CHAPTER - IX
CHAPTER IX

ORGANISATION UNDER THE REVIVALIST MOVEMENTS

It is true to say that, Haji Shari'at Allah based his plan of reform on purely religious principles. But his son Dudu Miyan added a new feature, giving a socio-economic bias to the movement. The pattern of the then Muslim society as described by the contemporary English writers needed such an evolution to rest the movement on a solid foundation.

The Fara'idi movement fostered a community of beliefs and interests among its followers which brought them into a brotherhood. The unifying tendency of the Fara'idis became apparent even at the initial stage when Haji Shari'at Allah preached his doctrines at Nayabari.

The Fara'idi settlement of Rakabi Bazar credits Haji Shari'at Allah for organising the local panchayat there. But he is not known to have attempted to bring the Fara'idis into a compact organisation. Definitely, in all appearance, it was Dudu Miyan who first realised the necessity or conceived the ambitions plan of organising the Fara'idis into a strong body and it was he who brought them under a central and hierarchical organisation.

In organising the Fara'idi society Dudu Miyan had two main objectives in view, viz. (i) protecting the Fara'idi peasantry from the oppression of the Hindu zamindars and European indigo planters, and (ii) securing social justice for the masses of the Muslims. In order to secure the first objective, he raised a volunteer corps of clubmen and arranged for their regular training in the art of affray fighting. For securing the second objective he revived the traditional panchayat system under Fara'idi leadership. The former was known as the political branch (Siyasi) and the latter the religious branch (dini). Both these branches of the Fara'idi organisation were then

2. Ibid. p. 22.
3. Ibid. 23
4. Ibid.
coordinated by an hierarchical Khilafat system, which brought all the Fara'idis of Eastern Bengal under direct control and supervision of Dudu Miyan.

The political branch of the Fara'idi organisation was an outcome of the conflict between the Fara'idi peasantry and the Hindu Zamindars. We have seen earlier that Haji Shari'at Allah protested against the imposition of idolatrous cesses by the Hindu zamindars on the Fara'idi peasantry, which brought him into conflict with the Zamindars in his later life. According to a government report, the zamindars lavied not less than 23 items of unauthorised cesses in addition to the lawful land revenues as late as A.D. 1872. In order to resist the zamindars from extorting these cesses, Haji Shari'at Allah commissioned Jalal-al-Din Mullah to organise affray fighters. James wise says that Dudu Miyan made his "most determined stand" against the "levying of illegal cesses by the Zamindars", especially against the idolatrous taxes. Wise considers it as an intolerable act of oppression that" a Muhammadan ryot should be obliged to contribute towards the decoration of the image of Durga (a Hindu goddess), or towards the support of any of the idolatrous rites of the Hindu landlord", as the "only apology" for their continuation was claimed to be their
antiquity and adaptation to the feelings of the peoples"¹. Thus, the conflict between the Fara'idis and the Zamindars arose from a peculiar religio-economic reason. This was instrumental to Dudu Miyan's realisation of the necessity of organising the Fara'idis into a strong body.

On his assumption of leadership, Dudu Miyan appointed several siyasi Khalifahs (i.e., political agents of deputies) in different parts of the Faridpur district (including Madaripur subdivision), where the zamindars were especially hostile to the Fara'idis. The duty of Siyasi Khalifah was to raise volunteer corps of affray fighters and to arrange for their regular training and secondly, to keep Dudu Miyan fully apprised of every new political development of his area. Later on, when the 'dini'( الدين) or religious branch of the Fara'idi organisation was developed into a centralised and hierarchical 'Khilafat' system, the political branch was also absorbed into it, as will be seen below.

The Fara'idi Khilafat system was designed to bring all the Fara'idis under the direct control and supervision of an hierarchy of authorised agents or Khalifas. At the apex of this hierarchy stood the 'Ustad' (i.e., the head of the Fara'idis); below him were the Uparastha Khalifahs (or the superior agents); next to them

¹. James Wise: Eastern Bengal, p. 24
were the Superintendent Khalifah: and at the lowest rung of the hierarchy stood the Goan Khalifah (village agent) or the Ward Khalifah (the agent in the ward of a town), as the case may be. The Fara'idi settlements of Eastern Bengal (were divided into small village units, each consisting of 300 to 500 Fara'idi families as the geographical conditions permitted. One prominent member of each unit was appointed a Khalifah and given the charge of the unit. Ten or more such village units formed what was often called a girl (i.e., a circle or neighbourhood), which was under one superintendent Khalifah. The respective unit Khalifahs of the area were sub-ordinated to him. The superintendent Khalifah was required to

1. Family records of (a) Jalal al Din Mullah of Faridpur, Khalifah of Dudu Miyan, and of his grandson Kafil al-Din Ahmad, Khalifah of Khan Bahadur Sa'id al-Din and (b) tradition current in the Family of Darwesh Ali Munshi of Tepeera, Khalifah of Dudu Miyan (c) of Munir al-Din Khalifah, and (d) Pahlwan Ghazi of Chandpur, Khalifahs of Dudu Miyan, See also James Wise Eastern Bengal, p. 23. Wise suggests that in partitioning Eastern Bengal into smaller units or circles Dudu Miyan followed the vaishnava practice, but he did not state his reasons for thinking so. On the other hand, we know very well that assigning a certain area to a Khalifah is a time honoured practice of the Sufi orders, familiar to Bengal for centuries.
maintain a Piyada (i.e., a guard or footman), and a peon (or messenger). The Piyadah worked as the executor of orders of the Superintendent Khalifah, and the peon was sent back and forth with messages and circulars to the unit Khalifahs of the girls on the one hand, and to the Ustad at Bahadurpur (in Faridpur district) on the other. Thus the Superintendent Khalifah acted as an intermediary between the unit Khalifah and the Ustad, and kept in constant touch with both.

A few highly competent persons were appointed as advisers to the Ustad, who were styled as Uparastha or superior Khalifahs. Such were, for instance, the guardians of Naya Miyan. Their function were multifarious: to advise the Ustad on important matters, guide the Fara'idi community, propagate Fara'idi doctrines and promote the advancement of the Fara'idi movement. Some of them were assigned a particular subdivision or a district but mostly they worked as personal envoys of the Ustad to the Fara'idi community in general

1. The above picture of the structure of the Fara'idi organisation has been drawn from the family records of the Fara'idis and from personal observation. The practice of appointing Uparastha Khalifah has fallen into disuse, but the rest of hierarchy as well as the maintenance of a piyada and Peon continue down to the present day.
The Unit Khalifah being responsible for the overall welfare of the Fara'idi community residing within the unit, his duties were, and still are, manifold. In the first place, he taught them the Kalimah or the formula of faith\(^1\), and the diniyat or the religious practices. Secondly, he enforced the faraid or religious duties, such as the daily prayers, fasting of the 'Ramdan' payment of Zakat and fitrah. Thirdly he made suitable arrangement for prayer halls in those places where no mosque existed and led the community prayers or appointed an Imam for the purpose. Forthly, he controlled the social and religious morals of his community, and administered justice in consultation with the elders. Fifthly, he administered religious services at the weddings and funerals, and shrived a dying man. Lastly, he maintained a Maktab or elementry school for the education of the children\(^2\).

As a remuneration for all these duties, he received a short of 'ushar' or tithe from the produce of the land belonging to the Fara'idi of his unit. The rate was, however, one fortieth i.e., equivalent to the rate of Zakat\(^3\).

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1. The Kalimah is a short formula in Arabic consisting of two phrases, i.e., \(الله
          لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله\) which means, I give witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.

2. Based on family records and personal observation.

3. This is still practised in the Fara'idi village of chandpur in the district of Tippera.
The functions of the Unit Khalifah were, and still are, purely religious. He is required to keep himself aloof from politics. He must, however, take notice of all political developments in his unit, and report regularly to the superintendent Khalifah. He is also empowered to settle petty disputes relating to marriage divorce, inheritance, domestic or public quarrels feuds over land or over any other property. This he does with the help of the elders of his unit.

The duties of a superintendent Khalifah, were by no means an easy job. In him was vested the religious as well as the political leadership of his gird. In the first place, he was required to watch closely the activities of the Unit Khalifahs, guide their steps and check excesses. The inhabitants of the gird were entitled to lodge complaint against any oppression or excess of the Unit Khalifahs to the Superintendent Khalifahs and seek for redress of any injury or harm done to them. Secondly, he acted as the court of appeal against the decision of the Unit Khalifahs to which the disputants were entitled to take resort if they were not satisfied with any decision of a Unit Khalifah. Such appeal suits were retried by the Superintendent Khalifah sitting in a council of the Unit Khalifahs of his gird. Thirdly,
he was responsible for social and spiritual welfare of the Fara'idis of his gird, and was required to pay frequently visit to different localities and preach the fundamentals of religion. He had also to maintain an Astana or a religious club in his own locality which was used as the venue for community prayers, public meetings, religious conferences and other functions of the community. When the Ustad or any other honourable guest came to visit the gird, the Astana was used as the rest house. Moreover, as the Fara'idis followed the Qadiriyyah order of Sufism, mystic meditation (halqah-i-Zikr) was held in the Astana on every Wednesday night. Fortly, he was required to take active interest in the political development (siyasi Mu'amilat) of his gird, in addition to his religious duties. If, however, he preferred to remain absorbed in religious affairs a siyasi Khalifah (political agent) was appointed for the area concerned. With the assistance of the Piyada and the peon, he kept himself in touch with every political development and kept the Ustad apprised of the situation through regular post. Fifthly, he was required to visit every locality of his gird once a year and see that the Fara'idis one and all, had adequate knowledge of the fundamentals of religion, lastly, superintendent Khalifah of Faridpur district, were
required to raise a volunteer corps of clubman and arrange for their regular training. This special measure was deemed necessary in the district of Faridpur, where the zamindars and the gomastah were hostile to the Fara'idi movement.

Records of all transactions of the Unit Khalifah and the Superintendent Khalifah were kept in books of proceedings. When the Ustad or the Parastha Khalifah came to visit the gird the proceeding were presented to him. If he approved of them, he put his signature and seal on them. If he did not approve, he would direct that the proceedings be sent Bahadurpur for further examination. In all important matters the advice and interference of the Ustad were eagerly sought by the local Khalifahs. In all religious and secular matters the Ustad was the final authority, and his decision was binding. If any party was not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent Khalifah, an appeal lay with the Ustad. In such cases, the Ustad, would fix a date for the hearing, and summon the Superintendent Khalifah and the parties concerned to Bahadurpur. In complicated cases an Uparastha Khalifah was sent to the spot to hear the appeal and to give

appropriate judgment in the capacity of being personal envoy of the Ustad.\footnote{Ibid. p. 149 f.}

The Fara'idi were not allowed to bring any dispute or legal suit before the government court without obtaining permission from the superintendent Khalifah or the Ustad. The non-Fara'idis (Muslim and non-Muslim alike) having a dispute with the Fara'idi were encouraged to bring the case before a Fara'idi court instead of taking it to the government court, and if anyone ventured to take such a case to the law courts, the enforcement of the decree was resisted by the powerful Fara'idi Khalifahs especially if it went against the interest of a Fara'idi\footnote{Cf. James Wise : Eastern Bengal, p. 25; and Navin Chandra Sen : Amar Jivan, Vol iii, p. 149.}

The above sketch of the Fara'idi Khalifat system which has been drawn mainly from the family records of the Fara'idi Khalifahs and from personal observation of the present day Fara'idi society, is corroborated by the contemporary writings, especially by those of James Wise, Navin Chandra Sen, Maulana Karamat 'Ali and H. Beveridge. But, as their account of the Fara'idi society is partial and many respects misleading, their views cannot be wholly relied upon James Wise says\footnote{James Wise : Eastern Bengal, p. 23.}

Following the example of the vaishnavas, he (Dudu Miyan) partitioned Eastern Bengal into circles, and
appointed a khalifah or agent to each, whose duties were to keep the sect together, make proslytes, and collect contributions for the furtherance of the object of the association. The further kept Dudu Miyan acquainted with every occurrence within their jurisdiction.\(^1\)

He further adds that Dudu Miyan settled disputes, administered summary justice and punished any Hindu, Muslim or Christian who dared to bring a suit for recovery of debt in the adjoining Munshi's court instead of referring the case to his decision.\(^2\) With regard to the influence of the Fara'idi Panchayat over the masses of the people,

1. In his analogy of the Fara'idi Khilafat system with the vaishnava organisation, James Wise appears to have misled by the apparent similarity between the two. For, the khilafat system including various gradations of the Khalifahs and the assignment of an exclusive area to each, was not a new invention of Dudu Miyan but derived from the time honoured practice of the sufis, which in vogue in the Muslim society of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent even centuries before the advent of vaishnavaism. No wonder, therefore, that we find an organisation amongst the followers of the Patna School at Maldah which is almost similar to the Fara'idi Khilafat system (see. W.W. Hunter: Indian Musalmans. London, A.P. 1971. pp. 81-82.

Wise says: "These Panchayat (of Eastern Bengal) possess great influence among the people and in Fara'idi villages as they take conizance of all offences, it is exceedingly rare that any case of violence or assault, committed within them finds its way to the regular courts"¹.

In the autobiography of Novin Chandra Sen, we find a detailed account of the actual working of the Fara'idi society in the time of Naya Miyan. The following translation of a passage from Bengali into English will illustrate the point. Navin Sen says, "the majority of the ra'iyats of Eastern Bengal, notably of the district of Faridpur, are Fara'idi Muslims. They accept the words of Naya Miyan as divine revelation and such slavish submission to the priest is not seen in any other human race. In this area (the subdivision of Madaripur). Naya Miyan established a State of his own within the British regime. In every village, he appointed a superintendent and Piyada through whom he kept the Fara'idis in his control. No dispute of the village could be submitted to the Diwani or Fawzdari Adalat (i.e, the civil and the criminal courts established by the Government), without the permission of the superintendent².

1. Ibid., p. 34.

He adds further¹, "at first, the case was tried by him and then if he accorded permission it could be submitted to the police or brought before the Law Courts. If anybody acted to the contrary, he was branded as a renegade for religion or Kafir². As a result, to whichever party of the dispute the superintendent lent his support, it would usually come out victorious even if it were on the wrong side. People would give false witness at his bidding, and when he went against anybody his case could never be proved even if the accusations were true. For, the police and the Judge were helpless in eliciting any evidence in favour of the case. Even if a person secured a decree from the law court on a piece of land, having spent a considerable sum, he was powerless to take possession of it if the superintendent went against him".

1. Ibid. p. 149.

2. Navin Sen appears to have confused between a renegade from the Fara'idi movement and from the religion of Islam. It is true that the Fara'idi ostracised a renegade but never branded such a person as renegade from Islam or kafir, for they also professed themselves to be Hanafi and followers of Ahl-al sunnat wal jama'at like the most non Fara'idi Muslims of Eastern Bengal.
One of the arguments of Maulana Karamat 'Ali against the Fara'idis was that since the Fara'idis had established a short of their own regime in Eastern Bengal, they had no excuse to shrink from the prayer of Jum'ah. He says, "ask them, whereas you have established the custom of administering justice among your disciples, and whereas you punish them by giving shoes and imposing fines to the extent of one hundred stroke, and one or two hundred rupees, and as these disciples still do not bring their complaint before any of the Judge (appointed by the British), what excuse has remained there, in accordance with your own principles, to refrain from saying the prayer of Jum'ah within the regime of your elected Amir?"\(^1\).

In his account of influential personalities of Bakarganj district, H. Beveridge says, "if I were to mention non officials, there are at least two who have exercised more influence than any judge or magistrate, I refer to the Mohamedan preachars named Karamat 'Ali and Dudu Miyan\(^2\).

If the above evidence is true, it must be conceded that Dudu Miyan's effort to organise the Fara'idi society was crowned with success. For, he was

\(^2\) H. Beveridge: District of Bakerganj, op. cit., p. 381.
not only able to bring millions of the Fara'idis under his direct control by means of the Khilafat system, but was also successful in securing social justice for them all in safeguarding their interests from the oppressive hand of the Hindu zamindars, European indigo planters and their underliners. In organising the Fara'idi society, Dudu Miyan laid down the principle of equality and brotherhood, the influence of which on the Fara'idi society was far reaching. This principle is discussed below.

James Wise says that Dudu Miyan asserted "the equality of mankind" and "taught that the welfare of the lowest and the poorest was as much an object of interest as that of the highest and the richest". He further declared all men as brothers, and pleaded that when a brother fell into distress, it was the "duty of his neighbours to assist him". According to government reports, the equality of the Fara'idis was "again and again emphasised", and a common fund was created for the welfare of the brotherhood.

Further more, following the Qur'anic verse "whatever is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to

2. Ibid.
God"1, Dudu Miyan declared that land is a bounty of God, and man being his most favoured creature has equal right to exploit this divine gift. Land, therefore, belongs to those who exploit it. Hence, he regarded the exploitation of the peasantry by the Zamindar's as a gross injustice (zulm 2).

Dudu Miyan, however, did not oppose the levying of taxes by the government. He only challenged the right of the zamindar to impose illegal and idolatrous cesses on the cultivators. For, he regarded the zamindars as merely tax collectors of the government. Hence, in his view, they were competent to realise only the land revenues authorised by the government. But, as the laws provided by the permanent settlement were prejudicial to the zamindar, "the peasantry were persuaded to settle on Khas Mahal lands managed directly by the government" and thus to escape "the payment of any taxes but that of the land revenue claimed by the State"3.

Nevertheless, the bulk of the Fara'idis had to live within the jurisdiction of the zamindars, and the latter, often found excuse to attach their lands for nonpayment of taxes or to bring civil suit against them

2. Traditiona: current in the family of Dudu Miyan, see also James Wise; Eastern Bengal, p. 24.
for disowning them from their tenancy rights. Whenever the zamindar, tried to enforce their so-called legal rights against the Fara'idis, funds were provided by Dudu Miyan from the common purse for the defence of the ryots and even to use the zamindars in the Law Court "or if it could be safe", says Wise, "clubmen were sent to destroy his zamindar's property and the servants".

Organisation under the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah, Ahle 'Hadith and Titu Mir's Movement: The Tariqah-I-Muhammadiyah, Ahle-Hadith and Titu Mir's movement had two important aspects for organising the Muslim society-socio-religious and political the former requiring the preaching of certain social and religious reforms and the latter the urging for the struggle against the "alien people from distant lands" and traders and vendors of goods. Both these requirements presupposed the organising of a dedicated band of missionaries and preachers who could move about and explain the mission to the messes. The earliest efforts in this connection, as shown above, were made by Sayyed Ahmad his chief associates. But they languished after his migration in

1826. After his death the need was felt for reviving the organisational side of the movement inside British India. But the Patna leaders, Titu Mir and Ahle Hadith leaders made their most valuable contribution to the movements. Patna now became, and remained till the very end, the most active centre of the movements in British India. But the Movements had also its regional centres in Bengal.

During the life time of Sayyed Ahmad the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement maintained three important preaching formula for organising the Muslim society into a well knit organisation, e.g. touring, preaching initiation. The Patna leaders who became Ahle-Hadith gave a greater cohesiveness to the organisation, created a well-knit training centre in Patna with number of subordinate zones and circles all over the country and allotted local preachers to each zone. These local agents preached in their respective zones, distributed pamphlets, collected Zakats and other monetary contribution and transmitted them to the Head-quarters at Patna. This remarkable system, which withstood for a
long time the might and the full resources of the English Government to trace and root it out from their dominion, has been discussed under four board headings: (i) Central Organisation at Patna, (ii) Itnert Preachers, (iii) District Centres, and (iv) Collection of Funds.

I. Central Organisation at Patna:

We may first describe the building of the Mohammadi Headquarters in Patna, the famous 'Kafila' as the Mohammadi

1. Key to terms used in the Muhammadi Correspondence and the Aliases by which the chief conspirators were known.

Recruits for the war were called Jihadis, Khidmatgars (Servants), Beoparies (Merchants), Musafirs (Travellers), Nargao (Bullocks).

Bands of recruits called Kafilas (Carvans). Malka and Sittina were spoken of as the Bara (Big) Godown and Patna as the Chota (Small) Godown.

A battle was called Moqaddima (Suit or case in court). Got was spoken of as the Mukhter or agent.

Gold Mohars were called large red rubies, large Delhi gold embroidered shoes and large birds.

Half Mohars were called small red beads and small gold embroidered shoes.

Remittances in Mohars were spoken of as rosaries of red beads.

Drafts or Hundis were called white stores and the amounts intimated by the number of white beads, as on the rosary.

Remittances of money were spoken as the price of books and merchandise.

The word Qafila was used to designate the premises belonging to the family of Saidqpur Moulvies in Patna City, and more particularly the part formerly occupied by Wilayat Ali and by Abd-al-Rihan. Muhammadi Aliases, Amadullah, aliases Ahmad Ali, Muhammad Ali or ahmad Abdullah, alias Baboo Sahib, Baboo Jan Khan Sahib, and Fayyaz Ali, alias Basirrudin or Fayyaz Alam. isa, alias Ruhullah

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themselves described it in their secret code or the 'Carvan Sarai' for rebels and traitors as Hunter preferred to described it. A graphic description of the buildings subsequently razed to the ground by the order of the Government, and the teachings imparted in it is preserved for us by Hunter and is reproduced below.

"In the Mussalman quarter of the ancient city of Patna there is an alley called Sadikpur Lane much frequented by travellers. On the left side of the alley is a group of buildings in the Moorish style with considerable frontage and running back some distance from the lane, their exteriors have that mournful dilapidated

Contd. from back page:

Hafiz Abdul Majid, alias Hafiz Saheb.
Abdul Karim, alias Karim Bax.
Yahya Ali, alias Mohiuddin.
Abd-al-Rahim, alias Mirza Rahim Beg
Muhammad Shafi, alias Shafat Ali
Qazi Miyan Jan, alias Muhammad Shakur or Abdul Rahman.
Christians or British Troops were called the heirs of Hazrat Ruhullah (Jesus Christ).


2. The site is now occupied by the buildings of the old Patna City Municipality's Office and the adjoining Hat grounds.
look which the brick and stucco buildings permanently assume after the first wet season and which present such a squalid contrast to our pre-conceptions of the gorgeous East. The prominent edifice of the group is a mosque of very plain interior in which public prayer is held every hour of the day and a Khutba or lecture is delivered every Friday. These Friday lectures in the Sadikpur mosque are different to those in the other mosques in the city. They are vehement harangues, exposing the inefficiency of works without Faith, warning the hearers of the great spiritual danger and urging them to cultivate the Inward Life. They contrast the simple worship of Prophet with the cumbrous rituals, the endless mummeries, bowings and genuflexions of the mosques and bitterly inveigh against those who by traditions have rendered the written words of no effect. The Moulvies of the other city mosques, while forced to acknowledge the learning and eloquence of the Sadikpur Lane preachers, denounce them as rejectors of the holy Sacrament, Unitarians and Schismatics". The description is finally completed with an account of the surrounding buildings. "Around the mosque are the dwelling houses of the priest and their zenana with a small college for the students of the reformed theology, a hospice for pious travellers and several little white shrines in which repose the bones of the Muhammadan Saints."
A steady flow of volunteers from all walks of life kept pouring in the headquarters for receiving instructions in the doctrines of the 'sect' and getting training in the more arduous work of missionaries and recruits. Care was taken in the selection of the volunteers, who were assigned work according to their educational qualification and social status, the youths of high promise were "received in the College and trained in the theology and dialects of Islam" while men of humbler capacity were more hastily trained in the striking doctrines of the reformed faith and sent forthwith to the Frontier. Volunteers of a still lower order were also preferred. They were kindly received at the hopsice and were put under the charge of Abdul Ghaffar, the 'lay brother' and the bursar of the hospice who lectured to them on the desirability and necessity of fighting for the cause in which they believed. In these cases not much 'doctrinaire training' was required. Theirs was a more active duty on the Frontier. The zeal and enthusiasm of these raw recruits were so much aroused by skilful 'indoctrination' that leaving behind their hearths and homes, they set forth voluntarily for the front lines. "The zeal of the fanatics for their religion and their

hatred for the Sikhs, which they also transferred to the successors of the Sikhs, the English, was so great that recruits and money flowed abundantly into Sittana from British India, many years after the apostle, Sayyed Ahmad, had perished.¹

All this work was organised under the direction of the local chief who was also described as the Khalifa. Among the Khalifas appointed by Sayyed Ahmad himself from Patna were Muhammad Hussain, Wilayat 'Ali and Mazhar 'Ali. They, in their turn, had been authorised to appoint their own Khalifas and thus the chain of Khalifas continued.

Among the notes and private papers of the late Moulvi Ghaffar Saheb (referred to earlier) is a list² of the persons upon whom the Khilafat (Deputyship) of Sayyed Ahmad devolved one after another. Each Khalifa was assisted by a Committee of counsellors, a 'Minister' of War, Finance etc.

The list is as follows:


¹. JRAS, Bombay Vol. XIV, 1880, pp. 363-64. Italics are mine.
². The list is also copied in the copy of Tazkira-i-Sadqa belonging to the late A. Ghaffar (p.58). For note on the importance of the valuable copy of the work, see Introduction.
(2) Wilayat Ali\(^1\) Amir; Enayat Ali, Minister for War; Farhat Husain, in charge of finance and recruitment of volunteers.

(3) Farhat Husain (Khalifa of Wilayat Ali), Amir; Yahya Ali, Adviser; Ahmadullah and Abdul Rahim Counsellors.

(4) Yahya Ali (Khalifa of Farhat Husain), Amir; Abdul Rahim, in charge of Finance; Ahmadullah, Counsellor; along with the surviving ones of the Counsellors mentioned above.

(5) Ahmadullah, Amir; Mubarak Ali,\(^2\) in charge of Finance; Iradat Husain, Counsellor; names of other members unknown.

(6) Mubarak Ali, Amir; Muhammad Hasan,\(^3\) Finance.

(7) Muhammad Hasan, Amir; (no other name is given in the list).

(8) Abdul Rahim (probably after his return from the Andaman Island), Amir; Muhammad Ibrahim, Abdullah of Ghazipur, and Abdul Aziz Rahimabadi, Counsellors.\(^4\)

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1. Muhammad Husain and Wilayat Ali were appointed Khalifas direct by Sayyed Ahmad, Farhat Husain younger brother of Wilayat Ali was appointed Khalifa by the latter (T.S. p.41). Most of the Counsellors were members of the Sadiqpur family.

2. He was a resident of Hajipur (district Muzaffarpur). Further details vide infra.

3. He was the youngest son of Wilyat Ali,

4. The regular organisation broke down after Abdul Rahim.
This list is an important document. It gives us an idea of the Working Committee of the Muhammad movement. It was the highest body organising and conducting the Movement. For obvious security reasons its composition and working were not based upon written regulations. All the members were imbued with the same spirit of sacrifice and service and the system worked smoothly on the basis of tacit understanding. It is also evident from the list that the Head (Amir) succeeded by seniority in the service of the Movement and not by seniority of age or rank. The list is also in complete accord with that we know from documentary evidence of the subsequent history of the Movement and the ends of the careers of the Amirs.

For some time during the period of revival under the Ali Brothers the Khalifa at Patna was Yahya Ali and it was his organising genius which ministered to the multifarious requirements of the chief centre at Patna. His duties, to mention only a few, included public ministrations in the mosque, lecturing to the students on 'doctrinaire' points, corresponding with the District centres, inspecting the arms to be forwarded to the Frontier and personality supervising the complicated system of drafts by which large sums of money were secretly transmitted. Abdul Ghaffar, the bursar, assisted him in the management of the temporal affairs such as the
boarding and lodging of the volunteers and students but the central organising genius was Yahya Ali. It will not be out of place to note here a few extracts from the judgement of Herbert Edwardes on the Ambala Trial in which Yahya Ali was one of the chief accused persons. Remarked the judge: "It has been proved against Yahya Ali that he was the main spring of the great treason which this trial has laid bare ... He has enlisted subordinate Agents to collect money and preach Muslim Jehad. He has deluded hundreds of thousands of his countrymen into treason and rebellion. He has plunged the Government of British India by his intrigues into a Frontier War which has cost hundreds of lives ... What he has done he has done with forethought, resolution and the bitterest treason. He belongs to a hereditarily disloyal and fanatical family". ¹

It could hardly have occurred to Edwardes that a day would come when his own very bitter denunciation of Yahya Ali would be quoted as a testimony to the latter's patriotic efforts.

II. Itinerant Preachers:

The itinerant preachers were the linchpin of the internal organisational set-up of the Muhammadic. These were

¹. C.R. Vol. XL. 1864, p. 132.
a dedicated and self-effacing band of workers who traversed over the whole country, spreading their message into the interior areas and collecting funds for the Movement. The climatic conditions of India and also the age-old traditions of wandering Yogis and Sanyasis rendered feasible and even attractive this system of wandering missionaries. The rigours of climate 'which sends men to seek 'shelter' were not stringent in the country and for the greater part of the year these preachers could move about unhampered. The spectacle of a wandering Faqir was nothing new to the simple unsophisticated villagers. On the contrary, they were quite often welcomed and offered free board and lodge for short periods. Here is a typical example of the preacher on his march, drawn out in the inimitable language of Hunter. "Much more does the Muhammadi Missionary's lonely life render him an object of interest to the villagers upon his route. Throughout many months of the year he enters the doors of no human dwelling. He comes from a distant Province, and during the long journey he admits no companion, save perhaps a faithful disciple, to interrupt his self communings. His serenity of demeanour and indifference to external external surroundings make
him a visibly different being from ordinary men. It is not surprising, therefore, that the villagers cluster around him and forget for a moment their dispute about water courses, and their long standing boundary feuds.¹

These teachers took papins to see that there was nothing in their teaching to excite the suspicion of the authorities. In connection with the activities of Enayat. Ali it has already been described how the Magistrate of Rajahahi went to the extent of asking a complainant against the 'seditious' activities of the former to show cause why he should not be prosecuted for filing a false complaint. In fact the persistent failure of the authorities to glean the real significance of the work of these preachers, upon which the super-structure of rebellion was raised, is striking and is severely criticised both by Hunter and O'Kinealy. Their teachings were a guarded mixture of expounding the necessity of socio-religious reforms and that of the struggle against the foreign rulers. Naturally enough, in many of the villages the age-old traditions and usages were too deeply embedded and the disappointed preacher had "to shake off the dust of obdurate hamlets from his feet".² But his message also struck a favourable response in many a home.

¹. I.M., p. 72
². C.R., Vo. XL, p. 133.
Care was taken to train intensively a select individual. When circumstances appeared favourable the missionary often down settled down as a village teacher or in some such other avocation, married locally and thus helped form the nucleus of a local unit. Having done his work thoroughly he moved on leaving the local man as a trustworthy deputy. Besides such local leaders, many more villagers were also 'initiated' and they were often asked to accompany the preachers and during their long journeys they were prevailed upon to attend to the call of the hour— a war was waging on the Frontier, volunteers were needed there, it was the highest service one could render, the choicest eminence one could achieve; wouldn't they take the chance of a lifetime which had come their way? There could hardly be any other answer to such repeated exhortations after months of living in a company surcharged with zeal, enthusiasm and a selfless spirit of independence, and so the flow of volunteers to the Frontier continued. Hunter rightly remarks that "they (the wandering missionaries) have enveloped the whole of Bengal in their meshes and converted many thousands of useful British subjects, first, into vagrant fanaties and then into bitter traitors to the Crown".

1. Ibid.
(iii) **District Centres**:

The next unit in the hierarchical structure of the internal organisation were the District Centres. These came to be established as a result of the itinerant preachers settling down in the interior villages when they found the response encouraging. Such centres were spread over the whole of Bengal and many other parts of the country Hunter\(^1\) gives a detailed account of two such centres in the Malda district of Bengal, along with a description of the system of their working.

About 1841 one Abdul Rahman a resident of Lucknow and one of the Khalifas of Wilayat Ali, came to Malda during the course of his preaching tours and having married and taken up a job as school teacher settled there permanently. His job enabled him to meet people of all sections and particularly to exercise his influence over the young. He carried on the double task of raising men and money from his circle and forwarding them to Patna. In this work he was ably assisted by one Rafique Mandal who was originally a cultivator but had been appointed as a 'tax-collector' by Abdul Rahman. Their work continued undisturbed for a long time until the authorities became suspicious in 1853. Rafique Mandal's house was searched and some papers proving "the seditious character of his

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1. I.M., pp. 78-81.
"trade" were discovered and he was arrested. He was, however, released soon after owing to what Hunter describes (and criticises) as the official policy of "contempt towards petty conspirators." After his release Rafique Mandal gave over his work to his son. Amiruddin, who proved to be a worthy successor and carried on the work with great ability, circumspection and success. Under him, the Malda Centre grew in importance and became the favourite rendezvous of practically all the District heads in Bengal and served as a convenient halting place for many of the Patna leaders.¹ (Enayat Ali, Fayyaz Ali and Maqsud Ali) during their tours of Bengal. The work of the centre went on, undisturbed, for over a decade because the District authorities and in particular "an English Magistrate in India had all the reluctance of Prefec of the August Empire to intermeddle with the various beliefs and superstitions of the races over whom he rules. Treason can thus safely walk about under a religious habit."² The Ahmadullah Trial in 1865 drew the attention of the authorities towards the working of this important centre of Wahabi influence. Even then Amiruddin continued his activities. In 1868 he invited the son of the Patna chief to vitalise the slackening zeal of the

1. Ibid., p. 82.
2. Ibid. p. 80.
followers in his area. His jurisdiction spread over three districts, including the whole of Malda and parts of the districts of Murshidabad and Rajshahi. The number of recruits he sent to the Frontier could not be ascertained exactly but Hunter computes2 that in one single Muhammadi outpost on the Frontier, containing over 400 men, more than 10 per cent had been sent from areas under his jurisdiction. This active centre was dispersed and its leaders arrested in 1869, of which a detailed account is given hereafter.

This, in brief, is the story of the working of one of the typical Muhammadi District Centres. The working of hundreds of other centres all over the country must have been more or less similar.

(iv) Collection of Funds:

For the purpose of collection of funds several villages were grouped into 'fiscal circles' each under a chief 'tax-collector'. Under him there were collectors for each village. Populous villages had, besides the tax-collector, a chief priest who led the public prayers in the mosque, a lay chief who was a sort of General

1. Ibid., f. n. 3.
2. Ibid., p. 80.
Manager and a Dak-Sardar\textsuperscript{1} whose duty was to arrange for messengers who carried out the hazardous secret missions of transmitting letters and money out of the country. The chief tax collectors made annual tours\textsuperscript{2} of their circles to see that all the due amounts had been collected. In between their tours they received regular transmissions of the funds collected by the local men and sent these on to Patna where a ledger was maintained of the receipts of such amounts.

Hunter refers\textsuperscript{3} to the statement of an Indigo Planter of Uttar Pradesh to the effect that his Muslim employees kept aside regularly a portion of their wages as contribution to the Muhammadi Fund. The more daring among them took periodical leave and went out to render active service on the Frontier. Between 1830-46 the Muslim bailifs of these Indigo planters frequently urged the necessity of joining the Muhammadi centre on the Frontier as a ground for a few months' leave.

Contributions to the Muhammadi Fund could be made both in cash and kind. The following were the chief forms

\begin{itemize}
\item 1. Ibid., p. 81, f. n.3.
\item 2. Ibid., p. 82.
\item 3. Ibid., p. 20.
\end{itemize}
of contributions:

(1) **Zakat**: It is one of the obligatory payments in Islam. It is a sort of income tax levied at a fixed annual rate from persons within certain categories of income. Originally this levy was meant to create a sort of a Welfare Fund out of which the needs of the indigent were met. The Mubammadis, however, used it primarily to finance the "war against the English."

(2) **Alms** were also given by the devout both in cash and in kind. The sale proceeds of the latter were collected and transmitted in consolidated amounts. The skin of goats and sheep, sacrificed on the occasion of Baqrid, were also collected,\(^1\) processed and sold.\(^2\)

(3) Another levy of a universal kind was the Muthia or a handful of rice or other grains. Under this system each household was treated as a unit and expected to set aside one Muthi or handful of grain, out of the daily quota of consumption, for the common fund. Such small savings did not put any strain even on the poor class contributors\(^3\) and at the same time enabled sufficiently large

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1. Ibid., Also see Govt. of Bengal, Judl. Dept. Prog. No., 168, dated., 1868.
2. This is still one of recognised methods amongst the Muslims of donating to orphanages where boys collect the skins on the occasion of Baqrid, process them, sell them and collect the proceeds.
quantities of grains to be stocked. These were gathered and sent periodically to the headquarters. This Muthia system was a well-known and useful method of collection of funds and was, later on, recommended for adoption by the leaders of other political parties, including the early Congress Party. Surendranath Bannerjee, at a meeting held in Calcutta in July, 1883, while moving a resolution for raising a National Fund for financing the agitation for constitutional rights, observed, "How do the Wahabis raise their fund? I speak of the Wahabi reformers and not the Wahabi rebels,¹ so you need not be afraid. They do it in this way. Every householder puts by a handful of rice before he takes his meal and these handfuls are all collected in the course of a week and then they are taken to a mosque for the Wahabi Missionary to come round and take them up. In this way a Fund is raised for the maintenance of the Wahabi Mission.²

The preachers invariably emphasised the necessity and the 'blessings' of donating generously for the Movement. It was specially recommended for those who, for some reason, could not go to the Frontier and participate personally in the war.

1. This distinction between the efforts of Wahabi preachers and Wahabi rebels was, probably, drawn out purposely. Otherwise the authorities would have objected to the adoption of a method used by "rebels."
Besides these regular-levies, special payments were also made on periodical occasions such as marriages, births, festivals and mournings. These were known as Khayrats, Fitra, Sadqa,\(^1\) etc. Large amounts of sum donations were also secretly sent from time to time by the wealthy followers of the Movement inside British India.

Transmission of Money

Such was the Muhammadi system of collection of funds. The other and more difficult work was the organising of a system for secretly transmitting the amounts thus collected to the Frontier. It was in this work that the Patna leaders, and particularly Yahya Ali, excelled. He organised a system of Muhammadi hospices along the entire length of the route to the Frontier and placed, each, under the charge of a proven disciple. Hunter gives the following graphic description of the working of this system. "The great North road was divided into suitable sections and the Muhammadi traitor on their way to our Enemy's Camp journeyed in safety through strange provinces in the full assurance that at the end of each stage there were friends upon the look out for their arrival. The Muhammadi agents in charge of the hospices were men of diverse

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ranks of life, all devoted to the overthrow of the British Rule and each the head of a local committee of traitors. Yahya Ali must have displayed a very deep knowledge of character in selecting these men for neither fear of detection nor hope of reward has induced a single one of them to appear against their leader in the hour of his disgrace and at this moment although it is known that a chain of asylums, like that of Thansar, connected Patna with the Punjab Frontier yet no one can come forward and put his fingers upon the particular spots.¹

This delicate and difficult operation (transmitting of money) was performed by a host of Secret Agents.² Although by force of necessity their work was shrouded in secrecy and not much detail is available about them a brief account of the hazardous task is being given below on the basis of such references as are available.

These agents proceeded with the cash (usually in gold Mohars or Guineas) from Patna. In order to lessen the weight and bulk of the assorted collection of cash they were converted into guineas which were own jackets, shoes or on other parts of the body of the messenger. In the work of exchanging the cash into Gold Mohars Amir

¹. C.R., vol. XL, 1864, p. 136
². For Lit of Secret Agents see Selections.
Khan, the famous hide merchant of Patna with his Agency in Calcutta, was of great assistance. Services of some money agents in Delhi were also utilised. In Syed Ahmad's time Delhi occupied a more important place in the scheme for transmission of money. The chief agent for this work in Delhi was a person named Ishaq.\(^1\) Syed Ahmad in his letter to the Patna leaders mentions the name of Ishaq as a safe and dependable person for transmitting money. Later, Patna became the centre and the transmission was done via Thaneswar and Rawalpindi. The secret agent proceeded along the entire length of the country, sometimes alone and in disguise, and often in groups along with other and bigger caravans. They proceeded by stages, staying in the different centres established along the entire Grand Trunk Road by the organizing genius of Yahya Ali. Their journeys, however, were not always as easy and secure as Hunter's description quoted above, would have us believe. Sometimes prior information about the intended route of the messenger bringing the money leaked out and yet they had to brave the hazard. We do not have many accounts left of the brave exploits of these resourceful and sincere agents. Only one story of the mission\(^2\) of Pir Mohammad, the ace Agent in Sayyed Ahmad's time, is

\(^1\) Mehr, 111, P. 58.

\(^2\) Mehr, 111, pp. 93-96.
mentioned below which will give some idea of the perilous nature of their work. He was going from Delhi to the Frontier after receiving a draft of Rs. 3,000/- and 1,000 gold Mohars in cash. Ranjit Singh came to know of this and instructed General Ventura to be on the lookout for the messenger. He was finally traced out and searched and the hidden money on his person was found out. Pir Mohammad was given a good beating and put under arrest in Lahore. The Mughals, who too had their own means of getting information, came to learn of his arrest through the local sympathisers of Sayyed Ahmad in Lahore. Finally, Hakim Mughisuddin of Saharanpur who was acquainted with Bengam Samroo, the widow of William Reinhardt, the famous German soldier of fortune, got a letter written by her to General Ventura and Pir Mohammad was released. He returned to Frontier after many other vicissitudes.

Another means of transmitting money was by drafts. Cash money was deposited with the bankers in Delhi and in Peshawar who forwarded them to the Frontier after a deduction of 12 per cent as commission. The rate charged was exorbitant but they were reliable and there is hardly any instance on record of money being held up or mislaid in transmission. Drafts of small amounts were preferred as they were easily cashed. Often instructions were given to bankers to keep aside some amount for being paid to the
dependents of the volunteers left in India. Special care was taken to look after them. It is as remarkable testimony to the character and integrity of the men doing this work that there is not a single instance of their ever defaulting with a single pie out of the huge amounts entrusted to them. Their travelling expenses were paid for separately and even when this was exhausted due to some unforeseen emergency on the way (illness, arrest or hold-up) the replenished it by doing odd manual jobs and never drew upon the amount meant for transmission.

During the time when Ahmadullah was in-charge of the funds, a register was maintained in which the different amounts received from time to time were noted. This register was kept in the name of Abdul Ghaffar. Elahi Bux (who turned approver in the Ahmadullah Trial Case) was entrusted with the work of purchasing gold Mohars and getting Hundees (Drafts) prepared. Both these works were vital links in the system of transmission of money and it is noteworthy that they were done through Hindu bankers. The names of the firms of Ramkishan Fatahchand and Manohar Das (Patna) Juggernath and Mukoond Lal (Delhi), Lalchand Kurrum Singh (Benares), Samunt Rai and Sheo Buksh (?) and Santu and Moti (of Manor, Frontier) may be mentioned in this connection. Some idea of the large

amounts of money which were transmitted by the Patna leaders can be had from the fact that during the three years, 1862-65, (when the Ambeyla Campaign was going on) sum of Rupees one lakh was transmitted from Patna through one banker, Manohar Ram only. 1 it can safely be said on the basis of this that very large amounts of money were sent during the long period of time that the system had been in vogue.

Cypers and Code Messages

An intricate system of code words for secret messages and for acknowledging receipts of money was in use right from the time of Syed Ahmad himself. One cypher code used in a document, seized in the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case, still remains to be decoded. Aliases were also used. As far as possible direct use of the names of the writers and the addressees was avoided. Literary and religious similies and allusions were used to convey secret meanings. The system of code words 2 and aliases was developed to a high degree of efficiency by the Patna leaders who depended much upon it for transmitting the funds collected by them.

1. Selections, p. 98.
2. Secret Cons., No. 15, dated 12th June, 1839, App. B.

The message in cypher is as follows: The figures are in Arabic numerals:

81169 16916 161911 616961
11696 116966 161911 116961
11696 116911 169116 1691161
112116 11611211 991169 169611
The attention of the Government was on several occasions drawn to the existence in India of a network of "treasonable correspondence" and supplies of men and money to the Frontier 'colony' of which Patna was the chief centre.

James Abbott, the Deputy Commissioner of Hazara, drew\(^1\) the attention of the Board of Administration, Punjab, as early as 1849 to the "existence of a remarkable nest of emigrants from Hindoostan who bring with them their own arms and means of subsistence and sit down at Sittana" which was a rallying post of all who hoped "see a successful Ghazwa" (battle). He also referred to the secret smuggling by these emigrants of "golds on their persons and letters in bamboo canes. "Nawab Wazir Muhammad Khan of Tonk, a disciple of Sayyed Ahmad, was also reported to be sending large sums of money annually. Their number in the previous two years was 60 or 80 but it had increased in the last fortnight to over two hundred and thousands more were expected. In subsequent letter.\(^2\) James Abbott repeatedly drew the Board's attention to the continued collection of men at Sittana from the different parts of India, particularly Rajputana and Rohilkhand. They came, via Attock, "disguised as beggars and students."

ragged garments were cast off on reaching Sittana. Godowns were also being constructed in Sittana where large supplies of wheat, 'brought on camels, were being stored. Cap. Abbott was apprehensive "of the existence of these enthusiasts in the strong country of Hazara" where they could always be utilised as the nucleus of anti-Government activities in the event of trouble from the Sikhs or the Durranis. He thought that in the event of any fresh trouble in the Punjab Hazara might be selected as the theatre of the first out-break. "The elements of strife are numerous, the ground is high and distant from the capital and the consummate judgement which selected Mooltan would not be slow to perceive the points of parallel." He advised the establishment of armed posts along the Indus to cut out the source of supply to Sittana. The Board\(^\text{1}\) however, did not share the apprehensions of Capt. Abbott. They did not agree to the establishment of such armed posts in forward areas without suitable means of communications. They perceived no grounds for an insurrection in Hazara. "All the enemies of the British Government have recently been signally defeated ... The people of Hazara ... fickle then, and faithless as they are, the time has not yet come for religious war, whatever fanatics may preach or whatever a

\(^{1}\) Ibid. Letter from H.P. Burn, Dy. Secy, to Board of Administration, to Major Abbott, Dy Commissioner, Hazara, dated 9th Aug., 1949.
few desperadoes may determine." The difference over policy between the man on the spot, Capt. Abbott, and the Board of Administration continued increasing in bitterness of tone and finally Abbott had to leave his charge in 1853. It is however only fit to admit the remarkable political sagacity of Capt. Abbott whose assessment of the situation was far more correct than that of the Board which was destined to be soon disillusioned in its pious hope of receiving continued loyalty from the "people of Hazara who had experienced nothing but favours at our hands."

Patna once again figured in 1852 as the centre of treasonable correspondence and of supply of men and money to the Wahabi colony on the Frontier. The Government as on so many previous occasions, failed to realise the real seriousness of the situation. The Governor of Bengal contented himself with drawing up a Minute, dated 26th August, 1852, on the subject which stated that "that a correspondence exists between persons in Patna and the fantics in Swat and Sittana, I have no doubt." Although the Governor did not share the apprehension of the Magistrate he considered it "expedient to watch the conduct and proceedings of the parties implicated and in the event of armed men being assembled (by the Wahabis, as reported by the Magistrate), he would take proper measures for upholding of the Government authority".¹

It was this system of supply of men and money from India which kept the struggles of the Muhammadi principality on the Frontier alive. Without the continuance of this vital support the struggle could not have been carried on. It was the accidental discovery of this source of supply in 1863 which led the Government of India, chastening under the heavy blows of the Ambeyla Campaign, to devote all their resources to tracing out these "centres of sedition" inside India and to seal them off. After that, even though the Muhammadi centre continued on the Frontier, its strength and effectiveness was gone. Once the perennial flow of the vital supplies from the fertile Gangetic plains was stopped the young sapling of the Muhammadi State shrivelled up on the hot barren rocks of the Frontier.

II Infiltration by the Wahabis into the Indian Army:

the other main plank in the organisational work of the Muhammadi was their attempt to infiltrate into the Indian units of the British army. Syed Ahmed himself had realised very early in his career the necessity of having a trained and disciplined armed force for the coming struggle. His idea was not, however, of just a mercenary army but a band of dedicated volunteers trained on the basis of certain ethical and moral standards. It was with
this motive that he had joined the army of Amir Khan of Tonk where he was given the key post of a religious preacher. It enabled his to give the type of moral training to the soldiers which he wanted. The author of the Makhzan narrates several "miracles" performed by Sayyed Ahmad during his stay there. These may well have enable him to exercise some influence over the minds of the raw soldiers.

The model set up by the leader of the Movement was followed with certain modifications by his followers in the subsequent period.