.

#### IV. Nationalist Christian Party

During the hectic days of the Salt Satyagraha the *Examiner* continued its forebodings: "The Catholic Church would not, given present conditions in India, recognise Mr. Gandhi's campaign of Civil Disobedience as a legitimate means to attain this end."<sup>20</sup> And it went on, "commonsense tells us that the position of the Catholic Church under a Government of Hindus, Muslims and Nationalists is not going to be any easier, to say the least."<sup>21</sup>

But Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's declaration to a mammoth gathering of 5000 students of Bombay colleges: "Your place is in freedom's fight" let loose an unprecedented wave of youthful political frenzy. Strikes, pickets and protest demonstrations became the order of the day. And the next day was a red-letter day in the annals of the history of the Indian

Christians of Bombay when the various denominations, including Roman Catholic, met together on a common platform to usher in the Nationalist Christian Party. Its first resolution was that the community "emphatically demands for India the right of self-determination and is of the opinion that the immediate grant of self-government alone will satisfy her political aspirations."<sup>22</sup>

J.S. Malellu seconded the resolution and others including Tarabai Tilak spoke on the occasion. While the Christa Seva Sangh openly supported the party the *Examiner* condemned the Civil Disobedience Movement and advocated instead "the virtue of Christian patience and urgent prayer of God".<sup>23</sup> And later it pronounced: "They that resist the powers that be, purchase to themselves damnation".<sup>24</sup> But undeterred by all the invectives hurled at them, several members of the Nationalist Christian Party openly defied Government and courted arrest. Joachim Alva was arrested on Jatin Das day and served his first sentence, so also Jos Bennie, F.M. Pinto and several others were imprisoned.

## V. Christian Misgivings

As the wave of repression was let loose against political offenders, two hundred non-Roman British Christian Missionaries appealed to Government to exercise Christian love. So truly like a bolt from the blue, in mid-1931 came the report of Gandhiji's adverse views on proselytism by Christian Missionaries. For proselytism is an integral part of a Christian missionary's task in India as anywhere in the world. The *Week* and *Anglo Lusitano* were quick to express shock and indignation. To the *Examiner* this was indeed grist to the mill, corroborating its gravest forebodings. Triumphantly it announced "thanks to Mr. Gandhi, Catholics in India have been put on the alert" and so it was. Even Gandhi's belated assurances in *Young India* of 7th May 1931 did not really assure. Safeguards for religious rights became a must. And from that phase to that goal was Christian initiative mainly directed.

## VI. Joint Electorates

H.C. Mukerji had been one of the earliest proponents of the idea that reservation of seats would perpetuate violation of the Christian community; and he had advised that by mingling with others in political life they would attain a footing of equality. So also Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur had held that reservation of seats, like privileges for any community, would militate against the establishment of the declared objective of the Indian Union and would lead to its break-up.<sup>26</sup> During the Salt Satyagraha, when the question of minorities surfaced, Christian leaders in Bombay namely, Joseph Baptista and Alloysius Soares spurned offers from other minority leaders to jointly demand separate electorates.<sup>26</sup> Said J.A. Saldanha, M.L.C. (Madras) to a Christian gathering in Bombay "The utmost we may claim is reservation of seats in proportion to our numbers combined with the right to contest seats in a joint electorate".<sup>27</sup> But despite all these declarations, and in the face of K.T. Paul's determined stand, his fellow—the other nominated representative of the Indian Christians at the first Round Table Conference—A.T. Panir Selwan, stated that the community favoured communal electorates.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately there existed at the time no organisation to vent the total Christian view-point. So when the conference ended with the unacceptable Communal Award and Christians were invited to discuss the issue at an All-parties Conference, Soares and Rev. Bhaskar Rao convened an All Christian Conference at Poona. By this time K.T. Pal had passed away; but though the Christians of Madras held out, the conference clearly evidenced massive support of Christians for joint electorates. It also approved of a draft of fundamental rights drawn up by Soares. The Poona conference sent its representatives to the All Parties Conference and there a twenty-three men committee was appointed; yet no Christian representative was despatched to the Third Round Table Conference. However, a Joint Committee of Catholics and other Christians came into being, and its representatives projected the community's stand on joint electorate to the cabinet missions. It also emphasized the

demand for inclusion rights, including the right to participate and propagate the faith.<sup>29</sup>

## VII. Constitutional Safeguards

Although the question of providing fundamental rights had been previously ignored, in 1947 the Constituent Assembly set up an Advisory Committee on minority and fundamental rights. Christians were well represented on it. A. Dharam Das (U.P.), A. Wilson and Rev. Jerome D'souza (Madras), Dr. J. Alban de Souza Anthony (Bombay), B. Kakra (Bihar), N.C. Mukerji and Frank Anthony (Bengal), Rev. J.M. Nicholas (Assam), Raj Kumari Kaul (C.P. and Berar) and later Mr. Ruthnaswamy. And as K.M. Munshi, the legal pilot of the advisory committee declared "The Christians took a fair attitude from the beginning. They were prepared to accept reservation proportionate to their population in the Central Legislature and Provincial Legislature. In other provinces they wanted liberty to seek election from the general constituencies, "This paid dividends. And as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman of the Advisory Committee and Champion of the Christian cause, stated emphatically to the house "The minorities have made many sacrifices. I have consulted the Working Committee on this issue. The working committee is of the opinion that these Fundamental Rights must be granted to the minorities since they stand drafted in the Draft Constitution of India". And the proposal was accepted unanimously.<sup>30</sup> The Indian Christians responded to the goodwill of the majority and surrendered the reservation of seats accorded to them. Thus Christians secured the insertion of Fundamental Rights into the constitution and thereby ensured the solid ground work for a lasting democracy.

## VIII. Liberation of Goa

Undoubtedly it was the Christians of Goan origin who took the lead in the struggle for the liberation of Goa. During the last century in Goa itself the struggle for autonomy under alien rule had been spearheaded by Christians, more often led by the clergy as in the famous Pinto Conspiracy of 1877. Again in

the Liberal Revolt of 1882, Fr. Pedro Antonio Ribeiro and Fr. Antonio D'Sa died as martyrs for Goan freedom. And even later Bombay supported several efforts. The first Goan prefect and the Portuguese enclave, Bernardo Peres da Silva, secured moral and financial help of Sir Roger de Faria, the merchant prince of Bombay; and in the 21st September Revolution some rebels found refuge in this city. In fact, a number of early Goan journals in Bombay, including *Anglo Lusitano*, started as a mouthpiece of nationalist sympathisers east of the Sahyadri hills.<sup>31</sup>

While the writings of Menezes-Braganza early in this century awakened Goans to the rise of national consciousness in British India, in 1928 Tristao Braganza Cunha—known as the Father of the Goan freedom movement—started a branch of the Congress Committee in Goa. This was shifted to Bombay because of repression by the Portuguese Government.<sup>32</sup> In January 1939, a group of Goan youth—Christian and Hindu—organised at Bombay the Gomantak Praja Mandal to spread among the Goan immigrants the creed of Indian nationalism.<sup>33</sup>

On 18th June 1946 Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia's defiant address to a mammoth gathering in Goa ignited the smouldering agitation. His arrest motivated a campaign of mass satyagrahis into the Portuguese territory. Fifteen thousand peaceful demonstrators were clamped into jail and among the deported ring-leaders were Tristao Braganza Cunha and Jose Ignacio de Loyod. Just before the country attained independence, on 21st June 1947 the Goan Political Conference presided over by Dr. George da Silva was held in the hall of the Institute Luso Indiano in Bombay. It declared as its watch word the slogan "Free Goa in a Free India", and a Quit Goa Resolution was also passed.

The Government of India expected to rid the country of foreign pockets by diplomacy. But as the Portuguese retained their hold on their colonies Goan agitators were thrown on their own resources and could only focus a spotlight on Goa. This they attempted by holding exhibitions of Goa's history and culture and by publishing a number of periodicals and pamphlets in Konkani, Marathi, English and Portuguese. To Lucio

Rodrigues as to Anshter Logo goes the credit of helping to keep alive the spirit of Goa by promoting the revival of Konkani Folk songs and dance, and Goan folklore. In 1953 when Tristao Braganza Cunha escaped detention and came to Bombay he set up the Goa Action Committee and opened the Goa information Bureau, appealing to the Indian Press News Agencies "to expose the distortion of facts systematically pursued by Portuguese official agencies throughout the World".<sup>34</sup>

Despite India's demand for direct transfer of Portuguese territory in India, Libson refused to yield. And though Prime Minister Nehru became impatient "at the way things were happening in Goa" and protest notes were sent to the Portuguese Legation in New Delhi, the *status quo* held. Dissatisfaction at this drift in Goan affairs led to a historic meeting of a group of interested patriots—A.L. Dias (later Governor of West Bengal), Prof. Rancisco Correia Alfonso (a papal knight), and two leading medical practitioners, Dr. Socrates Noronha and Dr. Menino D'Souza, Nicholas Menezes and Prof. Aloysius Soares at the house of J.N. Heredia (Honorary Consul for Brazil in Bombay). Although the incident cost the latter his post, in consequence of this meeting a manifesto was drafted and signed by 100 important Goan public figures of Bombay. It declared: "We hold that the wise and courageous decision for us is to free ourselves from the Portuguese rule and to unite with India". A copy was handed over to Ashok Mehta of the External Affairs Ministry and to the Prime Minister along with a letter pleading for guarantees that the culture, religion and customs of the people of Goa would be respected by India; and to this Pandit Nehru replied giving a specific assurance.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile some political parties continued their drastic tactics to attain the object. In July 1954 Francis Mascarenhas, President of the United Front of Goa, marched into the Portuguese enclave of Dadra and hoisted the National Flag without opposition. Soon Selvassa fell to other activists. This led to the subsequent fracas at the Hugue with Portugul vainly seeking international support to her claim to transport troops across Indian territory.

Since the various splinter groups kept drifting apart, Soares brought about the establishment of the Goan Liberation

Council to co-ordinate with Government efforts. The Council refrained from launching Satyagraha but held a mass meeting on Independence Day, gaining a reputation for balanced judgement. Cardinal Gracias and the two Papal knights were speakers on this occasion.

The movement was being hopefully watched by Goans abroad. In 1954 Rudolph D'Mello, a Goan student at Oxford set up the Goa League which appealed to the British Labour Party to influence the end of Portuguese colonial rule in Goa.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile brutal treatment meted out to the Satyagrahis at the border angered not only the Goans but also other Indians<sup>37</sup>

To counter statements in the foreign press that the movement was forced by the Indian Government, and "to educate public opinion everywhere in the world to the realities of the Goan question and thus pave the way to that freedom and self-Government which are at once our right and responsibility", in 1956 the Goan Liberation Council set up its organ, the Goan Tribune, with Aloysinus Soares as its editor. Even after the French withdrawal from India, the Goan question remained unsolved. Therefore, to mobilise people, Soares urged by Dr. Ubaldo Mascarenhas, established a federation of the four main parties. In this Goan Political Convention Violet Alva was very active. Resolutions were passed at one of its sessions extending greetings to other oppressed people of the world—especially the inhabitants of Portuguese Africa. Already at Belgrade, Nehru had realised the urgent need of an instrument to rehabilitate India's image in Africa. Hence, in October 1961 a seminar on Portuguese colonialism was held at Delhi and sponsored by the Indian Council for Africa. On this occasion by asserting that occupation of Goa by Indian forces would aid revolution against the Portuguese in Africa, Kenneth Kaunda posed a challenge to Nehru to re-assert his leadership. Consequently the Goan Political Council under the presiding genius Rev. H.O. Mascarenhas was drawn into the Third National Conference of Afro-Asian Solidarity held in Bombay on 2nd December 1961. In order to take up the right of liberation of Goa, Daman and Diu, the conference formed a national committee composed of members of the National Council of Afro-Asian Solidarity and the Goan Political Convention. This body

provided money and organisation and strengthened Nehru's hands and led to 'Operation Vijaya' a fortnight later. With this "at long last we are free". The yoke that our people have been carrying through the long weary centuries has been mercifully lifted... dignity and self-respect have returned to our homeland".<sup>38</sup>

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## Contribution of Sindhis to Freedom Struggle

A.J. Uttam

Sindhi is a small Nationality in Indo-Pakistan sub-continent with not more than one crore of population now, which was half a crore at the time of Independence. About third of this number has been Hindus. In spite of the small number, Sindhis have fully contributed to the struggle for freedom against British Yoke. In fact this contribution is matchless, in as much as Sindhi Hindus have lost their land and become homeless and their Muslim brothers have become strangers in their own land due to this Independence. I don't think any other minority can claim such a unique contribution.

Even though Sind was conquered by Britishers only in 1843, still it responded to their brothers' call for 1st War of Independence called the Revolt of 1857. The reports of "Sind Kasid" of 12th Sept. 1857 to 30th Sept. 1857, show all such attempts of Sepoys to revolt were nipped in the bud. Their leaders were hanged or gunned down publicly in 3 main cities of Sind—Karachi, Hyderabad and Shikarpur. The others were given heavy punishments. Rich Sindhis of Shikarpur even gave financial and food assistance for the revolting sepoy. These sepoy had conspired to kill the Europeans on particular date. Even in Jacobabad, the extreme North corner of Sind the Baluchis had conspired to kill the Commissioner Major Meri-

vader and his Darbar there. On hearing the shooting at midnight all European residents has run to Jail for shelter in their night dresses. The revolt was checked from spreading to two other Northern Cities of Sukkur and Khairpur.

After the failure of the 1857 Revolt there was a complete lull for about 2 decades. It was in 1880 that the first public body named "Sind Sabha" was formed five years before the formation of Indian National Congress, for ventilating the public grievances. The different communities Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians worked together in this Sabha. Like the initial years of Congress Sind Sabha got the redress of public grievances through petitions and prayers. It attempted to enlighten the public through meetings and discussions, memorandums and newspaper articles on administrative and social drawback. It even fought the elections and got some representation in Karachi Municipal Corporation and the Bombay Council.

The representative of Sind Sabha Diwan Dayaram Jethamal, the well known Advocate and public figure had attended the very 1st Session of Indian National Congress in Dec. 1885 in Bombay. The 1st college of Karachi named after him Dayaram Jethamal Sind College was also started in Jan. 1887 year after the Congress Session with the active efforts of Sind Sabha. The other prominent literary and social personalities associated with the Sabha were Diwan Kanoomal Chandanmal, Dayaram Gidumal, Rai Bahadur Hasan Ali Affandi, Mr. Fatchali, the relative of Badruddin Tyabji, Serai Thari Khan Lahori, Sadhu Hiranand etc. None of these persons was a politician, even though Sabha's activities created a sort of political consciousness. The Sind Sabha ran two newspapers also one in Sindhi named "Sudhar Sabha" and the other in English named "Sind Times" edited by Sadhu Hiranand. These organs not only educated the public for its rights and duties but also suggested improvements in administrative machinery—like the Congress of those days. Sind Sabha was not considered as a disloyal political association but a body of gentlemen. It had a good rapport with Government Officers who in turn ultimately succeeded in creating a discord in the Sabha Rai Bahadur Afandi had gone to Calcutta and started a separate Muslim Body in Sind, the branch of Calcutta organisation

“Majmua Mohamadi” (i.e. Mohamadan Association) in March 1884 and walked out of Sind Sabha on the pretext of opposing the move of the Sabha to join in felicitation of the then viceroy Lord Ripon. He also started a separate educational institution named “Muslim Madrasa” with government and municipal aid and it was in this Madrasa that Mr. M.A. Jinnah had taken his education upto 1892. Mr. Afandi opposed Sind Sabha’s move of starting a college (opened to all communities) and prevented Muslims openly from donating to this college. Thus even before the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 Sindhi educated class was being prepared for the ensuing struggle for freedom. Sindhis participated in the Congress Sessions from its very inception.

The next important phase in freedom struggle came in 1905 when the Britishers announced their mischievous move of partition of Bengal. This had a big impact all over India including Sind. It created new awakening against foreign machinations. The Congress’s call for opposition to Bengal’s partition and boycott of foreign goods created a big movement for Swadeshi. The popular and patriotic song of ‘*Vande Mataram*’ was heard in every city of Sind. In those days not only big processions and meetings were organised against partition move but Swadeshi and patriotic songs and dramas in Sindhi were also written by the famous writers like Lalchand Jagtiani, Tolaram Balani and others. The latter one a poet and a journalist went from village to village for propagation of Swadeshi. He started a paper named “Mata” which contained his patriotic poems and fiery articles. Government confiscated his book of poems also.

Another national leader and journalist of those days was Virumal Begraj who had started his paper named “Sindhi” from his own printing press. In 1909 he was prosecuted for printing in Sindhi a pamphlet entitled “Swadeshi struggle and Lokmanya Tilak’s thoughts” and sentenced to 3 years rigorous imprisonment with fine of Rs. 1000 and was sent to jail outside Sind. The publisher of the pamphlet who was a big merchant of upper Sind Mr. Cheturmāl Bulchand was awarded same sentence and the writer and translator of the pamphlet Mr. Gordhan Sharma was given a sentence of 5 years with a fine of

Rs. 500. This was the first political case of Sind and perhaps in India also of this nature with such harsh sentence for publication of a small pamphlet. The intention was to create a terror among patriotic Sindhi Youth. All of them were young men of 30 years.

But as the Govt. increased its repression and suppression of Swadeshi and the Boycott movement, the young revolutionaries and radical youth resorted to extremist methods of physically eliminating English Officers by bombs and inducing terror in their hearts. Bengal was in the forefront in such activities which were followed by Punjab and Maharashtra. Arbindo Ghosh was arrested for such conspiracy in Maniktolla Bomb Case. He was then propagating his revolutionary ideas through his papers *Vande Matram* and *Karamyogi*. Since revolutionaries like Madame Cama, Lala Hardayal, Veer Savarkar, Virendra Chatopadhyay etc. were carrying on their activities in foreign lands creating a big impact on Indian Youth including the Sindhis. Tolaram Balani and Dr. Choithram Gidwani had kept contacts with Madame Cama and they used to get revolutionary literature and also the knowhow of manufacturing bombs. They had organised biggest meetings on the Tilak's sentence in 1908 and Khudiram Bose's martyrdom in 1909. Dr. Gidwani had started a Brahmacharaya Ashram in 1909-1910 in Hyderabad Sind which was the centre of such activities and shelter for Indian revolutionaries like Ras Behari Bose, Hansraj *Wireless*, Kaka Kalelkar and Lokmanya Tilak's co-workers. Dr. Gidwani collected funds from Overseas Sindhis and sent them to Madame Cama. Overseas Sindhis had helped Ras Behari Bose and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose also with money, men and other materials during their stay outside India. From those days onwards Sindhis contributed liberally to the funds raised by national leaders like Lala Lajpatrai, Bipinchandra Pal, Lokmanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal, Tagore etc.

Even though the Government retracted and took back its decision of Partition of Bengal in 1911 still the extremists and revolutionary elements continued their activities which now spread throughout Sind also, by Maulana Obeidullah Sindhi, Shaikh Abdul Rahim (brother of Acharya J.B. Kripalani) who sold his wife and daughter's ornaments to meet travelling expenses of

Obeidullah Sindhi upto Kabul and those of Amir Hyder who later became communist and met Lenin also and Prof. Jawahar-mal Mansukhani (popularly known as Swami Govindanand). Maulana had migrated to Kabul in 1915 and was appointed as foreign minister in the Provisional Government of India formed under the Presidentship of Raja Mahendra Pratap. There he chalked out a plan to free India with the help of Afghan and other foreign governments. That plan is commonly known as Silk Letters conspiracy. These letters were written on yellow handkerchiefs and given to one Shaikh Abdul Hage for delivering them to Shaikh Abdul Rahim at Hyderabad Sind for sending on to Shaikh ul-Hind Mahmud Hasan at Jeddah. But the letters were intercepted by the Government and could not be delivered to Abdul Rahim and many people in Sind were arrested. Abdul Rahim who was the main link between the revolutionaries residing in Kabul, Arabia and India escaped the arrest. This was the first conspiracy under the Leadership of Sindhis. Maulana had visited Soviet Union and wanted to meet Comrade Lenin in 1923-24 but Lenin was sick in those days. But Obeidullah Sindhi stayed there for some time and thoroughly studied the socialist system and became its strong supporter and wanted it be implemented in free India also with some modifications. He had even framed the Indian Constitution also on those lines, with socialism, secularism, democracy as its main principles. He had published it in a booklet form in English and Urdu at Istanbul, which was banned by the British Government.

Maulana Obeidullah said therein "The Russian Revolution has two important aspects, namely the present day system of distribution of wealth and the right to possess private property is being substituted by a new system under which public property shall take the place of private property, and commodities (industrial and agricultural goods) shall be produced for use instead of for profit : This aspect of the Revolution is constantly influencing the world". Obeidullah Sindhi did not doubt that in the future the political and economic powers would be in the hands of the workers and peasants of the world.

"To overlook this aspect of the revolution, would be clear proof of political short-sightedness. India did not take a lesson

from the great French revolution and lost its greatness. We do not want that our country should remain blind to this event of worldwide importance, that is, Russian Revolution, and sign its own death sentence."

The Maulana had formed the branch of Indian National Congress in 1922 at Kabul which was the 1st of its kind. He was its President. When the Congress won provincial elections in 1937 it demanded the removal of Government restrictions imposed on his entry into India. He returned in 1939 during Allah Bux's ministry in Sind. He formed his own party named "Jamuna Narbade Sind Sagar Party" with branches in Karachi, Lahore and Delhi. According to the programme of his party India was a multi-national country like Europe with separate language, culture and history of each of such nationality. Through this party he wanted to propagate his progressive socio-economic programme. But he did not live long to implement the same and died in August 1944 at the age of 72 years.

Another Sindhi revolutionary of those days Prof. Jawahar-mal Mansukhani (Swami Govindanand) was associated with the Ghadar Party leader Gurdut Singh and on return to India in the famous ship Kama Gata Maru was arrested by the Government and put in prison for 3 years. He was once working in the trade union movement of Bombay textiles workers. He had also worked as a professor in Muzaffarpur (Bihar) College, alongwith Archarya J.B. Kripalani. But he was dismissed from service due to his revolutionary activities. On return to Sind after his release he became president of the Sind Congress for sometimes.

Apart from Acharya J.B. Kripalani who became General Secretary of the Congress for 30 years there were other three national leaders of Sind who had worked as professors in Colleges, outside Sind namely Acharya Assodumal Gidwani, Sadhu Vaswani and Prof. N.R. Malkani. All the three acquired prominence in that period. They were imprisoned also due to their national activities. All three were loved and respected by Mahatma Gandhi.

The other active leaders of Sind Congress in those days were Jajramdas Daulatram, Prof. Ghanshyam Shivdasani

(who along with Dr. Choturam Gidwani formed the famous Trimurti of Sind Congress), Seth Harchandrai Vishindas, Ghulam Mohamed Bhurgari, Maharaj Lokram Sharma and his brother Vishnoo Sharma who associated themselves with Home Rule League of Lokmanya Tilak and Annie Besant.

It was with the special efforts of Seth Harchandrai and Vishindas and Ghulam Mohamed Bhurgari that the Congress held its 28th Session in 1913 in Karachi. Both were the chairman and secretary of the reception committee respectively. It was attended by Lala Lajpatrai, M.A. Jinnah, Agha Khan Nawab Syed Mehmood and Ghulam Ali Chagla. There were 500 delegates from Sind alone and some 125 delegates from other places.

But it was in the days of Khilafat and non-cooperation movement against the Rowlatt Act during 1919-21 period that Sindhi Muslims had created history with their participation and standing shoulder to shoulder with Hindus. Both were visiting temples and mosques together for prayers. Everywhere in Sind Khilafat committees were formed and conferences held. The Government retaliated with Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Seeing the success of hartal Gandhiji gave a call for movement in August 1920. There were such huge public meetings that they had to be addressed at three different places so as to control the crowd. Shaikh Abdul Majid had played a very important role in Khilafat movement. But this united action against the British imperialism ended when reaction set in to Gandhiji's withdrawal of the movement as a result of some incidence of violence at Chowri Chaura. Britishers took advantage of this and inflamed Hindu-Muslim hostilities behind the cover of the Simon Commission. But the Congress opposed it and organized hartal and demonstrations against it. And when the Central Assembly was considering Lala Lajpat Rai's resolution on boycott of Simon Commission on 16th February 1928 the grand old man of Sind Seth Harchandrai was going from sick bed in ambulance to vote against the doctor's advice for the resolution. But he expired on the way. Whole nation was stunned. It is an unforgettable event of our freedom struggle.

In December 1929 Congress drafted the resolution on

*Purna Swaraj* and held Karachi session in 1931 after the Salt Satyagrah, under the shadow of the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh and his friends as well as two Sindhis—Meghraj Lulla and Dattatray killed in police firing in Salt Satyagraha. The session was also important for passing resolutions on the fundamental rights and adopting national economic programme. Assurance was also given in this session that the cultures, languages and scripts of the minorities and of different linguistic areas would be protected. At this stage G.M. Sayed who was a young boy during the Khilafat days joined the Congress and started wearing khadi and selling the same. He helped the formation of Hari Committee also along-with Hyder Bux Jatoi who resigned from deputy collectorship.

But due to the attitude of Hindu-minded Congressmen and the separation of Sind from Bombay in 1937 his honeymoon with the Congress did not last long and the struggle for freedom became the struggle for political power. Sind then became a pawn on the Congress and the League chessboards. Mistakes were committed by both sides. G.M. Sayed joined the League and became so active that he got the Pakistan Resolution passed in the Sind Assembly for he is repenting until today. Neither Mr. Sayed nor the Congress realised the importance of the new national leadership. Allabux who only could deliver the goods did not care for the office. He renounced his title of Khan Bahadur as a protest against Government's repressive policy. He was dismissed by the Governor as the Chief Minister of Sind and was murdered soon thereafter. Those were the blackest days for Sind even though at the same time the nation was bestirred with the Mahatma's slogan of 'Quit India'. Different sections of Indian society were up in arms—students under the leadership of Hashu Kewalramani and Sobho Gianchandani, women under the leadership of Miss Jethi Sipahimalani, youth under the leadership of Hemu Kalani and Parcho Vidyarthi in every city and town of Sind. Even the Martial Law sentences of whipping did not deter young men from defying Government. A young boy of 19 years Hemu Kalani preferred gallows than bowing before the British Government like Pir Pagaro the martyr and "Hūr" leader and peasant women martyr Mai

Bakhtawar of those days. Parcho Vidyarthi used terrorist methods but was saved from gallows and given life imprisonment like Ali Ahmad Brohi one of the leaders of RIN mutiny at Karachi. Like Brohi three other Muslim youths Mohammad Amin Khoso, Aslam Achzakai and Barkat Ali Azad had joined the quit India movement and suffered imprisonment. However, for reasons not to be dealt with here partition became inevitable and came as a parting kick of the British rulers.

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