CHAPTER - II

MUSLIM POLITICS AND RISE OF COMMUNALISM, 1919-1923

The period from 1919 to 1923 was the period of great turmoil because of the political roles played by the leaders of different communities on one hand and the British government on the other. The leaders of the various communities competed with each other to inflame the communal passions. Simultaneously, attempts were made to win over the British government in their favour. Those who suffered the most in this game of the political leaders were the common masses.

This chapter tends to discuss the role of the various Punjab Muslim leaders in the beginning of 1920s. Further an attempt will be made to answer the following questions. This is being done to explore the contradictory pulls which became instrumental in the rise of communalism particularly among the Muslim community. What were the Rowlatt Bills and Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and how the Muslims responded to them? What was the Khilafat Movement and how it effected the Punjab politics? How was Khilafat Movement...
associated with the Non-cooperation Movement? What role did the Punjab Muslims, especially Dr. Kitchlew and Fazl-i-Husain, play during those Movements? What led Fazl-i-Husain to form the Unionist Party? And above all, how the various communities interacted with each other?

Montagu's famous declaration of August 20, 1917\(^1\) and his visit to India in November 1917, had kindled hope for a new climate of political development. Contrary to the expectations, the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme roused among Indians a sense of alienation against the British Imperialism. The scheme was condemned throughout the country as it fell far short of expectations raised by the promises made during the first world war. In addition to this, Rowlatt Bills\(^2\) were also put forward which recommended special legislation designed to curtail the liberty of the people in a drastic manner.\(^3\) This clearly showed that the government had

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1. Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State, made an historic announcement on behalf of the British government, in which it was stated that the ultimate objective of the British policy in India was to establish representative institutions for self government. See Feroz Khan Noon, From Memory (Lahore, 1966), p.91.

2. Rowlatt Bills were prepared by the Rowlatt Committee, whose chairman was Justice Sidney Rowlatt of London High Court, to investigate the revolutionary movement after the First World War. Ibid.

3. The main slogan, under the Bills was, 'na vakil, na appeal, na dalil' i.e. no pleader, no appeal and no argument.
no intention of meeting its promises. According to 'Panjabee',
fears were expressed that what the authorities really wanted
was to introduce some drastic legislation of permanent nature
which would enable them to continue the present policy of
internment and deportation after the termination of war. ¹

The publication of the report of the Rowlatt Committee
showed to what extent these apprehensions were justified.
The establishment of special courts for trial of seditious
offences was an attempt on the lines of the special Tribunals
created during the war for trying offences without commitment
and without the aid of a jury. Their decisions were not
subjected to appeal or confirmation. ²

The debate on the Bills was still underway when Gandhiji
introduced a new method of education, Satyagraha or Passive
Resistance. ³ On February 24, 1919, Gandhiji called a conferene
ce of twenty five leaders who unanimously signed a pledge of

1. In order to suppress the activities of the Indian revolutionaries during the war, the British government passed
the notorious Defence of India Act, which gave it very wide powers of arresting and trying persons suspected to
be engaged in criminal and revolutionary activities.

2. Ibid.

3. V.N.Datta, New Light on Punjab Disturbances in 1919,
Satyagraha. In Lahore, many general strikes and meetings were held. Peaceful processions were taken out. On March 9, 1919, Fazl-i-Husain held a protest meeting which condemned the Bills and asked for their total rejection by the government. Under such circumstances, it seemed inevitable to accept Gandhiji's Satyagraha, but Fazl-i-Husain called it unconstitutional agitation and was unwilling to resort to that. On the other hand, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, a Muslim nationalist leader from Amritsar, with some of his Hindu colleagues like, Dr. Satyapal and Pt. Rambhuj Dutt, was ready to follow the lead of Gandhiji.

The March 30, 1919, had been fixed in accordance with Gandhiji's notice as a 'day of national humiliation and prayer'. Public demonstrations were to be held in Lahore to initiate the Passive Resistance campaign against the Rowlatt Act. This day in the Punjab passed off quietly. It is significant to note that Fazl-i-Husain refused either to sign the notice convening the meeting on the March 30, 1919.

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2. Azim Husain, op.cit., p.115; see also The Tribune, March 11, 1919, p.7.
4. See The Tribune, March 26, 1919, p.1; see also N.N. Mitra, The Indian Annual Register, 1920, Volume 1, p.56.
Gandhiji again passed a message for the closing of all shops and the suspension of all business activity on the April 6, 1919. The Civil and Military Gazette reported Gandhiji's call for all the Punjab Hindu and Muslim associations to take part in this movement. Hence, there was a countrywide hartal on April 6, 1919. Being the disciple of Gandhiji, Dr. Kitchlew showed great interest in this movement.

On April 9, 1919 again, there was over all hartal on the occasion of Ramnaumi festival of the Hindus. The Muslims, too, participated with great zeal. The scenes of Hindu-Muslim unity could be witnessed through the towns of the Punjab. Although under the instructions of Gandhiji, the Punjab demonstrations were quite peaceful, yet the Punjab governor was infuriated. This warning was implemented by prohibiting Gandhiji to enter the Punjab and deporting Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, who were the active participants in Gandhiji's Satyagraha Movement.

1. Home Department (Political), F.No.49/April 1919.
2. The Civil and Military Gazette, April 6, 1919, p.5.
3. Ibid., April 10, 1919, p.4.
5. Home Department (Political), F.No.23/June 1919; see also The Civil and Military Gazette, April 12, 1919, p.3.
As it was expected, the deportation of the two leaders made the mob furious. Many murders and outrages took place. At Lahore, hartal was observed. The Hindus and the Muslims together showed their complete hatred towards the government. The Hindu-Muslim solidarity was evident everywhere. It was said that the word HAM was made up of letters H and M (in urdu) with nothing between. The government of India notified a state of open rebellion in Lahore and Amritsar districts.

Fazl-i-Husain felt that if the hartal continued, the government might resort to further coercive measures and in order to avoid this, he made an appeal to end the hartal. However, his appeal fell on deaf ears. Finally, the tragedy of April 13, 1919, shook the Punjab, when general Dyer attacked the innocent public in the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar and in order to counteract the anger of the masses, the Martial Law was declared. In order to soften the situation and to request the Viceroy to stop this reign of terror in the Punjab, Fazl-i-Husain went to

1. "We Hindus and Muslims should allow nothing to come between us". See The Civil and Military Gazette, May 1, 1919, p.3.
Simla all alone, but the Viceroy was adamant and the Martial Law continued.

In view of the critical situation, many Muslim bodies and public men disassociated themselves from the Passive Resistance Movement. A Muslim manifesto was also issued by the leading Muslims of different Muslim Associations, which had requested the people to stop all the illegal activities to bring about peace in the province.

1. Fazl-i-Husain was not accompanied by any of his colleagues because they were afraid of displeasing the governor. See Azim Husain, op. cit., p.118.

2. Ibid.

3. The main Muslim leaders and their Associations were, Mohammed Shafi, General Secretary of All India Muslim Association; Zulfiqar Ali Khan, President of Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam; Fateh Ali Khan Qizilbash, President of Anjuman-i-Islamia; M. Hus Nawaz, General Secretary of Punjab Provincial Muslim Association, etc. See The Civil and Military Gazette, April 20, 1919, p.6.

4. The manifesto said, "... While repudiating Passive Resistance and Satyagraha, we earnestly appeal to our countrymen generally and the Muslim community particularly to abandon these movements, to obey authority and to take effective steps to bring about the restoration of law and order ..." Ibid.
Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the Punjab Muslims

At the time the disturbances began in India against the Rowlatt Acts, the Secretary of the State for India, Montagu was presenting the draft of the new constitution for India, to parliament in London. In India, especially in the Punjab, the disturbances continued throughout, but in London the draft passed through the various stages of legislation and finally took the form of the Montague-Chelmsford Report.

This Report provided for direct election to the Provincial Councils and for separate electorates for Muslims. It laid down a definite proportion of Muslim seats in all Provincial Councils except Assam, but including the Punjab and Central Provinces, where separate representation had not previously existed. In the Muslim majority provinces, the Muslims were to receive slightly less than their proportion of population while in other provinces where the Muslims were in a minority, they were to receive a disproportionately large number of seats, sufficient to give them a more effective position in the Council.

2. Ibid., p.188.
The Punjab Muslims were a vital element in the government's administrative and military strategy. They started off with a better share of seats in the Council and succeeded in making a better use of the Reforms.

The important part of the Reforms was the distribution of different communities in the Punjab Legislative Council. In this regard, it differed with the Lucknow Pact proposals. The Lucknow Pact had kept the nominated element low (20%) while the government laid down that at least 30% of the seats in each Council should be nominated.¹ The reason was that the government was not concerned to give either the Hindu or the Muslim majority communities a dominant share in their respective Councils. Its main concern was to preserve its own position.²

Under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the power in the province was transferred to the rural areas and it was a known fact that the Punjab had the majority of the rural Muslims, residing mainly in the western part of the province. So, after the Reforms, the focus of the Muslim politics

². Ibid.
shifted to the western Punjab in place of the urban areas of the Central Punjab. Of the thirty four elected members, twenty five were to be allotted to rural areas - ten to the Muslims, six to the Hindus, five to the big landowners and four to the Sikhs, and only six to urban areas - three to the Muslims and three to the Hindus.¹

Further, the government had taken great care in fulfilling the Muslims' demand of separate representation² which would check the Hindu middle class of urban areas from dominating over the Muslims, nor could the Hindus effect the elections of rural areas through their economic power. Government knew that the Muslims would dislike the joint representation method because of the fear of being dominated by the Hindus.

The Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab deeply grudged the special privileges granted to the Muslims. 'The Punjab Darpan' of May 28, 1919 remarked that inspite of their military services and their having furnished a quarter of the recruits supplied by the Punjab in the war, the Sikhs had

¹. IOR/L/Parl./409B, Franchise Proposals of the Punjab government pp. 149-205, quoted in David page, Prelude to Partition (Delhi, 1982), p.55.

². Under the separate electorate system, Muslims would vote in separate territorial constituencies for candidates of their own community.
received only one-tenth of the total representation and their desire to be treated like the Punjab Muslims had proved an empty dream.\(^1\)

At a meeting of the Punjab Legislative Council, Fazl-i-Husain held out the threat that the Sikhs would not receive special rights, because they had not joined the Indian National Congress in the way the Muslim League had done.\(^2\) This statement of Fazl-i-Husain was supported, when Franchise Committee said that the Muslims had received their share in accordance with their settlement.\(^3\) The Lahore district Sikh League, on February 28, 1920, demanded that 33\% i.e. 1/3rd of the elected seats for the Punjab Legislative Council should be allotted to the Sikhs.\(^4\)

Raja Narender Nath, President of the Hindu Maha-Sabha, wrote a letter to the Secretary to the government

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2. In 1916, as discussed earlier, the Muslim League and the Congress had signed the Lucknow Pact.


of India, showing the anxiety of the Hindus on the introduction of separate communal electorates for the Muslims and the Sikhs for the Provincial and the Imperial Councils.¹

The Punjab Hindus had also a grievance in as much as they were not regarded even as an important minority. As such, they and not the Muslims had a preferential right to separate communal representation. Secondly, the number of seats assigned to the Hindus in the Provincial and Imperial Council was also inadequate.²

As regards the voting qualifications in respect of rural areas, the government proposed that the payment of fifty rupees as land revenue should be the main qualification for voters. This qualification was twice as high as that proposed by other governments and would have made the Punjab electorate by far the smallest in India. In the urban areas the government restricted the number of urban seats to a bare minimum and proposed extremely high voting qualifications.

¹ According to Raja Narender Nath, the Muslims and the Sikhs were getting privileges which they did not enjoy before whilst the Hindus lost what they had enjoyed in the successive councils since 1913, i.e., equal representatives with Muslims exclusive of the Sikhs. See Home Department (Public), F.No.112-13/October 1919.

² Ibid.
To vote in urban elections, it was necessary either to pay income tax or to possess immovable property to the value of 10,000 rupees or to occupy premises valued at 20,000 rupees. These stipulations restricted the vote to three per cent of urban population.  

Fazl-i-Husain showed his dislike for the division of electorate among the rural and the urban areas because there was a provision in the Reforms that urban politicians could not stand from the rural constituencies even if they possessed land in those constituencies. It laid down that candidates for rural seats must fulfil a three year-residence requirement. Fazl-i-Husain criticised this residential qualification. He believed that the claim should be based on eminence and intelligence. Even Feroz Khan Noon, who was elected to the Punjab Legislative Council, was against this system because 'many of the electors were completely illiterate and did not understand the purpose of democracy.

1. IOR/L/Parl./409B, Franchise Proposals of the Punjab government, pp. 147-205, quoted in David Page, op.cit., p.55.
3. This resolution of Fazl-i-Husain was lost to official majority and the Franchise Committee accepted the government's proposals. Ibid.
Fazl-i-Husain further supported a resolution requiring that 'the President and the Vice-President of the Punjab Legislative Council should be elected by the Council itself from among its members'. He also desired that the Minister in charge of the Transferred subjects should enjoy equal status like that of the Executive Council. Finally, as regards the communal question, he suggested that the proportion of the Muslims in the Punjab Legislative Council laid down in the Lucknow Pact be maintained.

All this clearly showed that Fazl-i-Husain tried his best to make the Reforms democratic and liberal. Moreover, during the time when the Reform proposals were being discussed by the Franchise Committee, Fazl-i-Husain and his colleagues worked closely with the Congress. He appeared before Montagu as a member of the Punjab Provincial Conference.

1. Infact, the voters were not able to judge the quality of the candidates. They were generally influenced by the feelings of tribes, castes, friendship, etc. For details, see Feroz Khan Noon, op.cit., p.93.


3. Ibid., p.112.

4. The Punjab Provincial Conference contained representatives of the Punjab Provincial Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha and the more advanced branch of the Muslim League. It withered away when these organisations came to frame their detailed Reform proposals.
deputation in 1917.

On the other hand, Fazl-i-Husain's rivals, Mohammed Shafi and his associates had given up the hope of playing an important provincial role, even before the Franchise Committee visited the Province. By September 1918, Mohammed Shafi was working assiduously to secure a place in the Viceroy's Executive Council and he was successful in achieving the same on July 29, 1919.

Anjuman-i-Islamia of Ludhiana felt sure that Mohammed Shafi would be more useful to the Muslim cause than any member hitherto on that council had been or would be. Lord Chelmsford also showed his pleasure on this appointment.

1. When the whole province was burning against the Rowlatt Bills, Mohammed Shafi did not show much enthusiasm in opposing the Bills. Instead, he remarked, "... not that the introduction of such a measure as this, would not be justifiable under any circumstances but that the enactment of the proposed law at this juncture is unnecessary and inopportune." See The Tribune, February 23, 1919, p.1.

2. Home Department (Establishments, Part B), F.No.42-43/August 1919.

3. Ibid.

4. "I feel pretty sure that, if during this discussion of the Rowlatt Bills, I had received similar assistance from the then Indian member, the proceedings would have taken a different course ..." See Chelmsford Papers, Volume V, p.203.
Mohammed Shafi's colleagues like Mian Abdul Haye from the East Punjab Muslim constituency and Mian Ghulam Bari from the West Central Punjab Muslim constituency were elected to the Central Legislative Assembly. Like the colleagues of Mohammed Shafi, Fazl-i-Husain's colleagues also did not play any role in the Provincial Council during the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. On the other hand, Dr. Kitchlew, Aga Mohammed Safdar and Attaullah Shah became involved in the Khilafat Movement.

The Khilafat Movement had a vital importance in the Punjab politics. If the Rowlatt Bills and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms took great attention of the politically-minded Punjab Muslims, the Khilafat Movement also attracted a particular section of Ulema and other Muslims. It would be highly unjustified if this Movement is not discussed in detail.

II. Khilafat cum Non-cooperation Movement in the Punjab

During the First World War, the Indian Muslims believing in the British fairness, joined the British forces

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2. Ibid., pp.51-52.
against Turkey. But, after the war, the Treaty of Sevres in August 1920 by which huge territories were cutoff from the Turkish Empire, created a sense of fear and dissatisfaction among the Muslims particularly in the Punjab. They felt that the centre of the Muslim faith, i.e., the Ottoman Caliphate (of Turkey), was disintegrating leaving the Muslims, all over the world, in a state of great mental agony. They were also dissatisfied with the British regime in India. The atrocities in the Punjab had also disillusioned them.

Hence during 1919 to 1923, a new movement called the Khilafat cum Non-cooperation Movement was launched to challenge the British. The aim of this Movement was to form a joint Hindu-Muslim front against the British government.

The Caliphate (Khilafat) refers to the Caliph, who in theory, was both the spiritual and temporal leader of the Sunni Muslims ensuring the defence and expansion of the rule of divine justice on earth, and in thus furthering

2. Sunni is a sect of orthodox Muslims.
God's purpose, helping to assure eternal salvation for all Muslims. ¹

The Punjab Muslims like their co-religionists in other parts of India, chose the ideal of Islamic brotherhood, known as Pan-Islamism² for the articulation of their political aspirations and preservation of the Khilafat as the focal point of their movement because they wanted a share of power and patronage available under the British government in excess of their numerical strength. Gandhiji, while studying the sentiments of the Muslims, realized that history had provided a unique opportunity for the wholehearted unity between the Muslims and the Hindus because under his leadership, both these communities could start a fight against their common enemy i.e. the British government, for the fulfilment of their goals.

In order to show their eagerness for the redress of the Khilafat question, the Muslims organised different sessions of the All India Khilafat Conference at different places and at different times. The Lucknow Khilafat Conference in September 1919 resolved to hold an All India

¹ Gail Minault, op.cit., p.1.
² The doctrine of Pan Islamism signified a belief in one God, one Prophet, one Ka'aba and one book, the Quran.
Khilafat Day on October 17, 1919 to observe prayers, fasting, hartal, public meetings and appealed to the Hindus for support.1

On October 17, there was little activity in the Punjab. Even the Punjab Governor, Edward Maclagan, observed that there was not the slightest sign of disturbance except some violent remarks of Shaukat Ali about the allegiance of Muslims to their religion rather than to the government.2 Some Hindus also took part in the activities of the Khilafat Day.3 On October 27, 1919, the Muslims of the province respectfully expressed their feelings in connection with the Khilafat and the Turkish Empire.4

In the last week of December 1919, the Congress and the Muslim League met at Amritsar and the All India Khilafat Conference was held as well.5 The central question for the

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1. Home Department (Political), F.No.59/October 1919.
3. Home Department (Political). F.No.16/November 1919.
4. Ibid.
5. The Tribune, January 2, 1920, p.2; see also for the details of the Muslim League sessions, Shariffudin Pirzada, Foundations of Pakistan, Volume I, pp. 502-540.
polITICAL PARTIES WAS THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE REFORMS. BUT THE REFORMS AND THE NEW CONSTITUTION WERE NOT DISCUSSED AT THE KHILAFAT CONFERENCE, BECAUSE THE KHALIFATISTS LIKE DR. KITCHLEW, ZAFAR ALI, HAFIZ ATMULLAH AND ALI BROTHERS WERE MAINLY CONCERNED WITH THE KHALIFAT QUESTION.  

MEANWHILE, A MASS MEETING OF THE HINDUS AND THE MUSLIMS OF LAHORE WAS HELD ON JANUARY 12, 1920 TO DISCUSS THE KHALIFAT QUESTION WHOLEHEARTEDLY.  

A KHALIFAT MEETING WAS HELD AT DELHI ALSO ON JANUARY 19, 1920. DR. KITCHLEW, ABUL KALAM AZAD AND ALI BROTHERS WERE THE PROMINENT MEMBERS WHO DISCUSSED THE AIDS AND OBJECTS OF THE KHALIFAT DEPUTATION. GANDHIJII WAS EXPECTED TO BE THE MEMBER OF THE DEPUTATION. MOHAMMED ALI IN HIS SPEECH SAID THAT THEIR DEMANDS WERE SPIRITUAL BECAUSE CALIPHATE WAS THEIR SPIRITUAL HEAD AND THEY OWE ALLEGIANCE TO HIM, NEXT TO GOD.  

IN THIS MEETING, GANDHIJII REITERATED THAT ALL THE PRACTICAL STEPS TO BE TAKEN WOULD HAVE HIS FULL SUPPORT.  


However, he maintained that the best way to exert moral pressure on the government was through Non-cooperation, for which he suggested the following stages:

(i) renunciation of titles and boycott of the government-run educational institutions and courts;
(ii) resignation from all government departments except the army and the police; and
(iii) refusal to pay taxes.

During each phase, complete discipline, national unity and adherence to the principle of non-violence were maintained. This programme suggested by Gandhiji was highly appreciated and it got the full support of the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab.

1. Gandhiji, in a letter, explained the Non-cooperation and emphasised, "We desire to live in terms of friendship with Englishmen, but that friendship must be the friendship of equals, both in theory and practice." But he did not get any reply to this. See N.N.Mitra, The Indian Annual Register, 1921-22, Volume I, p.12.


3. In October 1920, a very large meeting of the Sikh League was held at Lahore, in which the Sikh League decided finally to throw in its weight on the side of the Non-cooperation Movement. See Chelmsford Papers, Volume XVIII, Letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab to the Secretary of the State for India, dated March 26, 1921, p.3.
According to the earlier plan, the Muslim deputation including the Muslim leaders like Dr. Kitchlew, Ali brothers, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Abdul Bari, Seth Chotani, Abul Kalam Azad and Hasrat Mohani met the Viceroy on January 17, 1920.\(^1\)

The Hindu leaders like Swami Shraddhanand and Gandhiji were also present. The deputation sought from the Viceroy three things, apart from the preservation of the Khilafat as a spiritual institution - Muslim control over every portion of the 'Jazirat-ul-Arab', 'Khalifa’s wardenship of Holy Places' and 'the integrity of the Ottoman Empire'.\(^2\)

The Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford replied to the deputation saying that he respected the Muslim feelings. Nothing more was said in this regard.

In February, 1920 the second deputation sailed to Britain and an address was presented to the Lieutenant Governor at the government house on March 14, 1920.\(^4\)

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4. The address read, "It is the united prayer of the rural and martial races of the Punjab Muslims that the Turkish Empire to kept intact as it was before the war ..." *Ibid.*, March 18, 1920, p.3.
On March 17, 1920, the Muslim deputation was informed that Turkey could not be treated on the principles different from those applied to other countries and that though she would be allowed to exercise temporal sway over Turkish lands, she could be permitted to retain lands which were not Turkish.¹

The receipt of the news of failure of the deputation greatly strengthened the Khilafat Movement in India. The March 19, 1920 was to be observed as the Khilafat Day. Gandhiji in a manifesto assured his full support to the Muslims. He said that he would cease to cooperate with the government and advised every Hindu to do the same.²

On the instructions of Gandhiji, the Khilafat Day was peacefully celebrated. In the Punjab, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs wholeheartedly took part in it. Dr. Kitchlew presided over a meeting at Amritsar and warned the government of the ill-effects in the province, if the Khilafat demands were not fulfilled. Other cities like Multan, Bhiwani, Sialkot, Batala, Lahore, Kasur etc. also observed peaceful hartals.³

1. The Tribune, March 18, 1920, p.3.
2. Ibid., p.1.
3. Ibid., March 21, 1920, p.4.
On April 2, 1920, the Punjab Provincial Conference held its annual session at Jullundur. Fazl-i-Husain, as a Secretary of the Congress Committee, opposed the Non-cooperation Movement. Harkrishan Lal, Ganpat Rai and Dr. Gokul Chand Narang were also convinced that the mass agitation would be unfruitful. Dr. Kitchlew, however, refused to accept this view and forced the moderates to permanently secede from the Congress. Although Fazl-i-Husain condemned the attitude of the British government with regard to Turkey and asked Muslims not to take part in the peace celebrations, yet he wholly identified himself with the activities of the Congress and the League and was inclined to be a Pan-Islamic and pro-Turkish. However, both these tendencies were kept well under control, because much opposition to the British government could annoy them and this was not wanted by Fazl-i-Husain.

As per the terms of Treaty of Sevres, the Arab countries became independent of the Ottoman Empire, and

1. In the Punjab Provincial Conference, a Non-cooperation Committee was formed in the province as a joint venture of the Congress, the Muslim League, the Khilafat Committee, the Sikh League and the Home Rule League. See S.L. Malhotra, Gandhi and the Punjab (Chandigarh, 1970), p.118.


3. Ibid., p.103.
Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia were put under French and British mandates. Eastern Thrace and Smyrna were ceded to Greece and the Dodecanese Islands to Italy. Though Constantinople remained Turkish, the straits were internationalized. As a result of this treaty, the Central Khilafat Committee, Bombay, decided to adopt Non-cooperation and to organise relief and a collection for the Khilafat fund all over India.

Following the decision of Central Khilafat Committee, Dr. Kitchlew, at a meeting on May 28, 1928, moved the Non-cooperation resolution which was passed. The Non-cooperation Movement was pressed forward in the Punjab thereafter. At Amritsar, Dr. Kitchlew collected five lakh rupees and started with the work of national organisation on the lines of the Congress and Khilafat mandates.

During July 1920, Gandhiji toured the Punjab with Shaukat Ali and Dr. Kitchlew, in the course of which many

1. The Civil and Military Gazette, May 16, 1920, p.3; see also Gail Minault, op.cit., p.90.

2. Ibid., p.4.

3. Following the passing of the Non-cooperation Resolution, Mohammed Iqbal, a Punjab Muslim League Leader, who was the first Secretary of the Punjab Khilafat Committee in 1919, resigned from both the Muslim League and the Khilafat Committee.

speeches were made at Amritsar and Lahore to popularize the Khilafat and Non-cooperation programme. Dr. Kitchlew and Zafar Ali Khan took charge of popularizing the Movement in the Punjab. Meetings were arranged by them at which the Turkish settlement was denounced in violent language and appeals were made to adopt Non-cooperation and the boycott programme. Likewise, Dr. Kitchlew arranged a meeting on July 28, 1920 at which the Turkish settlement was adversely criticised.

Zafar Ali Khan propagated the Khilafat cause and the adoption of the boycott programme through his articles in 'Zamindar'. The strongly worded articles in the 'Zamindar' were designed to wake racial passions of the worst order. He wrote recklessly and without the least restraint.

At the meeting of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League on August 29, 1920, the Non-cooperation resolution was passed in spite of the fierce opposition by its leader

3. Ibid.
Fazl-i-Husain. He was not in favour of Gandhiji's method of Satyagraha and Non-cooperation. He felt that Non-cooperation posed the greatest danger to schools and colleges. Gandhiji's scheme of setting up national schools and colleges seemed impracticable. Hence, he resigned from the Provincial Muslim League.

Even Mohammed Shafi expressed, through a memorandum submitted to Lord Reading, the Viceroy, his dislike of linking the Non-cooperation Movement with the Khilafat cause. Not only this, he accused Gandhiji for exploiting the religious sentiments of the Muslims and told the Muslims to keep their loyalties for the British government as that was the only source to redress their Khilafat grievances.


2. Though he believed that unfair treatment had been given to Turkey and the attitude of the government with regard to the Punjab disturbances, etc. was condemnable, yet he was convinced that the Non-cooperation Movement was unconstitutional, useless and full of dangers. See Home Department (Political), F.No.110/August 1920.

3. Ibid.

4. For the full text of the memorandum, see Reading Collection, Volume I, pp. 156-162.

5. In England, it was an impression that the Khilafat Movement was not a religious movement but was a part of the political movement for Swaraj. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p.162.
Apart from Fazl-i-Husain and Mohammed Shafi from Punjab, two prominent leaders at the All India level, Fazlul Haq and Mohammed Ali Jinnah, denounced Khilafat and Non-cooperation Programmes.  

During the latter half of October 1920, in spite of Fazl-i-Husain's opposition, Gandhiji visited Amritsar and twice addressed the students of local colleges on the subject of forcing their colleges to sever all connections with the government grants and university affiliations. The most satisfactory feature of his visit was the requisition signed by nineteen out of twenty one local members of the Council of Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore, in the emergency special meeting. The students thereupon formed themselves into an association and became the signatories of the requisition for their eagerness to defend their faith and reform their education under independent communal control.


2. The Tribune, October 24, 1920, p.3; see also Home Department (Political), F.No.66/December 1920.

3. The requisition required the Council firstly to give up the government grant of Rs.30,000 per annum and secondly to have the Islamia College disaffiliated if the majority of the students expressed such a desire.

4. Ibid.
Attempts were made nevertheless to popularize the Khilafat Movement. Efforts were made to win over the peasantry by organizing Khilafat Committees in villages. Volunteers were sent to special areas to keep up the enthusiasm of the people and seditious speeches were delivered by him. Zafar Ali, the important Khilafat leader, was finally convicted for sedition in Lahore and sentenced to five-year transportation. Maulvi Laqa Ullah and Sufi Iqbal of Panipat were similarly treated. On the evening of October 8, 1920, Gandhiji, Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali held a meeting at Rohtak (where the two were convicted) at which Gandhiji repeated the utterances for which the two accused were tried and defied the government to arrest him.

A few Muslims got disenchanted with Gandhiji who, they felt, had drawn Ali brothers to his ideas. It was observed that some Muslims were planning a coup by which they would seek to draw Gandhiji into a campaign of violence, but this observation was negated by Lord Reading who was sure of Gandhiji's idea of non-violent Non-cooperation.

1. The Tribune, October 24, 1920, p.3; see also Home Department (Political), F.No.66/December 1920.
2. Home Department (Political), F.No.59/December 1920.
3. Reading Collection, Volume I, letter from Lord Reading, the Viceroy to Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, dated July 7, 1921, p.57.
On July 17, 1921, Dr. Kitchlew got arrested at Simla due to his participation at the Karachi Khilafat Conference. The Civil and Military Gazette reported, "It is understood that the arrest had been made on account of the part taken by Dr. Kitchlew in the resolution of the Karachi Khilafat Conference, calculated to temper with the loyalty of the troops and the police". In September 1921, Ali brothers were also arrested, which revived the Khilafat agitation afresh. Meetings were organised in various cases where public anger on their arrest was expressed in violent language inspite of the repeated requests from Gandhiji and Ali brothers.

In February 1922, the massacre of the police occurred at Chauri-Chaura in United Provinces, which adversely affected

1. The Civil and Military Gazette, September 20, 1921, p.3.
3. Reading Collection, Volume I, letter from Lord Reading, the Viceroy to Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, dated September 15, 1921, p.107.
4. Ibid., dated September 22, 1921, p.116.
the peaceful atmosphere of the Punjab.\textsuperscript{1} Before the masses could decide anything, Gandhiji himself decided to postpone his Non-cooperation programme which was turning into a violent movement. This had an immediate effect on the Khilafat Movement which was dependent, to a very large extent, on the Congress support.

The cause of the failure of the Non-cooperation was itself undermined as a result of communal violence, which broke out in 1922 and the emergence of the new movements with communal bias, Shuddhi and Sangathan\textsuperscript{2} among the Hindus and Tabligh and Tanzim among the Muslims. Shuddhi and Tabligh were two sides of the same coin. The former was organised by Swami Shraddhanand and the Arya Samaj to proselytize among the fallen away Hindus or other groups of borderline Muslims who had retained many Hindu customs.\textsuperscript{3} This movement was a Hindu reaction to the superior powers of mobilization

\textsuperscript{1} In a place named Chauri-Chaura, about seventeen policemen were killed at the police-station. The British government took this tragedy positively as it was believed that with this tragedy masses would loose confidence in Gandhiji's Non-cooperation Movement. See Reading Collection, Volume I, letter from Lord Reading, the Viceroy to Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, dated February 9, 1922, p.9; see also N.N.Mitra, The Indian Annual Register, 1921-22, Volume I, p.58.

\textsuperscript{2} A.L.C.C. Papers, F.No. 3/1923, p.7.

\textsuperscript{3} Jat and Gujar Muslims of Karnal, Ambala, Rohtak and Hissar in the Punjab were thus reclaimed. See V.V.Nagarkar, Genesis of Pakistan (New Delhi, 1975), pp.124-125.
demonstrated by the Muslims during the Khilafat Movement. Afraid of the danger for the future of Islam, if Shuddhi was successful, a number of prominent Ulema and Sufis began a Muslim movement Tabligh. Although, purported to be peaceful, the methods used by both these movements were provocative which led to a number of communal clashes. Another Hindu organization and its Muslim counterpart were the Sangathan (unity) Movement headed by Lala Lajpat Rai and the Tanzim effort, brainchild of Dr. Kitchlew. In late 1922 and 1923, the Punjab was a scene of political skirmishes, Multan in September 1922\(^1\) and Amritsar in 1923,\(^2\)

These riots severely vitiated the atmosphere in the Punjab and the tension between the two communities increased. Although many Congress Hindus like C.R. Das, Sarojini Naidu,

\[\text{1. A riot broke out between the Muslims and the Hindus on the question of 'Tazia', in Multan, which resulted in the throwing of stones on each other. Hindus alleged that in the hands of the Muslim officials, their interests were not safe. Moreover, in Multan, the Muslims were more in number than the Hindus. For further details, see The Tribune, September 13, 1922, p.4.}\]

\[\text{2. Another riot took place between the Muslims and the Hindus after an insulting remark was passed by a Muslim boy to a Hindu girl. The city of Amritsar, that showed signs of Hindu-Muslim unity during the Jallianwala Bagh days, was now filled with the blood of the communities. For details, Ibid., April 13, 1923, p.3.}\]
Motilal Nehru visited Punjab and appealed to the two communities, in the name of Swaraj, to live amicably,¹ these appeals fell on deaf ears, because the Muslim and the Hindu communal organizations like the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, respectively, incited the communal feelings of their respective communities² which remained hostile to each other.

As a result of these disturbances in the province, the government issued a notification declaring Congress and Khilafat volunteer organisations to be unlawful.³

On September 3, 1922 (Moharram Day), Pir Mehr Ali Shah of Golra in Rawalpindi district stated in his address that the Muslims should invariably support the government. He was a man of considerable religious influence and exposition of his views was believed to have had a marked effect in the province.⁴

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³. N.N. Mitra, The Indian Annual Register, 1921-1922, Volume I, p.47.
⁴. Home Department (Political), F.No.18/September 1922.
The Non-cooperation Movement virtually lost its velocity in the Punjab and headed towards a definite downfall thereafter. The decline of the Khilafat Movement was commensurate with that of the Non-cooperation Movement. After March 1922, the Movement began a rapid decline in the Punjab and elsewhere in India.

In November 1922, the Turks under Mustafa Kemal, delivered the death blow to the Khilafat Movement by abolishing first the temporal powers of the Khilafa and thereafter the Khilafat altogether. The deposition of Khalifa and abolition of the Khilafat were accepted very quietly by the rural Muslims of the Punjab. The educated Muslims were, however, shocked and distressed at the action of the Angoora government, which was regarded as 'unstatesmanlike and prejudicial'\(^1\), to the interests of the Muslims. Sympathy was shown to the deposed Khalifa and king Husain's assumption of office was disfavoured. Consequently, extreme Khilafatists were completely nonplussed. There were a few signs that they would be prepared to support the candidature of the Amir of Afghanistan, but yet more than the assumption of the Khilafat by the president of the Turkish Republic

\(^1\) Home and Foreign Department (Political), F.No.7694/March 1924.
would be welcomed.¹

In early May 1923, the Khilafat Movement in the Punjab was reported to be at an especially low ebb. The Muslims were split-up into different parties, but the dominant group rallied behind Fazl-i-Husain's leadership.

III. Fazl-i-Husain and the Punjab Politics

Fazl-i-Husain played an important role in the Punjab politics. As stated earlier, he was the main architect of the Lucknow Pact in 1916 and after that he worked with the Congress and the Muslim League together till 1920, when finally he resigned from both these organizations on the question of Non-cooperation. But this breakaway did not change his utterances about Hindu-Muslim unity. He declared that he did not like the mystic formulae of the Muslim first and the Indian afterwards in the Muslim gatherings and Indian first and Muslim afterwards in Congress gatherings. He said that he was an Indian and the Muslim at one and the same time.²

After resigning from Congress in April 1920 and the Muslim League in August 1920, Fazl-i-Husain offered

¹. Home Department (Political), F.No.25/March 1924.
². Madan Gopal, Sir Chhotu Ram, A Political Biography (Delhi, 1977), p.47.
himself for the elections in one of the landholders' constituencies. Inspite of the great opposition from his rivals, he was elected by an overwhelming majority.  

During the first Legislative Council of the Punjab under the Reforms of 1919, convened in 1921, the question of appointments of the ministers arose, which under those circumstances, appeared to be a very difficult one.  

It was for this reason that Sir Edward Maclagan, the new Governor of the province, 'sought the cooperation of the persons who had popular image in the province'. Hence, Fazl-i-Husain and Lala Harkishan Lal were selected Education Minister and the Revenue Minister, respectively, by him.

The Tribune, hailed Fazl-i-Husain as 'the ablest man among the Musalman members of the Council' and Harkishan Lal as 'a man of remarkable tact and judgement'.

2. The memories of Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and the atrocities which took place, subsequently, were fresh in the minds of the Punjabis. Moreover, the Non-cooperation and the Khilafat Movements had made the people conscious of the bad role played by the British government.
4. The Tribune, January 1, 1921, p.3.
The Tribune further appreciated the Governor for these appointments. The Civil and Military Gazette also expressed its pleasure on these appointments and hoped that the two ministers would pursue a rural policy or at least a policy which was not hostile to rural interests, as the rural interests predominated in the Council. Both of these ministers abandoned Non-cooperation Movement. So it was also hoped that change would be seen from the 'barren and disruptive' politics associated with Gandhiji.

In this way, Fazl-i-Husain and Harkrishan Lal occupied their respective offices, under the great expectations from the public of the Punjab.

The first Punjab Council was constituted in 1921. When the elections were held, there was no particular political party in existence due to the popularity of the Non-cooperation Movement. Under its influence, the persons of extremist views also refrained from participating in the elections. Lahore and Amritsar were the most effected areas, as far as the Non-cooperation Movement was concerned.

1. "Sir Edward Maclagan deserves to be warmly congratulated on his choice of the first ministers under the Reforms' Act, for, a better choice, it would have been impossible to make". See The Tribune, January 4, 1921, p.3.


3. The percentage of the Muslim electors who voted was only 2% in Amritsar and 6.5% in Lahore. Of the non-Muslim electors, it was 4.9% in Amritsar and 3.5% in Lahore, Ibid., January 13, 1921, p.6.
the elections proved to be more complicated in the Punjab than in any other province due to the fact that there were important communities to consider instead of the usual two.¹

On the other hand, the residential qualifications meant for the rural constituencies brought forward the landed proprietors. In view of these circumstances, Fazl-i-Husain was witty enough to realize that, if he wanted to remain in power, he must organize a group of Council members to support him. The composition of the Council was such that an entirely Muslim party could not be formed. He, therefore, encouraged the rural Muslim, Sikh and Hindu members to form a Rural Bloc, which soon came to be known as Rural Party.

The Rural Party, from its inception, was open to all communities and included members who didn't belong to rural areas, but subscribed to the principles of the party. A new programme symbolizing economy expansion, efficiency and equality² was initiated by the party. Special attention was to be paid to the rural and backward population because, according to Fazl-i-Husain the real course was that the

¹. The Civil and Military Gazette, January 13, 1921, p.6.
². Madan Gopal, op.cit., p.54.
weak should be lifted up and their condition ameliorated.¹

Fazl-i-Husain believed that the main need of the hour was to make the primary education real and effective with a view to improve the literacy of the province and to raise the economic status of the individual. He envisaged the provision of vocational training in the middle school and the study of industrial, agricultural and commercial subjects in the high schools. He also recommended facilities for the students to join professional institutions like medical training, engineering and law colleges.²

For the attainment of this goal, large amounts were needed to improve the existing institutions and starting the new ones. Another objective of Fazl-i-Husain was to redress the bias against Muslims in the government services.

Since the Muslims mainly residing in the rural areas were backward in education and poorly represented on local bodies and public services, they heartily supported Fazl-i-Husain’s policy and got lot of benefits out of it. Rural Hindus and Sikhs, too, supported this

². Ibid., 1921. Volume II, 229.
Fazl-i-Husain always maintained that his success was due to the implementation of the Congress policy. The Congress had talked a good deal of the need to improve the condition of the people and Fazl-i-Husain's policy, as he said, had always been to aid the backward section of the society.¹

Although, the Punjab Muslims were the main beneficiaries of the policies of Fazl-i-Husain yet, the introduction of compulsory primary school education and the building of dispensaries, high schools and intermediate colleges in the rural areas did benefit the other rural communities also,² to some extent. Fazl-i-Husain gave generous grants to the existing Muslim schools and colleges and encouraged the establishment of the new ones.³

All the same, many of Fazl-i-Husain's policies were meant exclusively for the Muslims. In November 1921, he laid down that places at Lahore Medical College and at

¹ "The principle that I stand by", he told the Punjab Council in March 1923, "is the principle of helping the backward community, irrespective of their religion, be they Muslim, Hindu or Sikh". See Punjab Legislative Council Debates, 1923, Volume IV, p.1318.

² Ibid., 1921, Volume II. pp.374-75.

³ Ibid., 1924, Volume VI, p.315.
Government College, Lahore should be distributed among the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs in the ratio of 40 : 40 : 20. This was undoubtedly for the benefit of the Muslims. They had formed only 15.2 per cent of Government college admission in 1917-18\(^1\) and their share of Medical College places was probably much lower. Similar orders were also issued with regard to recruitment to the medical and educational services.\(^2\)

Prof. Gulshan Rai, General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, strongly criticized Fazl-i-Husain's policies regarding recruitment of services in the education and medical departments of the province. Negating the views that Fazl-i-Husain had based his policy on the provision of the Lucknow Pact, Prof. Gulshan Rai said that communal representation in connection with recruitment of services or in connection with the local bodies was not at all mentioned in the Pact.\(^3\) The Hindus also charged Fazl-i-Husain with an attempt to raise the proportion of Muslims in the educational services and also unjustly superceding

\(^{1}\) Punjab Legislative Council Debates, 1922, Volume III, p.66.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., 1921, Volume II, p.509.

\(^{3}\) The Tribune, October 25, 1922, p.2.
the well qualified senior Hindus. They maintained that under His Majesty's Government in India, appointments were made on the basis of merit and not on the basis of caste, colour or creed.¹

The fourteenth Sikh Educational Conference held on August 9, 1922 to discuss Fazl-i-Husain's policy of communal preference in the educational matters expressed apprehensions and appealed to the government to safeguard the Sikh interests. The Sikhs further suggested to fix thirty three per cent as the proportion for the recruitment of the Sikhs in the provincial educational and medical services instead of twenty per cent as suggested by the Minister of Education. The Sikh members of the Legislative Council were called upon to refuse educational grants until ample provision was secured for their community.²

Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia was of the opinion that the Sikh community was the most badly represented community as compared to the Hindu and Muslim communities. Taking an example of the appointment of judges, he felt that there were two Muslim and two Hindu judges on the

¹ The Civil and Military Gazette, March 5, 1922, p.11.
² Ibid., August 10, 1922, p.4.
High Court bench, while the Sikhs did not have any representation thereon.¹

Fazl-i-Husain also made some significant changes in the working of municipalities and local municipal boards. He introduced communal electorates in eleven municipalities in addition to the thirty-eight already existing in January 1921, and adopted a new formula of representation according to which the elected seats were distributed among the communities in proportion to their population.²

This policy was obviously calculated to benefit the numerically preponderant Muslim community at the expense of the educationally and economically advanced Hindus.

Between 1917 and 1920, the Punjab government had greatly increased the number of municipalities which possessed communal electorates and the percentage of the Muslim seats increased from forty to forty-four per cent. As a result of Fazl-i-Husain's Municipal Amendment Act, 1923, the Muslims further improved their position from 1920 to 1923 when their proportion arose from forty-four to forty-four.

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1. Sunder Singh Majithia Papers. F.No.46/1919-1922, pp.4-5.
nine per cent.¹

The Punjabi Hindus had a great dislike for Fazl-i-Husain's policies because of his prejudice towards the Muslim community. Amar Nath Chopra, a High Court advocate in Lahore, said, "Muslims under the leadership of Fazl-i-Husain are out to relegate Hindus to an insignificant position in the Punjab".² The Hindus boycotted the municipal elections held on December 17, 1923 in protest against the increased Muslim representation on the Municipal Boards.³

Earlier, in March 1923, Raja Narender Nath, a rich landowner and the President of the Punjab Hindu Maha-sabha, moved a resolution for the cut in Fazl-i-Husain's salary as a protest against his policies. The motion received the support of all the elected Hindu and Sikh members, but it was defeated because of solid opposition of the Muslims and the British officials.⁴

The Sikhs also boycotted the municipal elections to be held in December 1923 in order to press their demand

2. The Tribune, December 28, 1923, p.3.
4. Ibid., 1923, Volume IV, pp.1274-1277.
for separate representation for the Sikhs instead of representation by election jointly with the Hindus.¹

It was quite clear that Fazl-i-Husain as an Education Minister was open to criticism from almost all the Hindu and Sikh quarters of the Punjab. However, the Muslims were quite happy with him because he openly took up the Muslim cause and tried to benefit them through separate electorates and in return gained their goodwill and support, which helped him in the formation of the Unionist Party and making him the sole leader of the Muslim of the province.

IV. Formation of the National Unionist Party

Under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the next elections of the Punjab Legislative Council were due in 1923. In the 1921 elections, there was no organised party except the Rural Party. The new Council differed from the old one as it also included twelve members from the Swaraj Party.² This party was more urban and pro-Hindu than nationalist and was more a combination of the pleading and trading classes. This party came up due to the efforts of

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Pandit Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai.  

Fazl-i-Husain was again re-elected from the land holders’ constituency. Now, his main aim was to give a permanent form to his group in the Council. His experience had strengthened his view that not only in the present circumstances but in the future as well, under a parliamentary system of government, the proper course for the Punjab Muslims to achieve their goals and preserve their political supremacy was not to form a communal party in the Council but to bring other communities into a new party. There was a need for giving a non-communal name to the new group.

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1. The final form of the new Council, after the elections, was -

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<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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<tr>
<td>Swarajists</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khilafatists</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parbandhak Committee</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderates</td>
<td>38</td>
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</tbody>
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See Reading Papers, Volume V, telegram from Lord Reading to the Secretary of the State for India, dated December 6, 1923, p.368.

2. In fact, from his past experiences as the Education Minister, he learnt that the success and goodwill of non-Muslims could be achieved by raising big slogans about Hindu-Muslim unity and the confidence of the Muslims could be gained by providing special facilities to them. In fact, the motive behind all this was to strengthen his own position in the Punjab.

Ibid., Volume X, letter from John Maynard, the Punjab Home Member, to Edward Maclagan, the Punjab Governor, dated April 21, 1923, p.391.
This was how the 'National Unionist Party' came into existence under Fazl-i-Husain's leadership.¹

The formation of the 'National Unionist Party' proved a landmark in the history of the Punjab. For the first time in its history, it was this party which issued an 'election manifesto' and the electorate was asked to vote for party candidates rather than individuals. Except for three Khilafatists, all the thirty-five Muslims joined the Unionist Party, which was also joined by seven rural Hindus and Sikhs. Thus, the Unionist formed a majority of thirty-nine members against thirty-two, who formed the opposition, consisting of Swarajists, Khilafatists and individual Sikhs and Hindus.² The creed and objects of the party were:³

1. The attainment of dominion status by all constitutional means at as early a date as practicable;
2. the establishment in the province of the provincial autonomy;
3. the acceptance of the community of economic interests as the true basis of political parties, irrespective of caste, creed or residence;

¹ Nur Ahmad, op. cit., p.53.
² Azim Husain, op.cit., p.153.
4. the provision of equal facilities and opportunities for all, with special solicitude for the backward classes and areas whether rural or urban;
5. to develop national self-respect;
6. to encourage independence of thought and freedom of speech and to discourage sacrifice of public interests to personal ends;
7. to promote the interests of the masses without undue encroachment on the interest of the capitalists, big landholders and moneyed people;
8. to take up economic reconstruction and reorganization of agricultural and industrial life of the province so as to cope with the problem of unemployment;
9. to study and promote the commercial interests of the province;
10. to overhaul the educational system in all its branches;
11. to stand by the Punjab Alienation of Land Act as a measure for the protection of the backward classes;
12. to promote industries with special emphasis upon cottage industries in rural areas so as to provide supplementary means of income to rural population;
13. to improve methods of marketing, including reforms of objectionable market usages and practices;
14. to effect rural uplift by infusing the real and enlightened spirit in village communities and making every village a unit of true social and national life;
15. to secure purity of administration;
16. to distribute fairly and equitably the burden of taxation;
17. to eliminate all excess in the cost of administration so as to provide funds for beneficial activities; and
18. to ensure religious and cultural integrity of each community as the best basis of lasting national unity: denying the claims of any one community to dictate to other communities and in the case of conflict, settling the disputes and differences by the principle of toleration.

After the elections in 1923, Fazl-i-Husain was re-appointed as the minister, and on his request to the Governor to allow him to choose his own ministers, he appointed Chhotu Ram of Rohtak, as a minister, who was the co-founder of the National Unionist Party. The Unionist Party, although a non-communal party, was sympathetically inclined towards the rural Punjabis.

The Tribune alleged that the new party was neither nationalist nor unionist, but only a party the real aim of which was to advance what they believed to the interests of the rural population, perhaps of only a
particular section of that population, the agriculturists.1

V. Communalism in the Punjab

Communalism is a term which has been interpreted differently by different historians. Bipin Chandra in his book, Communalism in Modern India, called religion as the basis of communalism.2 Prabha Dixit's book, Communalism, A Struggle for Power, said that communalism was an independent movement which developed as an antithesis of nationalism.3 Hence, one thing was certain that the main motive behind communalism was the attainment of power. As the Punjab was the home of three main communities, communalism was quite an important factor in the provincial politics and many reasons could be attributed for the rise and growth of communalism, especially in the early 1920s.

From the point of view of the relations prevailing among the three main communities, the period after the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms witnessed great ups and downs from 1919 to 1923 - sometimes the Hindus and Muslims seemed united and at other times they were found to be working against each other. However, neither the Hindus, including

1. The Tribune, August 1, 1924, p.1.
3. Prabha Dixit, Communalism, A Struggle for Power (New Delhi, 1974), p.VII.
the Sikhs, nor the Muslims could be blamed alone for this state of affairs.

Generally, in India and especially in the Punjab, this Hindu-Muslim problem had been exploited for their own use by the British authorities as well as by other politicians. The policy of 'Divide and Rule' was perpetuated by means of the principle of separate electorates in the Morley-Minto Reforms in 1909 and the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in 1919. The British government tried to enflame communal feelings by introducing rigid censorship for the nationalist press and conciliatory policy towards the communal papers.

The communal riots in the Punjab, especially at Multan in 1922 and at Amritsar in 1923, resulted in the aggravation of communalism in the Punjab. When, in an effort to compose communal differences before the elections due that year, C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Abul Kalam Azad and Hakin Ajmal Khan visited the province in March 1923, they found the communal situation virtually

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1. It was a common belief among the British that, 'Hindu-Muslim unity can not work in practice'. See Reading Collection, Volume I, letter from Viscount Peel to Lord Reading, dated April 26, 1922, p.7.

In assessing the reasons for this state of affairs, the Congress leaders believed that the Shuddhi and Sangathan movements of the Hindus and Tanzim and Tabligh movements of the Muslims served as the important contributing factors, especially in the East Punjab.

Dr. Kitchlew, who was a nationalist and an ardent follower of Gandhiji, was alleged to have contributed to the rise of communalism by his Tanzim movement that aimed at serving the exclusive interests of his own community.

During his term as President of the Indian National Congress, several reports about the communal stance in Kitchlew's actions and utterances were received. Although all these allegations were denied by him and, after a few years, he did recover his position in Congress and started laying emphasis on the ideal of communal unity.

1. The Congress leaders gave a report which ran, "on our arrival here, we found that the relations between the Hindus and Musalmans, both educated and uneducated, were so greatly strained that each community had practically arrayed itself in an armed camp against the other". See A.I.C.C.Papers, F.No.3/1923, p.1.

2. Reading Collection, Volume V, telegram by Lord Reading to the Secretary of the State for India, dated August 17, 1923, p.242.


4. Ibid.
Apart from these movements, the other important factor which stimulated the communal sentiments was the formation of the Legislative Council and local bodies on the basis of separate electorates. The members elected by separate electorates would give preference to the interests of their own community and were apt to injure the larger interests of the province.

Above all, the communal policies adopted by Fazl-i-Husain also precipitated the hatred between the two communities. His educational policies and the introduction of the communal representation in the service fanned hostility among the different communities. He was alleged to be partial towards the Muslims and his policies as the Education Minister were directed towards the benefit of the Muslims only. The Hindus and the Sikhs showed great resentment over this issue. A Hindu nationalist wrote to Pratap of January 6, 1923 that Fazl-i-Husain had, with one stroke of the pen, endangered the Hindu-Muslim unity.\(^1\) The Loyal Gazette of January 21, 1923 criticized Fazl-i-Husain's policies and called them unsuited for the Hindus and the Sikhs.\(^2\) It believed that the British government also poured

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oil into the fire by accepting whatever Fazl-i-Husain suggested regarding the affairs of the Punjab.¹

In the Punjab Legislative Council itself, a lot of debate had been done regarding the change in the principle of the electorates, from separate to the joint, in case of the appointments in the local boards and municipalities.² But Fazl-i-Husain did not like this idea and he openly favoured the separate electorates. According to him, joint electorates could be successful only when communal prejudices, animosities and selfishness ceased to exist³ and this was perhaps, not possible because the Hindus and the Muslims belonging to different culture could not tolerate each other's success and, hence, separate electorates in the local bodies and municipalities remained, as before, to aggravate communalism.

The newspapers belonging to different communities also fomented the feelings of separatism. The Hindu and the Sikh newspapers like The Tribune, Khalsa Akhbar, Khalsa Advocate etc., held the Muslims responsible for this violence and other tensions in the Punjab. On the other hand, the Muslim newspaper like Muslim Outlook, threw the responsibility on the non-Muslims. They presented their views

3. Ibid., p.372.
in such an exaggerated way that mutual dissentions were certain.¹

Leading Muslims newspaper editors like Zafar Ali (Zamindar) could also be held responsible for inciting communal passions. It was said in 1920s that Maulana Zafar Ali had emerged as the most prominent among 'a considerable class' of journalist 'of pamphleteers and cartoonists who thrive by the dissemination of ... matter deliberately designed to increase communal hostility'.²

Hindu press, on the other hand, was openly alleged to exaggerate the attitude of Dr. Kitchlew towards communalism.³ That was why he complained to Gandhiji that his speeches were misreported.⁴

According to Gandhiji, there was yet another cause of the rise of communalism, viz., the loss of faith in non-violence among both the Hindus and the Muslims which resulted in great communal tension and communal riots, not only

1. Punjab Native Newspaper Reports, May 19, 1923, p.268.
3. S.L. Malhotra, Gandhi, an Experiment with Communal Politics, p.189.
4. Ibid.
in the Punjab but all over India.\(^1\) It was another matter that, as Gandhiji believed, the Hindus suffered more in these riots, because the Muslims were in a majority.\(^2\)

To some extent, the Act of 1919 was also responsible for stimulating the communal passions of the different communities in the Punjab. The communal or separate electorates granted to the Muslims under this Act had intensified the communal hatred and bitterness that further resulted in frequent communal riots, murders and bloodshed.\(^3\) On December 27, 1924, in the annual meeting of the Hindu Mahasabha, President Madan Mohan Malaviya, raised a strong voice against separate electorates.\(^4\)

Thus, it is seen that the period from 1919 to 1923 was very important so far as the Muslim politics was concerned. During this period, the Muslims were found to be engaged in different affairs. Their response


\(^{2}\) Ibid., p.139.


\(^{4}\) Ibid., Deputation from the All India Muslim League, p.8.
to the Rowlatt Bills, Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and the Khilafat Movement could be witnessed. Fazl-i-Husain took an uncompromising stand in all these matters. He refused to join the Non-cooperation Movement and when he found that no other party was left strong, he planned and formed a new party, 'The National Unionist Party'. Although he tried to unite all the communities, yet his policies as the Education Minister were greatly criticized and he was called a communalist and held responsible for the Hindu-Muslim disunity to a great extent.

There were clear signs indicating the rise of communalism amongst the Muslims. However, the trend was more marked among the elite of the Muslim community. They acted as agent provocative, raising the communal consciousness among the common masses of the Muslim. It is significant to note that the general people at the grassroot reacted with apathy. It was because of this that the National Unionist Party had to camouflage its instance of communalism under false slogans. Possibly, thanks to Fazl-i-Husain for creating an aggressive middle class among the Muslims, whose aspirations and critical ambitions poured oil in the fire of communalism which was already smouldering among the Muslim leaders of the Punjab. We will witness
this development in the next chapter which in a way is crucial to have in-depth understanding of communalism of this period.