CHAPTER V

NON-LEAGUE MUSLIM ORGANIZATIONS

It was once believed that the Congress virtually lost all its support among Muslims between the Non-cooperation Movement (1920-22) and the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-33). Gyanendra Pandey, for example, adds that this support was never to be regained.\(^1\) It has also been asserted that Muslims were "severely aloof" from the Quit India movement. To substantiate this claim colonial officials wrote in August 1942, "... In fact Hindu clerks going to work in Cawnpore preferred to do so through the Muslim quarters, where for the last 10 years they have been afraid to show their faces."\(^2\) Pandey also quotes the same source to illustrate his point about the alienation of Hindus and Muslims from one another for a long time.\(^3\)

Barely ten months after the beginning of the Quit India movement, the colonial officials, and those who based their assertions on colonial reports, were proved wrong. In June 1943, a Momin Conference was held at Kanpur at which the Government was condemned and the Muslim League was opposed. Even according to unfriendly colonial sources attendance at this Momin Conference was 1,000 persons.\(^4\) This attendance was big considering that most of the

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\(^2\) Colonial officials also believed that "the two communities have been behaving almost as if the other did not exist" and that the violence of the Quit India movement had made a "very deep impression on Muslims." See FR - 18/8/1942, both for the First and Second fortnight of August 1942, Home Political Department, National Archives of India (NAI).

\(^3\) Gyanendra Pandey, op. cit., p. 141.

\(^4\) FR - 18/6/1943, II half of June 1943, Home Political, NAI.
nationalist leaders had been jailed due to their participation in the Quit India movement. This attendance of 1,000 at the Momin Conference in June 1943 at Kanpur was big as compared to the mobilization done in this period at Kanpur by the Muslim League\(^5\) or even by Hindu communalists.\(^6\) This evidence requires that we examine the cardinal beliefs and mobilization strategies adopted by the less well-known organizations working among Muslims, like the Momin Conference mentioned above, in the 1920s and the 1930s or even later.

Some scholars have painstakingly documented such organizations among Muslims who ‘rejected the two-nation theory and worked to harmonise the two dominant communities’. In the opinion of these scholars such organizations were the Khudai Khidmatgars, the Jaimiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind, the Ahras, the Khaksars, the Momin Conference and the Shia Political Conference. Communal Muslim leaders ridiculed these organisations and claimed that they were ‘like the bloom on peach; you touch them and they are gone.’\(^7\) On the other hand, right in the 1930s, communal Hindu organisations dismissed ‘Nationalist Muslims’ as a ‘perfidious’ group who instead of converting Muslims to the Congress viewpoint had made Congress “bow to the will of Muslim communalists.”\(^8\) With the passage of time, this animosity only increased. Hindu communalists always suspected the

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\(^5\) The Muslim League held a meeting in February 1943 to condemn the statement of the Chairman of the Municipal Board that the colonial rulers preferred Muslim workers at the Central Ordinance Depot in Kanpur. Only 500 to 700 persons attended this meeting. PAI, 19-2-1943, p. 39.

\(^6\) All the Hindu communal organizations of Kanpur were able to mobilize 1,000 persons at the Vikram Bi-Millenium celebrations in December 1943. Here they accused Muslims of being ungrateful and treacherous. See PAI, 10-12-1943, p. 198. Hindu Sabha observed “Independence Day” on May 10 at Lucknow and only 200 persons turned up for this function where the Pakistan scheme was condemned and Rani Jhansi, Shivaji and Prithviraj Chauhan were praised. FR – 18/5/1943, II half of May 1943, Home Political, NAI.


\(^8\) The Hindu Outlook, 11-5-1938, p.3.
loyalty of nationalist leaders among Muslims. After the 'Partition Plan' was accepted in June 1947, the Hindu communalists became more vocal on this score and Mahant Digvijaynath, President U.P. Hindu Mahasabha, declared in Kanpur that 'most of the so-called nationalist Muslims were fifth columnists who deserved to be thrown out of India.'

Local units of all the afore-mentioned non-League Muslim organizations, except the Khudai Khidmatgars, were present in Kanpur. A short description of their work and activities is warranted here because they were quite different from the Muslim League. As compared to the latter, these organisations were nationalist in orientation and some of their activities were consciously undertaken to foster Hindu-Muslim unity. Moreover, the respectable presence of these organisations among Muslims through the 1920s right up to the late 1930s shows that Muslim League was not the 'sole' arbiter of Muslim destiny. And the continued existence of these organisations even in the 1940s proves that 'separatism' was not the sole aspiration of all Muslims even during the last few years of colonial rule.

Besides the local units of the aforementioned non-League Muslim organisations, Kanpur's leaders experimented with two other outfits from the early 1930s right up to the early 1940s, viz. Independent Muslim Party and Ittehad-i-Millat. Both of them had Left radicals in their ranks. Both the organisations believed in Hindu-Muslim unity and their political orientation was anti-colonial. Ittehad-i-Millat actually annoyed M.A. Jinnah who was visiting

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9 Vartman, 7-6-1947, p. 4. (The author has translated Vartman, a Hindi daily published from Kanpur, here and elsewhere.)
Kanpur in March 1941. Ittehad insisted on Hindu-Muslim unity while Muslim League had moved miles away from this goal with its separatist demand for Pakistan. So, Jinnah refused to even accept the welcome address of Ittehad, as we will show when we discuss this organisation later in this chapter.

Non-League Muslim organisations challenged the Muslim League from the 1930s but, as we know, they could not triumph over the League's juggernaut. Kanpur-based units of all-India non-League organisations were quite small; they could not even attempt this task on their own. Studies on some of the non-League Muslim organisations have taken note of this failure but have acknowledged that the reasons for it were 'not sufficiently clear'. However, a localised study like the present one gives us three tentative leads to the possible reasons for the failure of some of the non-League Muslim organisations to checkmate or subvert the politics of the Muslim League.

Firstly, the efforts of the non-League Muslim organisations to check the Muslim League were frustrated by the existing structure of political-constitutional power which recognised only the propertied and the educated as voters. Prominently consisting of poor Muslims and the marginalised ulama, the non-League Muslim organisations could not politically project themselves adequately and did not qualify for recognition by the powers that be. So, instead of progressively increasing their political presence, especially in the 1940s, they suffered, over time, from a severe depletion in their ranks.

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Secondly, the success of the non-League Muslim organisations was preempted by the fact that they did not take the lead in setting the agenda of either nationalist affairs or what came to be known as "Muslim Politics". They sometimes blindly toed the political line of nationalist organisations without recognizing that the propagation of communal ideas had created fears of "Hindu domination" among common Muslims in the 1930s and hence, even the ordinary Muslims were groping for some 'minority safeguards' along with Independence. In the 1940s, the non-League Muslim organisations just responded to the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan by floating concepts like "Muttahidah Qaumiyat" (or 'united Indian nationalism') and Hukoomat-i-Ilahia (or 'the rule of God under the golden rules of Islam'). But these organisations never seriously propagated or demanded the incorporation of these concepts in the programme of their own organisations. Hence, the half-hearted confrontation with the slogan of 'Pakistan' with alternative ideological goals did not carry conviction with their Muslim co-religionists.

Earlier one would not have touched a problematic term like "Muslim Politics" even with a barge pole. But the hesitation of the author in using this term, with necessary qualifications, of course, was considerably reduced by certain historiographical developments. Some scholars used the term in inverted commas because they did not think that there was a separate domain of "Muslim politics". They assumed that Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and K.M. Ashraf did not believe in the existence of a separate 'Muslim' domain either. See Salil Misra, *A Narrative of Communal Politics Uttar Pradesh, 1937-39* (New Delhi/ Thousand Oaks/ London, Sage Publications, 2001), p. 49n. Ironically, Ashraf's book, re-published in the same year as Misra's monograph, bears the term in its title, viz. K.M. Ashraf, *An Overview of Muslim Politics in India* (Translated from Urdu and edited with an introduction by Jaweed Ashraf) (New Delhi, Manak Publications, 2001). However, we believe that because they had enormous ideological, caste/ biradari, class, linguistic, regional and gender differences, all Muslims cannot be rolled in to one single analytical category. Hence, like Misra, we also use the term "Muslim Politics" with necessary qualifications, in inverted commas, because even we believe that no single organization/ ideological strand had a monopoly over the politics of all Muslims, viz. the politics in which all Muslims were involved or the politics which reflected all the concerns of Muslims as a group. In fact this chapter tries to explore the different ideological and political strands among Muslims in Kanpur.
Thirdly, the success of non-League Muslim organisations was also obstructed by their inability to recognize in time that they were shrinking and should, therefore, unite to face the juggernaut of the Muslim League. In 1946, when they actually tried to unite and halt the onward march of the Muslim League it was a case of too little and too late.

We propose dealing with some of the important non-League Muslim organisations of Kanpur in this chapter.

A. ALL-INDIA RIVALS OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

I. The Khaksars

The founder of Khaksars, Maulana Inayatullah Mashriqi (1888-1963), was a foreign-educated, high-placed official of the education department in Punjab. He formed the Khaksar organisation in April 1931 and published Isharaat - a booklet containing the objectives and practical programme of the Khaksars. The establishment of a (Heavenly) kingdom on earth and the collective predominance of Islam were the objectives of the Khaksars. The Khaksars wore a uniform ad carried a shovel during their drill. The organisation was based on dictatorship, not democracy; hence, the Khaksars and their neighbourhood recruits were supposed to obey the salaar's (or Commander's) order without any question or objection.¹²

¹² Maulana Inayatullah Mashriqi (1888-1963) wrote Tazkira in 1924 and the purpose of this book was 'to nullify the destructive influence of the teachings of mullahs who served their own interests and made a fool of the whole world.' In his Isharaat, Mashriqi instructed every Khaksar to collect at least ten persons from the neighbourhood after the prayers on sunset and assume their leadership. He was required to ask them to stand in a line and carry like the Prophet a shovel (called belcha in Hindustani), practice military drill and the Khaksars were supposed to prepare the neighbourhood recruits to sacrifice their life, property and even son in the cause of Allah and Islam. Tufail Ahamd Manglori, Towards a Common Destiny: A Nationalist Manifesto (English Translation by Ali Ashraf of Musalmanon ka Roshan Mustaqbil) (New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1994), pp. 300-301.
Khaksars did not join the Azad Muslim Conference on April 27-29, 1940 which protested against the Muslim League's idea of Pakistan. This was the reason for which W.C. Smith did not count them among the pro-nationalist Muslim groups such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Ahrars, the Momin Conference, etc. Instead, Smith lists Khaksars with the Muslim League as a carrier of Islamic Nationalism. Tufail Ahmad Manglori accepted that the Khaksars held ideas akin to the Muslim League in the beginning but he also observed a change in the policy of its founder, Allama Mashriqi, after 1943. Around the time Muslim League passed the Pakistan resolution at Lahore in March 1940, Mashriqi was imprisoned. A hundred Khaksars were killed around the same time in Lahore and Sikandar Hayat Khan's Government in Punjab rounded up Mashriqi in Lahore for practising Civil Disobedience. Mashriqi was sent as far away as Madras to serve his jail term. He was released from jail in January 1943. While addressing followers on reaching Lahore, after his release, Mashriqi reportedly urged that 'in these critical times India needs peace.' In our own evidence in Kanpur we observe that Khaksars were akin to the Muslim Leaguers till 1940 but then they moved away from the Muslim League considerably and in street fights, which ensued later, they became so inimical to Muslim League that they inflicted two casualties on its cadre.

14 Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., p. 302. Initially, the Salaar, Allama Mahriqi, used to shower praise on the British but he was very critical of Congress, Khilafat, the Ahrars, the Khudai Khidmatgar Red Shirts, etc. Mashriqi had a personal clash with Ahrars at Lucknow on the Madeh Saheba controversy during the period of the Congress Ministry. Ibid., p. 301.
Till 1940, not only were Khaksars on friendly terms with Muslim League but they also had the same leaders at the local level. For instance, in Kanpur, Shariuddin was the Vice President of City Muslim League but he was also the leader of Khaksars in the city. In February 1940, Shariuddin commanded a camp of 600 Khaksars at Kanpur. They gave a Guard of Honour to Mr. G.K. Hundoo who was the Deputy Superintendent of Police in Kanpur City.\textsuperscript{15} After a year, Jinnah came to Kanpur and got a rousing reception at the railway station. The massive crowd, which welcomed him on his arrival, included the Khaksars.\textsuperscript{16} However, this bonhomie changed to mistrust and active opposition later.

Relations between Khaksars and Muslim League got strained because Khaksars resented the secession plan of Muslim League\textsuperscript{17} and they also began disliking the 'toadyism' of the League. Congress also criticised the Muslim League on similar grounds but this did not make Khaksars friends with Congress. In fact, the Khaksars called the Congress 'a group of caste Hindus'.\textsuperscript{18}

Before 1940, Allama Inayat Ullah Khan Mashriqi considered non-violence un-Islamic; he called early Congress a "ladies debating club"; like Churchill he considered Gandhi the "loin-cloth clad nude Mahatma"; and he ridiculed Muslim leaders for being indistinguishable from "Hindu Lalas" because they wore the dress of Hindus, besmeared their forehead with 'tilak' and lived an ascetic life in Ashrams. When Muslim League observed the resignation of Congress Ministries

\textsuperscript{15} The Pioneer, 14-2-1940, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{16} The Leader, 30-3-1941, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{17} FR – 18/ 6/ 1947, I half of June.
\textsuperscript{18} FR – 18/ 10/ 1945, I half of October.
as Deliverance Day on December 22, 1939, Mashriqi said he was not 'delivered'. He continued to be at war with the Congress and boasted that he was victorious in this because the Congress was anxious for peace with him, though he did not want harmony with them. It is said that the Ahrars motivated Mashriqi to become soft to the Congress in the 1940s and, in this period, this leader of Khaksars actually preached Hindu-Muslim unity.19

The main reason for differences (and clashes) between the Khaksars and the Muslim League, according to Allama Mashriqi, was that the League was a body of upper classes and as such 'the Leaguers feared that if the Khaksars entered the political arena there will be no place left for them.'20 The people Khaksars trained in their camps at Kanpur mostly came from Muslims of the artisan class.21 In 1940, Khaksars trained 300 volunteers at Kanpur and some of them came from outside Kanpur district also.22 The interesting thing about these training camps was that they ended with mock fights in which crackers and dummy cannons were also used. Once, in 1940, around 15 Khaksars were injured at a training camp during these mock fights at Kanpur.23

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19 H.L. Seth, The Khaksar Movement (And its Leader Allama Mashraqi) (Delhi, Discovery Publishing House, 1985), pp. 50-54, 77-8 & 120. He said Gandhi wanted people to practice non-violence because he did not want them to pain anybody's heart; like women, he condemned the enemy from a distance and he practiced the famed obstinacy of women who make the life of their husband impossible by such abuses and disobedience that the humble man divorces his wife and takes rest in some other home. Ibid., pp. 52-3.
20 The Leader, 25-10-1945, p. 10. Asked why he did not choose to reform the Muslim League from within, Mashriqi replied, 'Firstly, Muslim League has banned the entry of Khaksars and secondly, we cannot and will not tolerate their fascism and that is all.' Ibid.
21 FR – 18/ 11/ 1942, I half of November. Home Political, NAI.
22 Ibid., – 18/ 5/ 1940, I half of May.
23 Ibid., – 18/ 6/ 1940, I half of June.
The Khaksars could be sometimes very intractable. In 1941, following communal trouble in Kanpur, the District Magistrate ordered a ban on the carrying of arms in May 1941. But Khaksars refused to obey this order on the ground that they had as much right to carry their belchas (or spades) as the Sikhs had to carry their Kirpans (or daggers). After considerable persuasion, the Khaksars agreed, eventually, to obey this prohibitory order on spades. They did so only after top Khaksar leaders intervened and ordered them to do so.\(^{24}\)

The leaders of Khaksars had a very strong hold on their volunteers but they enforced discipline through corporal punishment also. In the camp of 600 Khaksars in Kanpur city in February 1940 five stripes were awarded to five persons for breach of discipline in the Camp which was under "martial law". One of the five persons punished was Mr. Shariuddin, Commander of the City Khaksars.\(^{25}\) The next year again, the Provincial Hakim-i-Ala (or Provincial Commander) awarded punishment of one lash each to eight Khaksars for not wearing their uniform and five lashes each to some others for slackness in prayers.\(^{26}\)

It was noted by the C.I.D. authorities in October 1945 that while relations between Hindus and Muslims were bad those between different parties of Muslims were worse.\(^{27}\) The attacks on Nationalist Muslims by Muslim Leaguers had considerably increased in the period of elections and also in the times of

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 18/ 5/ 1941, 1 half of May.
\(^{25}\) The Pioneer, 14-2-1940, p. 4.
\(^{26}\) FR – 18/ 7/ 1941, 1 half of July. Home Political, NAI.
\(^{27}\) PAJ, 19-10-1945, p. 165. Such hostilities were also reported in 1937 when Hasrat Mohani went visiting leading Muslims with the request to find ways of reducing them. Ibid., 18-9-1937, pa. 436, p. 572.
parleys between political parties on the future of Indian Government. Allama Masriqi toured the country in October 1945. He claimed that there was no opinion in favour of Pakistan or Muslim League all over northern India. On the other hand, Mashriqi claimed, far more people believed in united action of Hindus and Muslims for achieving the independence of India. This led to considerable tension between the Khaksars and the Muslim League. Hence, Mashriqi warned Muslim Leaguers not to resort to aggression against Khaksars who could pay Leaguers back in their own coin.

Around this time, in October 1945, there was a clash between Khaksars and Muslim Leaguers in Kanpur. The clash was so intense that it claimed the lives of two Muslim League supporters. The reason for this clash was that Khaksars criticised Muslim League for prejudicing the rights of Muslims by their 'toady' behaviour towards the colonial government. On their part, the Muslim Leaguers thought that this criticism was unwarranted because protection of Muslim interests was the avowed goal of their organisation. Tensions between the two organisations went out of hand and violence followed. Two casualties resulted on the side of Muslim League. Exactly a year later, as if to observe the anniversary of this violent clash, it was reported that Khaksars had undertaken intensive propaganda against Muslim League at Kanpur. In October 1946, they

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28 The Leader, 20-10-1945, p. 3.
29 Ibid., 25-10-1945, p. 10.
30 FR – 18/ 10/ 1945. II half of October. Home Political, NAI.
stood in different Mohallas of the city and preached that Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan had failed (even before it was formed).\(^{31}\)

In June 1944, Khaksars took upon themselves the responsibility to create an atmosphere conducive for Gandhi-Jinnah talks. Allama Mashriqi, the National President of Khaksars, met the two leaders in this regard. He even entrusted the task of creating a favourable public opinion for the success of the talks through press, pamphlets etc. to Syed Allah Bux Shah of Kanpur.\(^{32}\) Some League-minded persons of Kanpur resigned from Khaksars because they were unhappy with the disdainful attitude of Allama Mashriqi towards Jinnah. They were also unhappy with Mashriqi’s reverential attitude to Gandhi. In June 1944, Mashriqi was to go to Poona to meet Gandhi. He ordered 300 Khaksars from Kanpur to join him on the train at Jhansi so that they could go and present Gandhi a Guard of Honour.\(^{33}\)

In July 1944, Khaksars from neighbouring districts were invited to participate in the Rajbi Sharif procession because the local organisers wanted to demonstrate the strength of Khaksars before the Muslim League in Kanpur.\(^{34}\) A few months later, in 1944 itself, the Khaksars tried to persuade Muslims not to slaughter cows on Bakr-IId and they also distributed leaflets on Hindu-Muslim unity.\(^{35}\) Around election time, in 1945, Khaksars pledged assistance to any

\(^{31}\) PAI, 18-10-1946, p. 158.
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 30-6-1944, p. 102. Syed Allah Bux wrote to Jinnah to see Gandhi and gave an ultimatum that if a favourable reply was not received in two weeks he would start an India-wide campaign with three million Khaksars at his beck and call. Ibid., 7-7-1944, p. 106.
\(^{33}\) Ibid., 23-6-1944, p. 98.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 14-7-1944, p. 110.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 24-11-1944, p. 179.
candidate who would support the Muslim creed in Legislatures. This did not mean that Khaksars had vowed to support Muslim League. Instead, it was reported that Khaksars helped Nationalist Muslims in elections in UP.

In times of extreme communal animosities and polarization, the Khaksars could not hold their ground against Muslim League in Kanpur and even in UP. Some of them cooperated with Muslim Leaguers during communal riots in November 1946 at Kanpur to achieve common objectives like arranging lorries for the safe conveyance of Muslims from the railway station to the city. But some other Khaksars joined the Muslim League. In November 1945, 20 Khaksars joined Muslim League at Kanpur alone. Earlier, during the six months ending in October 1945, Khaksars lost 382 members to the Muslim League all over UP. In the later half of 1946, the depletion of Khaksar ranks became a torrent. Consequently, in the last four months of 1946, 2,250 (or almost a quarter) of the 9,000 Khaksars in UP left their organisation to become Muslim Leaguers.

Allama Mashriqi opposed the 'langra' (or lame) Pakistan which came into existence in 1947. He announced that if three lakh Khaksars assembled at Delhi's Jama Masjid in June 1947 he would not go to Pakistan. But probably the ranks of Khaksars had depleted so much by desertion that such a large number of them did not gather at the aforesaid place. Hence, Allama Mashriqi first

36 FR – 18/8/1945, I half of August. Home Political, NAI.
37 PAI, 15-3-1946, p. 44.
38 Ibid., 15-11-1946, p. 175.
40 FR – 16/12/1945, I half of December. Home Political, NAI.
41 Ibid., – 18/1/1947, II half of January.
dissolved his organisation\(^{42}\) and then left for Pakistan where he died almost unnoticed on August 25, 1963.\(^{43}\)

**II. The Ahrars**

Another powerful organization with a nationalist orientation, during the period of our study, was Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam or the Ahrars. Founded on December 29, 1929 at Lahore, this organization was mainly concentrated in Punjab. It did, however, have a branch in Kanpur also. Ideologically, Ahrars were men alienated from Khilafatists because, in their own words, the latter had 'deserted nationalism and turned reactionary.' The Ahrars worked with the Congress during the Civil Disobedience Movement and some Ahrars also joined the Individual Satyagraha campaign of the Congress in 1940. The cooperation of the Ahrars with the Congress was a part of their political programme which desired economic, educational and social uplift of Muslims along with the freedom of India. However, W.C. Smith believes that Ahrars were more radical than the Congress in 1931-32 when they aided the State people's movement in Kashmir whereas the Congress, till then, forbade interference by nationalists in States with Indian rulers. He also commends Ahrars for being the first organisation to oppose the Second World War.\(^{44}\) The Ahrars at their Amritsar

\(^{42}\) In his Party’s newspaper, ‘Al Islah’, Allama Mashriqi wrote that he was dissolving his seventeen year old Khaksar organization because it had no revolutionary potential as three lakh Khaksars did not respond to his call to reach Delhi and also because the last hope of fighting for freedom was gone due to the division of 10 crore Muslims into several parts. Vartman, 6-7-1947, p. 1.
\(^{44}\) W.C. Smith (1946), *op. cit.*, pp. 270-272.
Conference in mid-September 1939, decided to oppose recruitment in army and this led to the arrest of hundreds of Ahrar volunteers in Punjab.\textsuperscript{45}

In the 1930s, the Ahrars sometimes managed to mobilize large audiences for their meetings. On June 9, 1936 at Kanpur, Ahrar leaders, viz. Habibur Rehman and Ataullah Shah Bukhari, who was a remarkable orator, addressed 10,000 persons and called upon them to join the Ahrar party. Two persons reportedly responded to this call and joined the Ahrars that day in Kanpur.\textsuperscript{46} This dilemma about having attracted a lot of attention but practically no support from the people, incensed the local leader, Abdul Qaiyum. He launched a membership drive at Kanpur in December 1936.\textsuperscript{47}

Kanpur abounded with the poor and in order to influence them, Abdul Qaiyum declared that the aim of the Ahrar party was to help the poor and the needy by securing employment for them. This claim had a ring of truth in it because the socio-economic program of the Ahrars was quite radical. For instance, the Ahrars demanded exemption from land revenue of agricultural income up to Rs. 500 per annum, ban on the charging of interest on loans and also primary education for all.\textsuperscript{48} However, as it was founded in Punjab, the radical thrust of the Ahrar party's programme was more agrarian. But to give it an urban and pro-poor image in Kanpur, Abdul Qaiyum claimed that the Ahrars and

\textsuperscript{45} Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., p.327.
\textsuperscript{46} PAI, 20-6-1936, pa. 362, p. 308.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 26-12-1936, pa. 733, p. 977.
\textsuperscript{48} Parven Sabharwal, op. cit., p. 119.
Mazdur Sabha (the central trade union of industrial workers in Kanpur) were similar. During his membership drive, Qaiyum pointed out to potential members that both Ahrars and Mazdur Sabha had a red flag, the volunteers of both wore red shirts and both opposed the colonial government.\(^49\)

This political programme attracted Hindus also to the Ahrar meetings. It was, for example, reported that, in March 1938, Ahrars held meetings at which the audience ranged from 600 to 2,000 persons and most of them were Hindus. Addressing one of these meetings Anwar Sabri reportedly said that the Ahrar programme consisted of Hindu-Muslim unity and the expulsion of the British.\(^50\) Earlier, Abdul Qaiyum had vowed to raise an army of 5,000 red shirts in Kanpur to drive the British out of India.\(^51\) The Ahrars were unhappy with Muslim League for doing nothing for Muslims while the Ahrars were fighting in the cause of Madeh Saheba, the Shahidganj mosque and Palestine.\(^52\)

The issues around which the Ahrars mobilized public opinion in Kanpur were Kashmir, Shahidganj mosque and the Sunni demand to recite Madhe Sahaba in Lucknow. We would now take up each of these mobilizations turn by turn.

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\(^{49}\) PAI, 26-12-1936, pa. 735, p. 979.
\(^{50}\) Ibid., 2-4-1938, pa. 114, p. 82. Muslim League leaders were severely criticized and Sabri said Ghulam Mustafa, a local Muslim league leader, should be beaten with shoes. Ibid.
\(^{51}\) Ibid., 11-9-1937, pa. 427, p. 567.
\(^{52}\) Statement of Abdul Qaiyum in a meeting of Ahrars. PAI, 22-1-1938, pa. 24, p. 21.
Muslim peasants of Jammu and Kashmir felt oppressed and the educated Muslims there demanded proportional representation in the services of the princely State. On July 13, 1931, there occurred an incident of police firing on a mob agitating on these issues in Srinagar. After this incident, sections disgruntled with the Maharaja of Kashmir formed an All-India Kashmir Committee in which the Ahmediyas had a strong presence. Some believers in Islam generally detest Ahmediyas because they do not accept the ‘finality of Muhammad’s prophethood.’ The Ahrars, being one of the sections who detested the Ahmediyas, also joined this committee and its agitation in Kashmir. They decided to infiltrate the princely state in August and September 1931 in thousands and the Ahrars reportedly had some influence in the Jammu region. In December 1931, the Kanpur unit of the Ahrar party requested the ruler of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, to accept the legitimate demands of his subjects and expressed sympathy with the victims of the Maharaja’s excesses. There is, however, not much evidence in our sources about the involvement of Kanpur’s Ahrars in the agitation in Kashmir.

53 For the middle class nature of demands and the communal mobilization around them, see U.K. Zutshi, Emergence of Political Awakening in Kashmir (Delhi, Manohar, 1986), especially Chapter 7.
54 For the role the Ahrars played and the reasons for which they took interest in this agitation, see Mridu Rai, Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir (New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2004), pp. 262-264.
55 Pratap, 27-12-1931, p. 25. (The author has translated Pratap here and elsewhere.)
56 More than a decade later, Hazrat Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar, the General Secretary of Majlis-e-Ahrar-i-Islam-e-Hind claimed, though unconvincingly, that 40,000 Ahrar volunteers from all over India went to jail in the Kashmir movement. He also recounted the gains of this movement in Kashmir politics and these included the institution and election of a Legislative Assembly and the improvement of people’s representation in Municipalities, Government Services and schools. He mentioned that due to this movement mosques were restored, taxes were reduced and the right to land ownership was acknowledged due to which even agricultural labourers could own land whereas earlier all the land was owned by the Maharaja. See Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., p.337.
In 1935, the Ahrars played a crucial part in the agitation for the restoration of the Shahidganj mosque to the Muslims of Lahore. 'Lahore Day' was observed at Kanpur also on August 9, 1935. A meeting was held in which around 800 people participated and a procession went down to Machli Bazar mosque in which some 400 persons took part. In his speech on this occasion, Abdul Qaiyum maintained the anti-colonial thrust of his party's ideology by blaming colonial officials, and not Sikh organizations, for the Shahidganj imbroglio. According to the CID report, however, the slogans raised by processionists on August 9, 1935, included "Down with Sikhs" and "Down with the British Government."

Belief in non-violence was probably not a part of Ahrar party's ideology. Yet, some Ahrar leaders were very committed to non-violence. At the height of the Shahidganj Mosque agitation, Abdul Qaiyum, the local Ahrar leader in Kanpur, showed his commitment to non-violence most handsomely. He asked Ahrar leaders to so organize the agitation that Muslims were able to sacrifice their own lives rather than take that of others. This, he maintained, would be a proof of their sincerity.

57 FR — 18/8/ 1935 for the I half of August 1935. Home Political, NAI. In this meeting resolutions were passed demanding the restoration of Shahidganj mosque and release of persons arrested during the agitation for its restoration unconditionally. Qadianis were also condemned in this meeting for calumanizing Ahrars. Ibid.
59 Ibid., 27-7-1935, pa. 327, p. 371.
"Shahidganj Mosque Day" was observed on September 20, 1935 with a public meeting attended by 8,500 persons most of whom were 'lower class Muslims'. However, Shahidganj Mosque could not sustain the same level of involvement of Muslims in Kanpur again. The judgement in the Shahidganj Mosque case was not in favour of the Muslim petitioners of Lahore. A public meeting was held to condemn this judgement in Kanpur which was attended by 700 persons on May 26, 1936. The Shahidganj issue remained live for some time and some people in Kanpur continued to take interest in it. To help the Shahidganj agitation, the Ahrars of Kanpur decided to send 5 volunteers to Lahore under Allahuddin, the captain of Ahrars. The five 'Martyrs' were taken out in a procession through the city on January 2, 1938 before their departure. On January 30, 1938, 300 Ahrars held a meeting against the decision of Punjab High Court in the Shahidganj appeal case. Addressing the meeting, Yusuf Mazdoor, a local Ahrar, said that if the judgement was pronounced in his presence he would have pulled out the judge's tongue and would still pay Rs. 50 to anyone who did it.

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60 Ibid., 28-9-1935, pa. 444, p. 484. In the evening, on the same day, Sikhs organized a counter-meeting in a gurudwara at Kanpur. Ibid., 28-9-1935, pa. 443, p. 483. Sikh assertion continued and on Guru Gobind Singh's birth day on December 31, 1935, a procession of 300 Sikhs (many of whom were wearing kirpans) took out the Guru Granth Sahib on an elephant. Ibid., 11-1-1936, pa. 6, p. 13. The mobilization of Sikhs in Kanpur started in 1930s and it was Punjab-centric. The first time a procession of Guru Granth Sahib was taken out was on July 27, 1932 and only 60 persons participated in it. Later in the evening, protest of Kanpur's Sikh's was registered at a private meeting in a Gurudwara against the granting of special rights to the Muslims of Punjab, probably by the Communal Award. Ibid., 6-8-1932, pa. 532, p. 471.

61 Ibid., 6-6-1936, pa. 330, p. 270.

62 Ibid., 8-1-1938, pa. 3, p. 3.

63 Ibid., 12-2-1938, pa. 50, p. 39.
The sole U.P.-centred issue the Ahrars took up was the one which was at the root of Shia-Sunni differences. The insistence of Sunnis to recite *Madhe Saheba* (or praise of the first three Caliphs after the Prophet) and of Shias to recite *Tabarra* (or the denunciation of the first three Caliphs as usurpers) led to conflicts, especially at the time of Muharram (a month in the Islamic calendar on the tenth day of which public mourning is done for the death of Husain at Kerbala) and Chehlum in Lucknow. After 1905-06, a major conflict between Shias and Sunnis took place at Lucknow in April 1938 in which 10 persons died and 160 were injured.

In 1936, the Ahrars were abetting the Sunni desire to recite *Madhe Saheba* in Lucknow. The Ahrars from Kanpur reportedly fomented 'communal trouble' at Lucknow on behalf of Sunnis who claimed the right to recite *Madhe Saheba* which the Shias contested. No respectable Sunni was involved in the civil disobedience agitation on this issue and, hence, the Ahrars were entirely dependent on what the colonial officials disdainfully called the 'lower bazaar element.' By involving itself in this agitation, Smith maintained, the Ahrars exposed two things. Firstly, they exposed their desperation to outwit Muslim League and attract Muslims by doing 'anything.' Secondly, Ahrars also exposed

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64 Though both were Muslims, Shias (who belonged to the Prophet's family and are a minority section of Islam centred in Iran) and Sunnis (who follow the custom of the Prophet and are the majority Muslim community) differed from each other in their beliefs and ritual practices.
66 FR - 18/ 7/ 1936 for the II half of July.
67 Ibid. - 18/ 8/ 1936 for the II half of August. *Home Political, NAI.*
how ‘unstable’ their ideology was and how ‘tenuous’ the line between communal and secular groups could be.\(^\text{68}\)

In our evidence we found that the relations between the Ahrars and the Muslim League in the 1930s were not only tenuous (as Smith opined) but quite estranged. The Ahrars enlisted Muslims into the Congress and the U.P. Provincial Ahrar Conference on April 13-14, 1937 was reportedly suffused with a distinctly pro-Congress feeling.\(^\text{69}\) At the All-India Ahrar Conference in Batala (Punjab) on October 28, 1937 Ahrars decided to break off relations with the Muslim League because it was opposing the Congress.\(^\text{70}\) The Ahrars at another Conference in Kanpur prohibited their members from joining the Muslim League and, at the same meeting, they also expressed faith in the Muslim Mass Contact programme of the Congress.\(^\text{71}\) This, however, does not mean that the Ahrars were willing to take risks or sacrifice anything for the Congress. When confronted by stronger pro-Jinnah Muslim Leaguers, the Ahrars cleverly argued that they had nothing against Jinnah’s programme and neither were they asking Muslims to join the Congress. Instead, Ahrars claimed, speciously, that they wanted the Congress to join the Ahrar party.\(^\text{72}\)

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\(^{68}\) Smith believed that Ahrars were only a communal group because they stood for their community whereas Muslim Leaguers were communalists because they espoused communalism vis-à-vis other communities. WC Smith, op. cit., p. 272.

\(^{69}\) FR – 18/ 4/ 1937 for the second half of April 1937.

\(^{70}\) Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., p. 326.

\(^{71}\) Parveen Sabharwal, op. cit., p. 121.

\(^{72}\) FR – 18/ 6/ 1937 for the I half of June 1937. Home Political, NAI. The Ahrars were confronted by stronger Muslim Leaguers at Aligarh.
No Muslim Leaguer believed these specious arguments of Ahrars. This was revealed when the sheer presence of the Ahrars at the Muslim League Conference at Lucknow in October 1937 led to disturbances which mercifully remained 'minor.' In Kanpur, less than two months later, this antagonism between the Ahrars and the Muslim Leaguers was not confined to minor disturbances. This animosity spilled over onto the streets in Kanpur. There were demonstrations and stone-throwing between the Ahrars and Muslim Leaguers in December 1937.

Following the Muslim League's Lucknow session in October 1937 and the Ahrar's Batala Conference also around the same time in 1937, the relations between the Ahrars and Muslim Leaguers deteriorated so much that tension prevailed at Kanpur in the third week of November 1937. It may be noted that the Blue Shirts Young Men's Association (called Nili Poshi locally) was started in 1936 to counter the activities of the Ahrars and the President of this Association was a hot-head called Mohammad Faruq. On November 20, 1937, at a meeting Mohammad Faruq threatened Alauddin (of Ahrars) and B.K. Sharma (of Congress) with violence if they persisted in taking out a procession to ridicule the Muslim League. In retaliation, the next day a lot of stones were thrown into a mosque frequented by Muslim Leaguers. The Leaguers believed that the Ahrars

73 Ibid., – 18/10/1937 for the half of October 1937.
74 PAI, 4-12-1937, pa. 527, p. 640.
75 Ibid., 5-9-1936, pa. 516, p. 536. Maulvi Fazal Mohammad Faruq was a young cleric with a great desire for revenge and violence. Addressing 700 co-religionists, in the presence of Shaukat Ali and Abdul Qaiyum, on July 16, 1935, Faruq claimed that other communities and the Government had been trying to crush Muslims for 10 years and the younger generation should be allowed to punish their foes. Ibid., 27-7-1935, pa. 327, p. 371.
were responsible for it as their office was close by. A crowd of about 150 Ahrars protested outside the mosque and a riot was about to break out, the C.I.D. reported.\textsuperscript{76}

The Ahrars continued to remain a bugbear to the U.P. Muslim League even after the elections of 1937.\textsuperscript{77} But at the local level, there was respect and concern for some activities of the Ahrars among a few Muslim Leaguers. The Ahrars, as already stated, had some support among poorer sections of Kanpur's Muslims. Moved by widespread illiteracy among them, the Ahrars ran night schools for the poor Muslims at six places in 1938, viz. Nazirbagh, Begumganj, Chamanganj, Coolie Bazar, Patkapur and Khapra Mohal of Kanpur Cantonment. At the inauguration of the last school Dr. Abdus Samad, the prominent Muslim League leader of Kanpur who was also the MLA from the Kanpur-Allahabad constituency for Muslims in UP Legislative Assembly, praised Ahrars for their constructive work.\textsuperscript{78}

The general tenor of Ahrar-League relations, however, remained hostile. Listing his reasons for the inimical disposition of the Ahrars to the Muslim League, in 1939, Maulvi Habibur Rehman said that whereas the Ahrars wanted a

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 4-12-1937, pa. 527, p. 640.
\textsuperscript{77} Even Nawab M. I. Khan complained about Ahrars to Nehru in his letter dated 30\textsuperscript{th} November, 1937. He said the speeches of these propagandists of the Congress were indescribable as they "verge on obscenity and vulgarity" full of "filthy abuses of the Muslim League and its leaders." Khan deplored that "yet they are received everywhere by Congress men with acclamation and they are commissioned by Congress Committees to plead the cause of their candidates in every election." Nehru pleaded innocent on the ground that due to paucity of time he did not read the Urdu or Hindi press in which the speeches of Ahrars were reported and also added that Ahrars "are not closely associated with the Congress and are not used to our discipline and methods." See K.K. Aziz (ed.), Muslims Under Congress Rule 1937-1939 A Documentary Record Vol. I (1978) (Reprint) (Delhi, Renaissance Publishing House, 1986), p. 210 & 216.
\textsuperscript{78} The Pioneer, 17-12-1938, p. 5.
flourishing Islam and a free India, Muslim League’s highest ambition was merely to secure a few rights and a certain quota in Government services. When the Muslim League celebrated Pakistan day on April 19, 1940, Ahrars organised counter meetings to condemn this scheme.

For different reasons Ahrars were ignored by the right wing of Congress and treated with hostility by its left wing. During his visit to Kanpur in the second week of November 1937, Govind Ballabh Pant, the Premier of UP, was received by a hartal by Muslim shopkeepers on the call given by the Muslim League. The sight of closed shops of Muslims and the black flags put on them pained the Premier. He noticed this while travelling in a Rolls Royce from the Railway Station to the venue of his meeting. Speaking at Phool Bagh later, Pant said that he was ‘pained at the hartal of Muslims and admitted to not being able to specially serve them so far.’ He said ‘justice can be done by looking in all sides’ and because ‘we are in larger numbers in this Province, there are more so-called Hindus in the Ministry.’ The fact of the matter was not all Muslims were on hartal and the Premier failed to notice the presence of a few hundred Ahrar volunteers and Azad Muslim League activists who had gone to the railway station, like others, to receive him. A nationalist also noted that Acharya Kriplani was invited by Ahrars for their Conference at Lucknow in April 1937. Kriplani expressed inability to attend this session of Ahrars due to sickness. Politeness demanded

79 Parveen Sabharwal, op. cit., p. 121.
80 FR -18/ 4/ 1940 for the II half of April 1940. Home Political, NAI. These were dismissed as failures by colonial officials.
that Kriplani should have stopped here but, in his anti-Ahrar zeal, Kriplani added that even if he were in better health he would have refused the invitation because Majlis-i-Ahrar was a communal organisation.\(^{82}\) It has been noted that in February 1941 Gandhi rejected the potential of Ahrars to be allies by declaring them unacceptable to him because they were neither pacifists nor hand-spinners.\(^{83}\)

The Ahrars, like the Jamiat-ul-ulema, played a prominent part in the Muslim Mass Contact Programme of Congress (which began in April 1937 and was terminated in 1939). But the presence of Ahrars or ulema in this programme was not liked at all by left-wing Congressmen like K.M. Ashraf. He wrote to Acharya JB Kriplani, then Secretary of AICC, resenting the installation/occupation by Ahrars of all the prominent positions in Provincial Congress Committees, especially in U.P. Ashraf did not like the idea of Muslims being approached only by co-religionists for involvement in the Congress. Ashraf also did not like the idea of Muslims being contacted by Muslim leaders only in the Muslim Mass Contact programme.\(^{84}\)

Opposed by the Muslim League and not treated kindly by different ideological streams within the Congress, the Ahrars became *persona non grata* in politics. A major blow to the Ahrar party came from desertions after the Muslim League passed the Pakistan resolution and began propaganda on this issue. In

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\(^{82}\) Manglori attributed this haughtiness to success in elections of 1936 having gone to the head of Congressmen. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, *op. cit.*, p. 277.


\(^{84}\) Quoted by Salil Misra, *op. cit.*, p. 233.
July 1940 some Ahrar volunteers crossed over to Khaksars.\textsuperscript{85} In Kanpur the most fatal blow to Ahrar party came in January 1943 when its famous local leader, Abdul Qaiyum, left it. Ironically, he joined the Muslim League as its Propaganda Secretary for Kanpur city.\textsuperscript{86}

It goes to the credit of the Ahrars that despite these setbacks, the party remained firm on its principles. At its Saharanpur Conference on April 26, 1943, the Ahrar party declared its preference for Hukoomat-i-lllahia which was supposed to be ‘the rule of God where the miseries of the people could be overcome and conditions of their welfare could be established by implementing the golden rules of Islam.’ In an obvious reference to show disapproval of the Pakistan scheme, Ahrars also made it clear that the establishment of a Government by a Muslim majority or by individual Muslims did not mean Hukoomat-i-lllahia.\textsuperscript{87} The Ahrars turned down Jinnah’s appeal to join the Muslim League in 1944.\textsuperscript{88} The Ahrar party also took the bold decision of contesting the elections of 1945-6 independently.\textsuperscript{89}

In December 1946, Maulana Abdul Qaiyum, then in Muslim League, addressed several private and prayer meetings where he narrated brutalities against Muslims in Bihar and Garhmukteshwar (between 7\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} November, 1946); and he called on Muslims to organise self-defence with whatever

\textsuperscript{85} FR – 18/ 7/ 1940 for the I half of July 1940. \textit{Home Political, NAI.}
\textsuperscript{86} \textit{PAI}, 22-1-1943, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{87} Tufail Ahmad Manglori, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 327-29.
\textsuperscript{88} Parveen Sabharwal, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 121-2.
\textsuperscript{89} FR – 18/ 9/ 1945 for the II half of September 1945.
weapons they could obtain, to ready themselves to execute orders of the Muslim High Command and to strengthen the Muslim National Guards. Interestingly, Abdul Qaiyum left the Muslim League in the elections that followed soon after and he contested from the Kanpur Muslim urban constituency as a Nationalist Muslim. Abdul Qaiyum managed to get just 14 percent of the votes polled in this constituency against his formidable rival Hasrat Mohani of the Muslim League.

Speaking at Sheikhopura on July 17 1945, Hazrat Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar, the General Secretary of Majlis-e-Ahrar-i-Islam-e-Hind enunciated the policy of his organization. He said that the Ahrars were as intensely against British imperialists in 1945 as they were on September 11, 1939 when they decided not to render any assistance to the Government during II World War. He wondered whom did Muslim Leaguers want to take Pakistan from because they vented all their anger on Hindus and Sikhs who were colonial slaves like the Muslims. The anti-Muslim League rhetoric was conspicuous but the pro-Congress tone was missing in this exposition of Ahrar policy. Colonial authorities were quick to prophesy that the Ahrars were like 'mushroom growths' that would end up being swallowed by larger bodies like Muslim League or Congress. Nothing of this sort actually happened. Towards the end of the period of our study, the Ahrar party still had 1,045 members in U.P. in 1947.

90 PAI, 27-12-1946, p. 197.
92 Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 331 & 334.
93 FR – 18/ 1/ 1947 for the second half of January 1947. Home Political, NAI.
III. The Momin Conference

Julahas (or the traditional weavers) are considered a socially inferior community or biradari among Muslims. In the beginning of the 20th century they constituted 4.81% of the Muslim population in Kanpur district; and they were mostly city-based. By 1931, the last Census to make caste-wise enumeration, the Julaha population in Kanpur was reduced to less than 3 percent. One of the reasons for this depletion in Julaha population could be the tendency among 'all low-caste Muslims to enroll themselves as Pathans or Sheikhs.'

Julahas, as a supposedly socially inferior biradari, were in greater need of community organizations and other props to invoke a sense of self-esteem in themselves. The Congress had established Charkha Sanghs (or Organization of Spinners) which did not address the Julahas only but in which the Julahas had a large presence. For instance, in late 1930s, Charkha Sanghs in U.P. had a membership of 1 lakh members and 39% of them were reported to be Muslim Julahas. The spindles of yarns were made on Charkhas (or the spinning wheels) and the preponderance of Julahas among the members of Charkha Sanghs made the Charkhas and Julahas nationalist symbols. Some poets composed inspirational nationalist rhymes in Hindi about the power of the Charkha (or spinning wheel) which can be translated as follows:

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94 Incidentally, the number of Julahas was less than that of Saiyads, traditionally the most literate biradari among Indian Muslims, who constituted 6.29% of the Muslim population in Kanpur district. H.R. Nevill, Cawnpore: A Gazetteer (Allahabad, Government Press, 1909), p. 120.
95 Census of UP, 1931 Part II (Allahabad, 1933), pp. 520-525.
96 Census of North-Western Provinces and Oudh, 1891 (Allahabad, 1894), p. 323.
97 Vartman, 4-1-1938, p. 3.
Now the Government is a little shaken –
The Charkha’s circles have given it nausea.
The yarn of Charkha will entrap one day,
Those who deprive us of employment.
The force of Charkha will batter them.
This method Gandhi has taught us.
Now, the Government is a little shaken.
Just as Krishanji was born to kill devils
And Ram came to wipe off Ravan;
Similarly, says “Saryu”, Charkha shall bring
The Day of Judgement for India’s enemies.98

Momins or Ansars, as the Julahas were also called, had their own community organizations also. All India Jamiat-ul-Ansar Conference had its headquarters in Kanpur itself.99 One Jamiat-ul-Ansar-ul-Musalmin was established in Delhi in 1923 and it ran schools in backward areas where almost 1,200 students received education.100 Some educated persons belonging to the Julaha community also brought out Momin Gazzette from Kanpur.101 Another organization of Julahas was called All India Jamiat-ul-Momin Conference (or Momin Conference) for short.102 The Kanpur session of Momin Conference took place between October 9-11, 1937 and it was presided over by Maulvi Abdul Aziz

98 This poem was remarkable for its Hindu imagery and very simple Hindustani language. Saryu Narayan Shukla (1923), Garam Ghalein (Kanpur Azad Granthmala). Proscribed Literature Roll No. 13, NMML.
99 PAI, 25-6-1943, p. 113.
100 This organization issued an appeal for help in Dawn, 22-8-1946, p. 6.
101 This journal was listed among the 10 ‘influential nationalist papers’ by the Minorities Department of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee in June 1940, i.e. after the demand for Pakistan was raised by the Muslim League. File No. 7/1940, AICC Papers, p. 21. Momin Gazette edited by Abdul Qaiyum, according to informants in Kanpur. Interview, Jamil Akhtar Nomani, Editor, Siyasat, Urdu Weekly, Kanpur.
102 PAI, 5-11-1938, pa. 393, p. 283.
Abdul Lateef, B.A., who had been a member of the Legislative Council in Bombay.¹⁰³

Both Momin Conference and Jamiat-ul-Ansar were mainly interested in reforming social practices among the Momin community, improving the economic condition of Julahas, promoting Khaddar, checking oppression by zamindars.¹⁰⁴ But both these organizations also espoused political causes and were broadly pro-Congress. For instance, Mohammad Said addressed 400 members of Jamiat-ul-Momin in 1938 and advised Muslims to remain aloof from politics but 'if they must join a party it must be the Congress.'¹⁰⁵ This political line sometimes led the Momin organizations into antagonism with the Muslim League. One of the worst clashes between Momins and Muslim Leaguers took place at Kanpur in 1938.

The U.P. Muslim League’s Political Conference had taken place at Kanpur in mid-August 1938.¹⁰⁶ Three weeks later the Jamiat-ul-Momin had a meeting in Kanpur where the Muslim League was freely criticized. This embittered some supporters of Muslim League so much that they attacked Momins and several people were injured in the fracas that ensued. One Momin succumbed to his injuries and died three days later. It was then suspected that goondas who had

¹⁰³ Tufail Ahmad Mangleri, op. cit., p. 342.
¹⁰⁴ See PAI, 9-3-1940, pa. 88, p. 54 for community reforms and ibid., 23-10-1937 pa. 480, p. 600 for other things.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 15-1-1938, pa. 14, p. 11.
¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 27-8-1938, pa. 307, p. 208.
the backing of the Muslim League were responsible for this murder.\textsuperscript{107} 3,000 people attended the condolence meeting after the death of this Momin and the Momin leaders requested their audience not to be agitated about this murder. These leaders reminded their followers, much in Gandhi's non-violent vein, that the death of their Momin brother was a signal of their impending success because 'success always followed sacrifices.'\textsuperscript{108} Just five weeks later the Muslim League was criticized again at the All India Jamiat-ul-Momin Conference for poaching on Momins and trying to wean them away into its organization.\textsuperscript{109} Luckily, not much offence was taken to this criticism and no violence followed this meeting in Kanpur.

The tension between Momin organizations and the Muslim League continued in the 1940s after the League started agglomerating support of common Muslims around its slogan of Pakistan. Kanpur District Jamiat-ul-Ansar Conference on June 19-20, 1943 and All India Jamiat-ul-Ansar Conference on June 20 and 21, 1943 held their meetings at Kanpur. According to a C.I.D. report, the tone of both these meetings was pro-Congress and anti-Muslim League.\textsuperscript{110} Abdul Qaiyum Ansari, Vice President of Momin Conference, claimed that Pakistan was invented by the wealthy to grind down their ignorant co-religionists. Yet, in 1945 the Working Committee of All India Momin Conference was looking for an agreement with the Muslim League, failing which, it declared, its intention

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 17-9-1938, pa. 331, p. 230.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 24-9-1938, pa. 338, p. 239.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 5-11-1938, pa. 392, p. 283.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 25-6-1943, p. 133.
to contest the forthcoming elections on its own.\textsuperscript{111} The expectation of an agreement between Momin Conference and Muslim League did not materialize and, hence, the President of Momin Conference asked his followers to vote for Nationalist Muslims in the elections of 1946.\textsuperscript{112}

The Muslim League was aware about its negligible influence over the Julahas in U.P. So, to draw these sections to itself, the Muslim League got resolutions passed at several places, as early as 1938, that Muslims should wear khaddar woven by Muslims only.\textsuperscript{113} The Muslim League even sent a delegation of Ansar leaders to win the support of Julahas in UP just before the elections of 1946.\textsuperscript{114} This provoked Zahiruddin Ansari, President of Momin Conference to do some anti-League propaganda in Kanpur.\textsuperscript{115} But when the Muslim League’s propaganda got stronger and its appeal got wider, the same president gave a statement in favour of Pakistan. This happened barely two months before Partition. The Working Committee of the Momin Conference, however, took a serious view of this \textit{volte-face} and suspended its own President, Zahiruddin Ansari. The Working Committee also appointed Abdul Qaiyum Ansari as its Acting President and this person, as we noted above, had called Muslim League a ploy of the wealthy to oppress the poor.\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Meeting was held at Mau in Azamgarh district of east UP. FR – 18/ 9/ 1945, II half of September, \textit{Home Political}, NAI.
\item PAI, 23-11-1945, p. 186.
\item FR – 18/ 6/ 1938, II half of June, 1938. \textit{Home Political}, NAI.
\item PAI, 28-12-1945, p. 203.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, 11-1-1946, p. 6.
\item FR – 18/ 5/ 1947, I half of May, 1947. \textit{Home Political}, NAI.
\end{enumerate}
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On April 30, 1947, some Muslim miscreants had attacked the police injuring 22 constables and this instigated the police to harass Muslims and ordinary Momins were not spared of such harassment because they were also Muslims.¹¹⁷ In mid-May, Hakim Kamaluddin Ansari, President, City Momin Conference, Kanpur claimed that riots had been going on for six weeks but they had not spread to Ansari-dominated areas like Cantonment, Babupurwa etc. But, he complained, in areas where Ansaris lived in mixed localities the police harassed Ansarís by arresting them and instituting cases against them. He also alleged that the police did not want the situation in Kanpur to improve because whereas goondas roam free, innocent Ansarís were apprehended by it.¹¹⁸

The loyalty of nationalist leaders among Muslims was made a subject of controversy by Hindu communalists and Mahant Digvijaynath, President UP Hindu Maha Sabha, declared in Kanpur that most of the so-called nationalist Muslims were fifth columnists and that they should be thrown out.¹¹⁹ This cue was taken up by Veer Bharat which alleged that Ismail Jabih, Editor of Mansoor Gazette would be editing Kaumi a daily which was to be the organ of the Muslim League. Ismail Jabih defended himself saying that his paper was an organ of the Congress. He said, ‘I have been a member of Congress since 1922 and think it is my duty to serve my country and community from the Congress platform.’¹²⁰ It was pathetic that a nationalist had to prove his loyalty to India before rank Hindu

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 7-6-1947, p. 4.
¹²⁰ Ibid., 13-6-1947, p. 4.
communalists in such a manner. The discomfort of the nationalist Muslim leader was increased by the fact that he had to defend himself as an individual because his organisation was too weak to do it and its activities were little known.

IV. The Shia Political Conference

Shias were a minority among the Muslims but they had been politically very powerful in the past. In fact, before the British conquest, they were the rulers in most regions from Sindh to South India. When franchise was very limited Shia candidates managed to get elected but as franchise expanded and religious prejudice was aroused against them, the already vulnerable position of Shias became more precarious. This was when their leaders decided to form the All India Shia Political Conference in 1929. This Conference held around five sessions in the next ten years. The resolutions at these sessions generally supported the demand for Joint electorate with reservation of seats for Shias. In 1937, the President of the fourth session of Shia Political Conference, Sir Syed Wazir Hasan, ridiculed the demand of the Muslim League for safeguards from Congress, Hindu Mahasabha, etc. Sir Hasan opined that there was no example where a section of a slave nation demanded guarantees from slaves of its own kind. Demanding guarantees under such conditions would only mean that Muslims were demanding wages for participation in the freedom movement, Hasan added sarcastically.¹²¹

¹²¹ Shia Political Conference held its first session in Lucknow in 1930, the second in Montgomery on April 5, 1931, the third in Lucknow on October 30, 1932, the fourth session also there on October 11-12, 1937 and yet another one also at Lucknow on April 14-15, 1940. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 339-342.
Shia Political Conference was a mildly pro-Congress progressive organisation. The reason why Shia Political Conference was not able to resist the Muslim League was that it was more a letter-head organisation which was neither active nor powerful.\textsuperscript{122}

In Kanpur also Shias were a small community. According to the Census of 1901, they constituted 2.66 percent of the total Muslim population in the district.\textsuperscript{123} Information on them is sparse and episodic. However, two things which can still be deduced from such meagre information is that the Shias in Kanpur got very insecure whenever new constitutional arrangements were proposed and also that the Muslim League was their bugbear all through the period of this study.

In 1928, the constituencies of the Municipal Board were being marked afresh. There was a proposal to divide Chak number(s) 12, 17 and 18 between Ward number(s) 1 and 2. Nawab Syed Khaqan Husain, President, Shia League, objected to this proposal on the apprehension that this would disable Shias from returning even a single member to the Municipal Board of Kanpur. The Nawab demanded that Ward Number 1 should consist of Chak number(s) 1 to 18. His proposal which was supported by Haji Abdul Qayyum, MLC, and approved by the Collector as also the Commissioner, was finally accepted.\textsuperscript{124} The Shias were happy with the affairs in the Municipal Board thereafter. But when they had no

\begin{footnotes}
\item[122] W.C. Smith, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 276.
\item[123] H.R. Nevill, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 118.
\item[124] RB 60/1916, \textit{Municipal Department, UPSA}.
\end{footnotes}
representation after Municipal elections in 1945, Shia League accused Muslim League for letting them down.\textsuperscript{125}

Shias came out openly in support of Congress as early as December 1937. The Shia League held a Conference in Kanpur at this time and 700 delegates attended it. This Conference appealed to Muslims to join Congress for attaining Complete Independence.\textsuperscript{126} At another Shia Political Conference, a few months later, speakers condemned the policy of the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Tabligh Conference. It urged all Muslims to join the Congress party.\textsuperscript{127}

For Shias, the defiance of Muslim League came hand in hand with support for Congress. Around Moharram, in March 1939, a Muslim was stabbed in Kanpur and the Muslim League decided to embarrass the Congress Government in UP over this issue. It asked Muslims to close their shops and not take out the Moharram procession as ‘arrangements for their safe passage were inadequate’.\textsuperscript{128} But the Shias paid little heed to this call of the Muslim League. They took out the procession of their tazias to the burial ground, though they had to do so a little hurriedly.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{PAI}, 9-3-1945, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{PAI}, 7-5-1938, pa. 166, p. 114.
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Ibid.}, 4-3-1939, pa. 81, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.}, 11-3-1939, pa. 92, p. 50.
V. The Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind

Most of the ulema were concerned at the gradual whittling down of their influence and prestige since 1857. Some ulema (like Maulanas Shibli Nomani and Abul Kalam Azad) extricated Muslim League from communal aggressiveness (as also colonial sycophancy) in the early years of its existence. Some others (like Maulanas Mohammad Ali and Azad Sobhani) actually entered politics during a crisis in 1913 when colonial town planners broke the wazukhana (or washing place) of Kanpur's Machli Bazar Mosque. Most of the ulema were actually annoyed at being maltreated by the colonial authorities and also at the way Muslim League misrepresented them as an obstacle to progress. This was the main reason behind the formation of Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind at Delhi during the Khilafat Conference on November 22, 1919.  

Apart from being opposed to flattery and sycophancy towards the colonial rulers, the first session of Jamiat-ul-Ulema at Amritsar in December 1919 defined its credo to safeguard the religious rights of and provide leadership to Muslims. It also declared its belief in sympathy for and unity with the non-Muslim brethren.

Two peculiarities of this organization were that its main body remained firmly anti-colonial and it did not give up, even for favourable publicity, some controversial tenets like its belief in cow slaughter. In the context of anti-colonialism, it may be noted that Jamiat-ul-Ulema had taken part in the Non-Cooperation movement and urged Muslims to give up Government titles, jobs.

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130 For a detailed and balanced account of Jamiat-ul-Ulema, see Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 313-314 & 321-322. Jamiat expected Muslims to observe Shar‘ī (religious) directives, form Qaumi Baitul Maal (religious treasury) and establish a department of Tableegh (religious propaganda). Ibid.

131 Ibid.
and schools, boycott trade with England and refuse Government aid to educational institutions in the same way as the Nadwatul Ulema of Lucknow had done.\textsuperscript{132} Even after the Non-Cooperation movement was withdrawn, Jamiat-ul-Tulba, the student wing of Jamiat-ul-Ulema remained active among students. In October 1922, it held a meeting to elicit support of Muslims for the Moplah rebellion in Kanpur. The meeting was attended by 300 people, mostly students, and they contributed Rs. 2 for the welfare of Moplahs.\textsuperscript{133} A more nationalist flavour was witnessed in the resolutions of All-India Students' Conference organized by Jamiat-ul-Tulba at Kanpur in January 1924. This Conference declared that it had two aims. Firstly, it claimed to be interested in the organization and education of Muslims wherein it understandably condemned \textit{Shuddhi} (or the ritual cleansing and re-conversion of 'strayed' Hindus). Secondly, Jamiat-ul-Tulba claimed that it wanted to further the Khilafat and Congress cause. Presiding over the All-India Students' Conference, Husain Ahmad Madni preached swadeshi and non-violence. Resolutions passed at this Conference prayed for the recovery of Gandhi, urged the wearing of Khadi and, ironically, asked for the inclusion of English language in the curriculum of National Islamia schools.\textsuperscript{134}

Jamiat-ul-Ulema was also a part of the Civil Disobedience movement from 1930 onwards. Its unit in Kanpur seems to have fallen into stupor and, hence, in July 1930, Ataullah Shah Bukhari wanted to revive it under Hasrat

\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 314.
\textsuperscript{133} \textit{PAI}, 28-10-1922, pa. 1243, p. 1550.
\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Ibid.}, 2-2-1924, p. 36, p. 44-45.
Mohani's direction. Bukhari came to Kanpur and addressed a public meeting on July 28, 1930 where Hindus constituted almost 80% of his 4,500 strong audience. He said that those who quote texts to say that Muslims cannot unite with Hindus were wrong and that they should not forget that the ulema had taken the help of Hindus during the Khilafat agitation in 1921.\textsuperscript{135} Hasrat Mohani had started veering towards the Congress after it accepted 'Complete Independence' as its goal in December 1929. In July 1930, Hasrat Mohani had written and issued a cogently argued pamphlet in which he exhorted Muslims to join Congress. Mohani warned co-religionists that by not siding with the Congress or the Government, Muslims would incur the displeasure of both and lengthen the chains of their own slavery. He specifically urged the supporters of Jamiat-ul-Ulema to join Congress because the objective of both these organisations was 'Complete Independence.'\textsuperscript{136} In November 1930, on the exhortations of Husain Ahmad Madni, 50 Muslims joined Congress at one of the two meetings organised by Jamiat-ul-Ulema in Kanpur.\textsuperscript{137}

Nevertheless, some ulemas occasionally thought of safeguarding the interest of Muslims only and therefore, compromised with the colonial authorities or just followed the Muslim League. But to do this they had to leave the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind and form a splinter group. This was what Maulana Mohammad Ali had to do when he held a separate meeting of his followers at Kanpur while the Jamiat-ul-Ulema met for its ninth session at Amroha (in West UP) from May

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 2-8-1930, pa. 630, p. 1237.  
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 12-7-1930, pa. 582, p. 1074.  
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 8-11-1930, pa. 909, p. 2210.
3-6, 1930. Mohammad Ali had to break away from the main body because he was not eager to participate in the on-going Civil Disobedience Movement and was rather keen to go for the Round Table Conference to London to discuss the future political reforms in India.138

The fight on ideological issues among leaders of Jamiat at the top had, as expected, its local ramifications. The formation of a branch of the pro-colonial Jamiat-ul-Ulema at Kanpur led to widespread differences among the clergy. In December 1932, a newspaper reported that factionalism was rampant in Jamiat at Kanpur where one group of the ulema was taking orders from Delhi (where the main branch of Jamiat was located) and the other from Kanpur itself. The newspaper warned that communal discord might erupt if unity efforts were not taken up in right earnest. Sensing trouble, the office-bearers of Jamiat, viz. Maulana(s) Inayat-ullah Firangi Mahal, General Secretary and Abdul Hamid Qadiri Badauni, Propaganda Secretary, came down to help reconcile differences.139 It seems their visit had a positive outcome because after it no complaints of rivalries, ideological or programmatic, were reported within Jamiat through the rest of the 1930s in Kanpur.

In 1939, Jamiat-ul-Ulema declared a 'policy of cooperation with Congress for the independence of India.' Muslim League, on the other hand, took its anti-Congress-ism to its logical end by celebrating 'Deliverance Day' to commemorate the so-called relief Muslims felt after Congress Ministries resigned. But the strain

138 Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., p. 317.
on Jamiat-League relations came after Muslim League passed the Pakistan resolution and decided to celebrate April 19, 1940 as Pakistan Day. Jamiat-ul-Ulema decided to observe All-India Hindustan Day on the same date. Annoyed at this confrontation, the pro-Pakistan section of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema finally broke away from the main body and formed Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam. Its leaders were Maulana(s) Sahabir Ahmad Usamani, Zafar Ahmad Thanawi and Mufti Mohammad Shafi. This break away group supported Muslim League in the elections of 1945-1946.¹⁴⁰

Jamiat-ul-Ulema sought to pave the road to unity among Muslims,¹⁴¹ to promote their interests¹⁴² and to protect their cultural rights¹⁴³ even at the cost of being misunderstood. Jamiat stood for Hindu-Muslim unity not only in the 1920s and the 1930s but even after the passage of the Pakistan resolution by Muslim

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¹⁴¹ In its eight session at Peshawar between December 2-5, 1927 Jamiat expressed sorrow at the mutual disputes between Shias and Sunnis. It also expressed displeasure at the Congress Government’s behaviour on the question of Madhe Saheba in its tenth session at Delhi between March 3-6, 1939. In its twelfth session at Jaunpur on June 8-9, 1940, Jamiat endorsed the genuineness and justice the Madhe Saheba movement. In its thirteenth session at Lahore on March 20-21, 1942 Jamiat appealed to Muslims to stand united like a solid wall and not indulge in mutual abuses and condemnation on controversial issues; urged them to promote equality and not to insult co-religionists irrespective of the profession or race to which they may belong; and as far as possible, to offer Friday prayers only in one mosque in each town. See details in relevant sections of Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 313 – 324.
¹⁴² In its seventh session at Calcutta, on March 14, 1926, Jamiat-ul-Ulema urged members to make efforts to remove the poverty of Muslims. In its fourteenth session at Saharanpur on May 7-9, 1945, Jamiat decided to establish night schools to impart necessary religious and useful secular education among Muslims. See details in relevant sections of Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 313 – 324.
¹⁴³ In the tenth session of Jamiat-ul-Ulema at Karachi between March 31 and April 1, 1931, demanded safeguards for the culture, accomplishments and Personal Law of Muslims in the future Constitution of the country. In its eleventh session at Delhi between March 3-6, 1939, Jamiat sought a draft law on cultural autonomy and in this context, inter alia, demanded from Congress workers that in decorating their session venues and in the procedures of their meetings the special features of only one culture should not be exhibited; regretted the Sanskritisation of Hindustani language; and disagreed with the name Vidya Mandir scheme and did not want the Wardha Educational scheme to be implemented without the acceptance of Jamiat-ul-Ulema. See details in relevant sections of Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 313 – 324.
League. During communal riots, however, Jamiat workers only helped Muslims in every way. In the process of performing its duty to Muslims, Jamiat-ul-Ulema did not spare the "Mahasabhai" mentality (or thinking/ prejudices akin to that of Hindu Mahasabha) of some Congress Committees in the 1930s and the 1940s. The first resolution to his effect was passed in the ninth session of Jamiat at Amroha on May 3-6, 1930. Jamiat did not believe in the general condemnation of Congress. Instead it crossed swords with Congress policy on specific issues like 'displeasure with Congress for not appointing any Muslim in its industrial committees,' 'sorrow at the failure of Congress to appoint any Muslim Minister in the Congress ministry of Orissa or in the Central Provinces in place of Mr. Shareef,' and 'condemnation of the anti-Urdu activities of some Congress ministers.'

144 In its second session on November 19-21, 1920 at Delhi Jamiat expressed satisfaction at the participation of Hindu brethren in the Khilafat movement and desired that good relations be maintained with them. In its fourth session at Gaya on December 24, 1922 it appointed a Committee for Hindu Muslim unity. The riots in 1920s took their toll on the syrupy tenor of these resolutions but did not douse the spirit for reconciliation. So, in its seventh session on March 14, 1926 at Calcutta Jamiat regretted the widening gulf of hatred due to the hostile behaviour of Hindu brethren but insisted that unity of action should be forged with those non-Muslim gentlemen who desire unity. In its ninth session at Amroha from May 3-6, 1930, Jamiat expressed regret at the Mahasabhai mentality of Congress Committees but chalked out a program for a united Civil Disobedience movement with it. In its tenth session at Karachi from March 31 to April 1, 1931, the Jamiat authorized its Working Committee to draft a Hindu-Muslim compromise. In its twelfth session at Jaunpur on June 8-9, 1940 Jamiat endorsed the resolutions of Azad Muslim Conference. In the Azad Muslim Conference held with the participation of seven organizations (viz. Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, Ahrar-e-Islam-i-Hind, Muslim Independent Party of Bihar, All India Momin Conference, Krishak Praja Party of Bengal, Anjuman-e-Watan of Baluchistan and All India Shia Political Conference) on April 27-29, 1940 at Delhi it was resolved that India was the common homeland of people of different religions and communities and that the proposal to divide India along religious lines was impracticable and harmful to the interests of Muslims (and the country) as it will create difficulties in the path of freedom. See details in relevant sections of Tufail Ahmad Mangleri, op. cit., pp. 313 – 324.

145 Mr. M.Y. Shareef was the President of the Muslim League in Central Provinces and Berar in 1936. He was lured into Congress allegedly by the promise of minister-ship in 1937. He was made Minister of Law in N.B. Khare's cabinet. He created a storm in 1939 because he released from jail a Muslim prisoner, Syed Zafer Husain, a former Inspector of Schools in Berar, a year before his sentence expired. Mr. Husain was sentenced for raping a minor Backward Class Hindu girl at Wardha. N.B. Khare even defended his Minister by doubting the victim's innocence and by...
Jamiat-ul-Ulema defended Muslims, yet did not turn communal and the main reason for this lay in the concept of "Muttahidah Qaumiyat" (united nationhood) by which it stood. The ideological kernel of this concept was the belief in United Indian Nationalism and this was the core issue for Jamiat's differences with Muslim League in the 1940s. Maulana Syed Husain Ahmad Madni, the Sheikh-ul-Hadees of Darul Uloom, Deoband, ridiculed Muslim League's "two nation" doctrine as "hostage theory". Madni maintained that the Muslim League's contempt and hatred of Hindus rendered the peaceful spread of Islam impossible and this he, as an Islamic cardinal, thought was bad for Islam itself. In his Presidential address to Jamiat-ul-Ulema just after the Pakistan resolution was passed at the Lahore session of Muslim League in 1940, Madni elaborated the concept of "Muttahidah Qaumiyat". He said that 'just as the diversities in our individual appearances, individual qualities and stature do not affect our common humaneness, similarly our religion and cultural differences do not interfere with our common associations with our homeland.'

The concept of Muttahidah Qaumiyat was translated in practice by Jamiat-ul-Ulema to mean Freedom with Unity between Hindus and Muslims. In 1945, Maulana Syed Husain Ahmad Madni asked Muslims to join hands with Congress saying that Shareef's action was 'an error of judgement and not perversity.' After a retired High Court Judge called the Minister's action unjustified, Congress High Command ordered his dismissal for being guilty of 'miscarriage of justice.' See D.E.U. Baker, Changing Political Leadership in an Indian Province: The Central Provinces and Berar, 1919-1939 (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 178, especially footnotes 15 and 22; and Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, Saffron versus Green Communal Politics in the Central Provinces and Berar, 1919-1947 (Delhi, Manohar, 2003), pp. 137, 146 and 147.

146 All these three resolutions were passed at the eleventh session at Delhi on March 3-6, 1939. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 317–318.
147 Resolution passed at the fourteenth session of Jamiat-ul-Ulema at Saharanpur on May 7-9, 1945. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 320–321.
148 Parveen Sabharwal, op. cit., pp. 87-89.
because Muslim League was an agent of the Government.\textsuperscript{149} In the same year, Jamiat-ul-Ulema also issued a circular to enrol voters and collect funds for anti-Pakistan propaganda.\textsuperscript{150} Around Independence, during the period of communal bigotry and violence, Jamiat stood out as a sentinel of peace. To fulfil this role of Peace Keeper, Kanpur Jamiat observed "Peace Day" on the call of its President, Abdul Jalil. This was done immediately after communal violence at Kanpur in April 1947.\textsuperscript{151} The importance of observing "Peace Day" can be appreciated better by comparing it with the activities of other organisations in this period. In this period Muslim League was busy, inter alia, demanding the right of Muslims to carry swords and Hindu Mahasabha-ites, like Swami Karpatriji, were enlisting supporters in akharas of Sadhus for their proposed crusades at Delhi and Mathura.\textsuperscript{152}

Ideologically, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind stood for both freedom from colonialism and unity between Hindus and Muslims. Its programme included an active cooperation with Congress without dropping its belief in the need for cow slaughter. Similarly, its opposition to the demand for Pakistan cost it a division in its ranks but did not deter the leadership of this organisation from its chosen path.

\textsuperscript{149} PAl, 23-11-1945, p. 186.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 26-10-1945, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{151} Vartman, 19-4-1947, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{152} FR – 18/4/1947, I and II half of April 1947. Home Political, NAI.
B. LOCAL CONTENDERS AGAINST THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

I. Independent Muslim Party

After the Riots of 1931, given the disarray in the Muslim League, two major efforts were made in Kanpur to build organizations among Muslims. Hasrat Mohani and Azad Sobhani started one Independent Muslim Party in August 1932. They proposed to make it an all-India organization but on Congress lines. The maverick trade union leader of Kanpur, Deonarain Pandey, also joined the Independent Muslim Party. But this organization was not able to go very far or do anything much as Government records or non-official newspapers did not take much notice of it. However, an inkling of the things this Party intended to do can be had from the reports of an “Azad Conference” organized by it at Sanatan Dharam Hall in Kanpur eight months after its formation. Resolutions passed at this Conference expressed sympathy with the communist “suspects” of the Meerut Conspiracy case, demanded the release of political prisoners of the Civil Disobedience movement to discuss new constitutional measures; the Conference also demanded total provincial autonomy if Federalism was to be granted.

Independent Muslim Party could not do much, but the news that it was on the anvil aroused considerable comment in the press even before its formation. Himmat welcomed the advance news about the intention of some leaders to form a “Muslim Independence Party” as it was proposed to be called in February

154 Vartman, 7-5-1933, p.4.
1931. Himmat hoped that the new party would break the political inertia among Muslims but thought that if this party had come into existence in 1921, at the time of Ahemadabad Congress, or in 1929, at the Lahore Congress session, it could have created political daring, public spirit and capacity for action among Muslims. These sessions of Congress were the ones in which Mohani and Jawaharlal Nehru moved resolutions for 'Complete Independence'.\(^{155}\) This newspaper either did not know or remember that an Independent Muslim Party was, in fact, formed by Mohani in 1926 also. It was primarily brought into existence to fight the elections of 1926 to U.P. Legislative Council. It put up three lawyers and one landlord (i.e., the Raja Saheb of Salempore) from its side for the Muslim constituencies of Allahabad, Meerut, Gorakhpur and Unnao.\(^{156}\)

When the Independent Muslim party was formed, again in 1932, a section of Muslims was not delighted. The aims of this party were seen to be similar to those of the Congress. (In fact, Mohani also formed, along with other revolutionaries, an Azad Congress Dal (or Independent Congress Party) in 1935.\(^{157}\) ) Representing the views of Muslim communalists, Hamdam felt that a Congress-like party would have been welcomed only if Muslims were as "awakened" as Hindus. So, this newspaper advised Mohani to first organize Muslims and remove communal differences.\(^{158}\) It seems Mohani took the advice given by this newspaper seriously but a trifle late by becoming an active Muslim Leaguer in 1937.

\(^{155}\) RNP, No. 9, 28-2-1931.
\(^{156}\) PAI, 30-10-1926, PA. 957, P. 568.
\(^{157}\) Ibid., 16-11-1935, pa. 532, p. 563.
\(^{158}\) RNP, No. 31, 6-8-1932.
II. The Ittehad-i-Millat

The second local organization of Muslims began as a 'Unity Committee'.

After the ghastly communal riots of 1931, the maverick trade union leader, Deonarain Pandey, formed a 'Unity Sabha'. In 1932, this Sabha organized a joint fair of Hindus and Muslims to make unity between the two religious groups permanent. The 'Unity Sabha' came to be later called Ittehad Sabha (or Unity and Reconciliation Association). The choice of this name was also important. Ittehad was a word derived from Persian and Urdu. Earlier, well-meaning people also formed unity Committees but gave them patently Sanskritized Hindi names like Prem Prachami Sabha (or Association to Propagate Love) and Milap Committee (or Unity Committee). The name Ittehad Sabha, with other factors like its promoters not being anti-Muslim, also attracted Muslims to this organization. Among the most important activities of Ittehad Sabha was the organization of U.P. Ittehad Conference in 1933. This was attended, among others, by the Chief Judge of Lucknow High Court, Sir Wazir Hasan. The President of its Reception Committee was one Begum Habid Ahmad Khan Lodhi.

The Ittehad Sabha was, however, hijacked by Muslim communalists and transformed into Ittehad-i-Millat which became friendly to Muslim League particularly after Hasrat Mohani became an active Muslim Leaguer in 1937. At

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159 Pratap, 8-5-1932, p.27.
160 Ibid., 20-3-1932, p.27.
161 Ibid., 16-6-1924, p.16.
163 Vartaman, 11-5-1933, p.6.
meetings organized by *Ittehad-i-Millat*, Muslim audiences were exhorted to join Muslim League and follow Jinnah because Gandhi was a good leader of Hindus but had no use for Muslims.¹⁶⁴ Simultaneously, the *Ittehad* organization allegedly started doing what *New Age* called "mischievous propaganda" among Muslim workers, due to which it apparently lost the sympathy of communists, though this organization was started by a trade unionist.¹⁶⁵ Some volunteers of *Ittehad* went around and disturbed meetings of the Ahrars and others even said that Hindus were greater enemies of Muslims than even the British.¹⁶⁶ *Ittehad* leaders organized meetings where, in the presence of Mohani, Mohammad Ali, an ex-constable, condemned the Congress ministry and abused Congress leaders saying that the Congress was a purely Hindu and communal party.¹⁶⁷

*Ittehad-i-Millat* also mobilized common Muslims on some issues which were agitating their minds. On April 3, 1938, it decided to collect funds for the dependants of the 25 volunteers who went to Lahore for the agitation on Shahidganj mosque. It made a collection for this fund on the streets of Kanpur.¹⁶⁸

The interesting thing, however, is that *Ittehad-i-Millat* fell foul of Muslim League in 1939 due to two reasons. Firstly, after the outbreak of World War II, the Muslim League decided not to indulge in any agitation and this alleged timidity of Muslim League annoyed the *Ittehad* leaders immensely. Secondly,

¹⁶⁴ PAI, 1-5-1937, pa.219, p3-6.
¹⁶⁵ *New Age, Cawnpore Supplement*, December 1937, pp.34-35. Communist leaders in Kanpur were apprehensive in 1937 that if *Ittehad-i-Millat* was not properly watched, it could win over workers to its side. PAI, 9-10-1937, pa. 461, p. 590.
¹⁶⁶ PAI, . 11-9-1937, pa. 427, p. 567.
¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 9-10-1937, pa. 461, p. 590.
¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 16-4-1938, pa. 135, p. 98.
Ittehad-i-Millat tried to remain true to its name and sought Hindu-Muslim unity, even after Muslim League adopted the Pakistan resolution. This annoyed the Leaguers, including Mohammad Ali Jinnah. We can illustrate these points with the following examples.

Some miscreants attacked the Rathyatra procession at Kanpur on June 19, 1939 due to which police opened fire and several persons were injured. This incident sparked off a series of communal riots in which 8 persons were killed and 45 were injured. The police firing came as much wanted proof to the charge often made by Muslim communalists that the Congress Government had been more oppressive in two years than the British had been in one hundred and fifty. The Muslim League contended that the riots on June 19, 1939 (which led to the death and injury of people in police firing) had been engineered by Mill Owners' Associations and Hindu Sabha and that the police firing against Muslims was vindictive. On their part, Hindu communalists, especially those belonging to the newly formed Hindu Sangh, also blamed the police for not taking enough preventive measures despite being warned about the impending tension.

Dr. Abdus Samad, the Muslim League's Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Kanpur, resigned from U.P. Legislative Assembly in protest against the firing. It was not as if he was a Muslim League fanatic. For instance, in

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169 Ibid., 24-6-1939, pa. 246, p.154. In the communal rioting on the first day 3 people lost their lives and 36 were injured. The police fired at two places to control frenzied mobs. It fired 14 rounds in all and these resulted in injuries to eight people. The Leader, 21-6-1939, p. 10.
170 The Leader, 23-6-1939, p. 10.
171 Ibid., 20-5-1939, pa.186, pp.112-3.
172 Ibid., 22-7-1939, pa.286, p.183.
173 Complaint by Balkrishna Maheshwari, Secretary, Hindu Sangh. The Leader, 22-6-1939, p. 10.
February 1939 he sensed that the communal situation was deteriorating and urged everyone to 'sit together and bring a better understanding between the communities rather than allow matters to drift.'\textsuperscript{174} Dr. Samad believed that on June 19, 1939, the local authorities mishandled the situation, the Congress government was in no mood to listen to anything disagreeable to them and the people he represented, i.e. the Muslims of Kanpur, had no access to the English press. Hence, Dr. Samad concluded that he would not get a proper hearing on the representation of his case in the Legislative Assembly and it was better for him to resign his MLA-ship in protest.\textsuperscript{175}

Public outrage against this firing was not spontaneous. Initially, the Muslim League meetings drew an audience of 175 to 500 persons.\textsuperscript{176} The Working Committee of Kanpur City's Muslim League decided to take up the issue of the police firing of June 19, 1939 "on Muslims alone" in a big way. It decided that every Muslim house, shop and mosque in Kanpur would hoist black flags from 26\textsuperscript{th} June and that all Muslims would observe hartal on the 19\textsuperscript{th} of every month. Moreover, it asked Muslim Members of the Municipal Board to demand an independent and non-official commission of enquiry within a week, failing which they were asked to boycott the activities of both the Municipal Board and the Improvement Trust. Finally, a threat of Civil Disobedience was also held out in

\textsuperscript{174} The Pioneer, 24-2-1939.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 9-7-1939, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{176} PAI, 1-7-1939, pa.254, p.160.
case the Congress Government of U.P. did not concede the demand for an independent, non-official Commission of enquiry within 3 months.  

Even those common Muslims who believed that the firing was unjustified also resented extremist opinion. When a Pesh Imam used very aggressive language at one meeting his audience objected. In response to the call for peaceful protest, Pesh Imam Jafar Ali of Shafihabad Mosque said it was effeminate to hoist black flags and observe hartals. He said Jehad was the only way to achieve their objective and for this Muslims should come out in the field with their swords. Some people in the audience objected to these remarks and they declined to say their prayers with Jafar Ali as Pesh Imam.

An attendance of 5,000 each was reported on the first and second month of the “Kanpur Firing Day”, viz., July 19 and August 19, 1939. This meant that there was a ten-fold increase in the participation of common Muslims since the initial rally against the firing where only 500 persons turned up. This support was drummed up by strikes in which Muslim shops were closed and black flags were put up on them and as a result of public meetings in which inflammatory speeches were made. The Muslim League held its monthly ‘Yaadgar Day’ on September 19, 1939 also. The public meeting at Parade on this occasion was addressed by Khaliquzzaman and Jinnah’s message praising Kanpur’s Muslims for their discipline, determination and unity was read out here by M.A. Lari.

177 The Pioneer, 27-6-1939, p. 10.  
178 PAI, 5-8-1939, pa. 306, p. 196.  
179 Ibid., 29-7-1939, pa. 299, p.190 and Ibid., 26-8-1939, pa.334, p.220.  
180 The Leader, 21-9-1939, p. 9.
Smaller but more intense protests were organised by students. It was reported that around 100 students of Halim Inter College were addressed on August 14, 1939 by Sufi Manzoor Ali. At the end of this meeting which 'was not a Muslim League meeting and in which nobody of consequence was present', the Premier's effigy was shoe-beaten and later burnt. Interestingly, Lala Padampat Singania, President of the Hindu Sangh, complained to the authorities that Muslim Leaguers were holding meetings against the firing on June 19, 1939 in an offensive manner.

Speeches of the Muslim League leaders were never wanting in aggression against Hindus, Congress leaders or the Congress Government even before the police firing of June 19, 1939. The tone of the speeches by Leaguers after the police firing of June 19, 1939 only became shriller. An inkling of the kind of speeches that were made now is provided by the one given by Mohammad Faruq, a radical Muslim communalist, who shot into prominence due to his demagogy. Faruq claimed that the Premier (G.B. Pant) could shoot him but could not invent a machine to ruin all Muslims. If he did so, God would cause their blood to flow so freely that the Premier and the (Congress) Government would both be drowned in it.

After the Muslim League created a storm of protest through strikes, black flags and inflammatory speeches, it was natural for people to demand a civil

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181 PAI, 26-8-1939, pa. 334, p. 220.
182 He complained that Leaguers took out processions with the effigy of the Premier and raised objectionable slogans, they menacingly moved at night with spades, they objected to aarti (or ritual singing of religious hymns) in certain temples etc. The Leader, 6-9-1939, p. 6.
183 PAI, 22-7-1939, pa. 286, p. 183.
disobedience movement to express their anger against the police firing at Kanpur on June 19, 1939.\textsuperscript{184} A civil disobedience movement was promised by the local Muslim League leaders themselves from September 19, 1939 if the Congress did not agree to their demand for an independent, non-official enquiry into the aforesaid firing.\textsuperscript{185} A delegation of Kanpur’s League leaders went to meet Jinnah in Delhi to seek his blessings for their proposed Civil Disobedience movement. But Jinnah passed the buck and said that Kanpur’s League leaders must seek the consent of the Provincial Muslim League leaders.\textsuperscript{186}

The Provincial Leaguers only delayed a decision on the proposed Civil Disobedience and sent Khaliquzaman for an enquiry on the necessity and feasibility of Satyagraha in the third week of September 1939 on the instructions of Jinnah.\textsuperscript{187} But somewhere in-between Muslim League leaders chickened out. Some 875 volunteers in Kanpur were prepared to court arrest during the proposed Civil Disobedience movement but the II World War had broken out in the interim time. So, the Muslim League postponed the proposed Civil Disobedience movement on the advice of Colonial authorities.\textsuperscript{188}

This volte-face by Muslim League infuriated the organizers of \textit{Ittehad-i-Millat}. They went ahead to announce, by the beating of drums, that the Civil Disobedience movement would be organized as per schedule. To show that they were not dependent on Muslim League the \textit{Ittehad} leaders declared that if not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 29-7-1939, pa.299, p.190.
\item \textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 26-8-1939, pa.334, p.220.
\item \textsuperscript{186} The Leader, 6-9-1939, p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Ibid., 21-9-1939, p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{188} PAL, 30-9-1939, pa. 387, p. 252.
\end{itemize}
the Muslim League, they would lead the Civil Disobedience movement. Consequently, a complete hartal was organized on 19th September and a public meeting (larger than any which had taken place so far on this issue) attended by 7,000 persons was also held.\textsuperscript{189} This action proved both the organizational capacity and independent standing of Ittihad-i-Millat and other non-Muslim League organizations among Muslims in Kanpur right up to the closing years of the fourth decade of the twentieth century.

The cardinal belief of Ittehad in Hindu-Muslim unity also strained its relations with the Muslim League. Believers in Ittehad (meaning peace and unity) faced the worst treatment at the hands of none other than Mr. M. A. Jinnah. Jinnah visited Kanpur on March 29-31, 1941. Jinnah, as is well-known, had by then declared that Hindus and Muslims were two nations whose religious philosophies, social customs, sources of inspiration from history, literature, epics, heroes etc., were different and that any attempt at uniting them would only 'lead to growing discontent and the final destruction' of the State formed for this purpose.\textsuperscript{190} Addressing Kanpur Muslim Student's Federation, in much the same vein, Jinnah said that communal unity had proved elusive because Muslims were a separate entity whereas Hindus kept calling them a minority and kept offering them some safeguards. Addressing others Jinnah also reiterated that he did not recognize any tribe or section among Muslims and that Muslims were Muslims.

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 30-9-1939, pa. 387, p. 252. The U.P. Muslim League leader, Khaliquzzaman, also addressed this meeting. The presence of Khaliquzzaman leads one to doubt if Muslim League actually mobilized people even though officially it claimed not to have been involved.

\textsuperscript{190} Jinnah's Presidential Address at Muslim League's Lahore Session in March, 1940. Extracts of this Address re-produced in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), India's Partition, (Delhi, OUP, 1994 Reprint), p.56.
first and Muslims last. Jinnah accepted separate welcome addresses from
Momins and Eastern Railway Muslim Employees Association besides those
given to him by Adi Hindu Depressed Classes Association and Backward Hindus
Association.¹⁹¹

Jinnah refused to accept a welcome address from ittehad-i-Millat on the
ground that it contained a reference to the need for Hindu-Muslim unity.¹⁹² It was
not as if Jinnah did not lend his ears to the general clamour for Hindu-Muslim
harmony as is revealed by his diplomatic reply to a reference to this in the
welcome address presented to him by the Municipal Board of Kanpur. Jinnah is
reported to have replied that 'everyone wanted Hindu-Muslim concord though
they differed on the way of achieving it.'¹⁹³ So, it was not the mere expression of
the desire for Hindu-Muslim unity which angered Jinnah. He probably refused a
welcome address from ittehad-i-Millat because he thought that the two-nation
theory must at least be accepted by those organizations whose membership,
support and backing came predominantly from among Muslims.

Ittehad-i-Millat proved to be the proverbial nine days' wonder. After its
massive mobilization against Kanpur Firing on September 1939 and Jinnah's
disapproval of its programme in March 1941, this organization either went into
hibernation or just disbanded. There was practically no important activity which
Ittehad-i-Millat undertook after being snubbed by Jinnah as little mention of it was
made in our sources after March 1941. Nevertheless, Ittehad-i-Millat continued to

¹⁹¹ The Pioneer, 31-3-1941, p. 2.
¹⁹² PAI, 4-4-1941, pp. 37-8.
¹⁹³ The Pioneer, 1-4-1941, p. 4.
believe in Hindu-Muslim unity and it (along with Chowk Shoraj Peace Committee) organized a joint procession of members of both these religious groups on Janmashthami (or the birthday of the Hindu God Lord Krishna) in August 1941 in Fazalgarj Mohalla.\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Ittehad-i-Millat} continued to have a working relationship with communists as late as 1943 when it offered to organize food committees along with the Communist Party at Kanpur.\textsuperscript{195} But these activities were rare, especially after Jinnah snubbed \textit{Ittehad-i-Millat} in March 1941, an incident we have mentioned above.

C. CONCLUSION

The political assertions of non-League Muslim organizations failed. None of them was formed before the Muslim League but some of them seemed as strong as the League in the 1920s and the 1930s. In the period of the glory of these non-League Muslim organizations, the Muslim League was weak, uninspiring and prone to splits. Muslim League split at its Delhi session in 1933, with Hafiz Hidayat Husain, a Kanpur-based lawyer, heading one faction and Mian Abdul Aziz of Peshawar leading another.\textsuperscript{196}

Till 1937, Muslim League was not advocating two nations and by implication, it stood for Hindu-Muslim unity. This was a point on which none of the non-League Muslim organisations discussed above had any difference with the Muslim League. The Muslim League and the non-League organizations differed basically on their expectations of minority safeguards from the colonial

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 27-8-1941, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{195} PAI, 22-10-1943, P.170.
\textsuperscript{196} Mushirul Hasan, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 289-90.
authorities and their attitude to the Congress. Some of the non-League Muslim organizations came into existence in the late 1920s or the early 1930s at the time when constitutional reforms were being intensely debated and discussed. Hence, the Ahrars formed their organization in 1929, the Khaksars were born in 1931, the Independent Muslim Party was created in 1931 and the Shia Political Conference in 1929.  

The Muslim League's basic contention (and the assumption of Hindu communalist's) was that all Muslims were one and their politics, dictated by religion, was indivisible. But through their political activities and ideological assertions the non-League Muslim organisations showed that this was not the case. It was unfortunate that three lives were lost to prove that, leave alone "all" but even the one lakh odd Muslims of Kanpur had acute political differences among themselves. As stated above, one Momin called Abdulla was killed by alleged Muslim Leaguer goondas in 1938 and two Muslim Leaguers (whose names could not be ascertained) were allegedly killed by Khaksars in a fracas in 1945.

The death of Abdulla had led Momin Conference at Kanpur to hope that this 'sacrifice was a signal for success.' However, the non-League Muslim organisations did not succeed and their failure could be attributed to two reasons.

197 Shia Political Conference held its first session in Lucknow in 1930, the second in Montgomery on April 5, 1931, the third in Lucknow on October 30, 1932, the fourth session also there on October 11-12, 1937 and yet another one also at Lucknow on April 14-15, 1940. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., pp. 339-342.
Firstly, the people mobilized by non-League Muslim organisations were mostly poor and illiterate. Hence, their presence did not seem to count especially in constitutional politics and their politics did not seem to matter. The Ahrars were supposed to be mobilizing the 'lower bazaar element' and they openly declared themselves to be, like Mazdur Sabha, eager to secure employment for the poor and the needy. Khaksars claimed to be a party of the have-nots and they sought to augment their strength through training camps which were mainly attended by persons of the artisan classes. Momins were, of course, *en mass* a lower *biradari* of Muslims whose community organisations used to demand, among other things, relief from oppression by zamindars. Consequently, there was a greater chance of their aspirations to be grossly ignored and their activities to be unwittingly under-rated. To give an example, Muslim residents of Coolie Bazar presented welcome addresses to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Jawaharlal Nehru. They constituted one-fourth of the audience in a meeting where Nehru was honoured in 1936. But colonial intelligence reported that with the exception of Hasrat Mohani and Ghazi Khizr Mohammad, the rest were 'very irresponsible men with no status.' Moreover, the poor, for example, Julahas had few votes.

Usually, even in full-fledged democratic systems, political representatives only stand *for* the poor and very seldom *with* them. Under the colonial system of representation where franchise was limited severely by property and educational qualifications, the poor had an even lesser chance of being heard. The first step to kill a nascent political movement is to ignore it and this seems to have

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198 PAI, 12-9-1936, pa. 526 and 562, pp. 545 and 558.
happened here. Thus, unwittingly or by design, valiant efforts by non-League Muslim organisations in politics were reduced to a naught because they were scarcely noticed by others and were poorly represented by themselves.

The second reason for the failure of non-League Muslim organisations lay in the fact that they only reacted to political initiatives taken by the Muslim League. After Pakistan was demanded, "Muttahidah Qaumiyat" (or the belief in United Indian Nationalism) was proclaimed at the Jamiat-ul-Ulema Conference in 1940 by Syed Husain Ahmad Madni, the Sheikh-ul-Hadees of Darul Uloom, Deoband. Similarly, after the demand for Pakistan had caught the imagination of a large section of Muslim masses, Ahrars declared their preference for Hukoomat-i-Illahia (or the rule of God under the golden rules of Islam) at their Saharanpur Conference on April 26, 1943.

Thirdly, the non-League Muslim organisations failed to make strategic alliances between themselves in time and they also did not pursue with earnestness their common objectives of Hindu-Muslim unity, safeguarding interests of Muslim masses, opposition to colonialism or even conflict with the Muslim League. 'Azad Muslim Conference' was convened at Delhi on April 27-29, 1940, after the demand for Pakistan was made, by seven organisations, viz. Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind, Ahrar-e-Islam-i-Hind, Muslim Independent Party of Bihar, All India Momin Conference, Bengal's Krishak Praja Party, Baluchistan's Anjuman-e-Watan and All India Shia Political Conference. This Conference had set up a Board of twenty-five members which was supposed to submit its report on the solution of the communal problem within two months. The Board met once
but nothing was heard about it thereafter more due to the ‘indolence’ of its members.¹⁹⁹ Yet another creditable attempt for united India was made again at Delhi on March 6-8, 1944 and an organisation named All India Muslim Majlis was formed, among others, by office-bearers of Momin Conference, Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Krishak Praja Party. The principles and objectives of this organisation were as good and liberal as permitted by the times. But practically no effort was made to propagate those principles (of a united Indian federation with autonomous provinces vested even with the right to secede) or realize those objectives (to revive the Islamic spirit among Muslims but to take other communities along on the road to making India a united country with complete Independence).²⁰⁰ Finally, around election time in 1945-1946, the puny non-League Muslim organisations, without any centralised coordination, tried to fire-fight the raging Muslim League in as united a manner as was possible. Belated efforts at unity of these organisations with Congress were made by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai in July 1945. At Kanpur also a Committee was set up to counter anti-Congress propaganda among Muslims.²⁰¹ But by then the die was cast.

Non-League Muslims were being called all sorts of names in the 1930s and the 1940s by Hindu communalists.²⁰² Jinnah himself called non-League

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¹⁹⁹ Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., p. 344.
²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 345.
²⁰¹ PAI, 27-7-1945, p. 117.
²⁰² The Hindu Outlook called them a perfidious group which instead of bringing Muslims to the Congress was pushing the Congress to bow before Muslim communalists. The Hindu Outlook, 11-5-1938, p.3. Digvijaynath, President of U.P. Hindu Sabha called nationalist Muslims ‘fifth columnists who deserved to be thrown out of India.’ Vartman, 7-6-1947, p. 4.
Muslims 'traitors, selfish and misguided persons.'\textsuperscript{203} This language by the Quaid-e-Azam had its hideous fascist local manifestations. One sample of it was a statement by Mohammad Faruq. This un-gentlemanly Muslim Leaguer had a decade long adversarial relation with the Ahrars. In 1936, he was made President of Kanpur's newly formed Blue Shirts Young Men's Association to counteract the activities of the local Ahrars.\textsuperscript{204} Around election time when he saw some support for Nationalist Muslims, Mohammad Faruq said furiously, 'If a Muslim does not vote for Muslim League, it shall be my duty to throttle his neck and kill him.'\textsuperscript{205} Given this background, it was not surprising that nationalist Muslims fared poorly in the elections of 1945-1946. Still, despite the restricted franchise, they managed to get more than 30% of the rural vote and 14% of the urban vote of Muslims in Kanpur.

The political activities or the ideological assertions by non-League Muslim organisations were obviously not strong enough to deflect Muslim League from its chosen path of Partition. But the legacy of these organisations was valuable for those Muslims who remained in India after 1947. The table below shows that there was not much out-migration from Kanpur after Partition; the Muslim population in the city declined more sharply (by 6.43%) in the decade 1931-41 than between 1941-51 (when it decreased by merely 1.81%).

\textsuperscript{203} Addressing a public meeting at Bombay, Jinnah accepted Sarat Chandra Bose's charge that Muslim League did not represent all Muslims. He said, 'It is childish to claim that any political party represents cent per cent of the inhabitants of a country. Such a claim cannot be made by any sane person. In every country there are traitors and selfish and misguided persons. I claim to represent an overwhelming majority of Muslims of India and challenge Congress to disprove this claim.' \textit{The Leader}, 9-11-1945, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{204} \textit{PAI}, 5-9-1936, pa. 516, p. 536.

\textsuperscript{205} \textit{Ibid.}, 12-10-1945, p. 162.
### Muslim Population in Kanpur (in percentage)\(^{206}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>% of Total Population</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>29.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>12.94</td>
<td>23.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>11.51</td>
<td>21.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For those common Muslims who decided to stay in India after Partition (and a vast majority did stay as the afore-mentioned statistics show), it was more convenient to build a niche for themselves on the leads provided by the dissenters from the Muslim League. A scholar has, for example, argued that these Indian Muslims could point to Jamiat-ul-Ulema to answer allegations that Muslims had not participated in the freedom movement and that they were always looking to cultural centres outside India.\(^{207}\) At a mundane level, the presence of non-League Muslim organisations made the continued existence of Muslims in India natural and their participation in the celebrations of Independence acceptable. For instance, in April 1947, some Muslim families had packed their belongings and were ready to leave for where they thought Pakistan would be. But some Congress leaders requested them to stay on in India and they obliged.\(^{208}\) On the First Independence Day, the Tricolour (the flying of which led to protests by Muslim Leaguers previously) was unfurled all over the city, including Chowk which was a bastion of the Muslim League. Common Muslims

\(^{206}\) Calculations based on Census of UP, 1931, Part II, pp. 472 and 494-7; Census of UP, 1941, Tables, pp. 36-7 nd 58-9; and Kanpur District Census Handbook, 1951, pp. 94-5.


\(^{208}\) Vartman, 8-4-1947, p. 4.
were present at the temple on Meston Road where Kashinath Gupta, President, Chowk Ward Congress Committee unfurled the National flag and was given a salute of twenty-one rifle shots. Even Muslim League workers were present at the Phool Bagh where Congress volunteers from the whole city saluted the National flag which was unfurled to a hundred and one rifle shots.\textsuperscript{209}

\textsuperscript{209} Pratap, 19-8-1947, p. 4.