CHAPTER III

MUSLIM COMMUNAL MOBILIZATION

Grievances, real or perceived, formed the peg around which antagonistic identities were sought to be cast by communal leaders and organizations among Muslims. Before going into the process of how socio-economic problems and cultural anxieties were converted into grievances, we would like to take a look at the facts about the life of urban Muslims in United Provinces (U.P.) in general and Kanpur in particular.

Muslims formed just 29.82 per cent of Kanpur's population in 1931. When Kanpur's population doubled between 1931 and 1941, the proportion of Muslims in its population declined by 6 per cent to become 23.39 per cent. On an average, Muslims of Kanpur were educationally worse off and economically better off than their co-religionists in U.P. as a whole.

There was greater incidence of the educational lag among Kanpur's Muslims not only in contrast with Hindus but even as compared to co-religionists in the other prominent cities of U.P. A Committee was appointed in 1925 to look into 'the state of Primary Education of Boys of the Muslim Community and of Educationally Backward Communities in UP.' It calculated, from the Census of 1921, that the percentage of Muslim scholars in Primary Schools of Kanpur was

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the lowest as compared to other Municipalities of KABAL towns. (KABAL was the acronym for the five prominent cities of U.P., viz. Kanpur, Allahabad, Benaras, Agra and Lucknow.) The Committee also found that in 1925 in Allahabad division (of which Kanpur was a part) there were more Muslim boys in Middle Vernacular schools in non-descript Farrukhabad and Fatehpur than in the much bigger and more famous Kanpur. This dismal situation improved a bit in Kanpur in 1931. According to the Census of 1931, as compared to the literacy among Muslims in other KABAL towns, the literacy average of Kanpur’s Muslims (at 14.34%) was better than that of their co-religionists in Agra (9.64%) and Benaras (10.00%), almost equal to that of Muslims in Lucknow (14.65%) and much lower than that of Muslims in Allahabad (21.13%).

Educational statistics were not collected by the Census of 1941 and educational surveys became rarer in the 1940s. Hence, it was difficult to estimate the extent of educational progress among Muslims of Kanpur. However, in 1946, according to an estimate, there were 800 students in Halim Inter College alone. This college and Mohammad Ali Memorial School were the symbol of educational progress along secular lines among Muslims in Kanpur. As opposed to this, Kanpur had Madrasas, which catered to the needs

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4 The other findings of this Census were that literacy of all sections in Kanpur was lower than the literacy averages of their counterparts in other KABAL towns, except Agra. The literacy among Muslims was uniformly lower than literacy among Hindus in all KABAL towns. Census of UP, 1931, Part II, pp. 470-74.
5 Letter of Bashir Ahmad Quraishi from Kanpur, Dawn, June 14, 1946, p.4. There were 20 High Schools and Inter Colleges in U.P. whose management was in the hands of Muslims in 1948. Out of these, two were in Kanpur. These were Muslim Jubilee Girls High School and Halim Muslim Inter College. S.M. Jamil (compiler), The Muslim Year Book of India and Who’s Who 1948-49 (Bombay, The Bombay Newspaper co. Ltd., 1949) (Published under the auspices of The All-India Muslim Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bombay), p. 256.
of traditional religious education, and mostly boys were admitted to them. Six such institutions existed in the city towards the end of the period of our study.6

Economically, a section of Muslims in Kanpur was doing fairly well. Muslim businessmen in Kanpur were supposed to have had a monopoly over tanning, leather and timber industries and a significant control over trade in general merchandise (called bisat-khana) and hides and skins.7 In Kanpur, the overwhelming majority of Muslims, like most of the Hindus of the city, were poor who eked a modest living by working in tanneries and textile mills besides doing odd jobs like that of green grocers selling vegetables, barbers, etc.8

In discussing the rise and growth of Muslim communalism we will lay greater emphasis on temporal factors and our basic concern will be with local issues. We shall, in this chapter, look at the growth of communal organisations in Kanpur, grievance-mongering done by Muslim communal organizations and the telling effect all this had on different sections of Muslims in Kanpur, especially on workers, students and businessmen.

A. COMMUNAL ORGANIZATIONS
I. Tanzim and Tabligh
   As elsewhere, in the 1920s, Tabligh (education) and Tanzim (organisation) were the more active organizations through which mobilization of

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6 There were 120 Madras in the United Provinces in 1948. Out of these, six were in Kanpur. These were: Ziaul Ulum, Coolie Bazar; Ashraful Ulum; Jame-ul-Ulum; Imdadul Ulum, Bansmandi; Ahsanul Madaris; and Takmilul Ulum. S.M. Jamil (compiler), op. cit., p. 250.
7 Claim made by M.H. Abdi, Secretary of UP Muslim Chamber of Commerce, Kanpur in his letter dated April 18, 1944 to the Secretary of the Governor of UP. File No. 60/1944, Municipal Department, UPSA, p. 27.
Muslims along communal lines was initiated and consolidated. It has been suggested by scholars that in transitional societies, like India, Islamic symbols became a powerful source of inspiration and legitimisation of social and communal identity. After the priestly class of Muslims lost the patronage of medieval rulers who happened to be Muslims, they turned to ordinary believers for support in the 19th century. The common believers were introduced to reformed Islam. The proponents of new Islam provided a type of Islamic model behaviour code and emphasised collective action by an increasingly self-conscious Muslim community. Tanzim was a part of this process. It came in 1920s and turned personal religious practice into a public spectacle and a collective activity. The perception that Islam was in danger and that Muslims were an abused minority lay at the core of the Tanzim movement. But to overcome this condition, Tanzim generally proposed martyrdom, not murder, for the defence of Islam.

Scholars give different reasons for the growth of Tanzim and Tabligh organisations among Muslims in 1920s. Some simply feel that Tanzim was a reaction and it was started to oppose the Shudhi (purification) and Sangathan (consolidation) activities already underway among some Hindus. The Shudhi and Sangathan activities were reportedly taken up after the forcible conversion of

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Hindus by Muslim Mapillas in Malabar. 11 Ram Gopal quotes Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew to say that as Madan Mohan Malaviya started the Sangathan movement, Muslims organised a counter-movement. 12 I. H. Qureshi agrees with this line of argument; he felt, however, that equating Sangathan with Tanzim was wrong. Qureshi's espousal of Muslim communalism was no secret and according to him while the originators of Sangathan intended to make it "aggressive", the Muslim movement was "defensive". 13 But, as we will just show, Qureshi was wrong in asserting this because Tanzims were equally, if not more offensive, than Sangathan in their propaganda and activities.

The involvement of a redoubtable Congress leader, like Kitchlew, in Tanzims deserves an explanation. Kitchlew wished to give socio-economic succour to Muslims, especially in Punjab - the province to which he belonged. In Punjab, the entire trade and a majority of services were in the hands of urban Hindus mainly belonging to the Khatri, Bania and Arora castes. 14 Hence, for the uplift of Muslims, Kitchlew sought to make mosques centres of learning and establish Industrial schools with the help of 'Muslim' banks and cooperative societies. 15

13 Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, Ulema in Politics (Karachi, Ma'aref Ltd., 1972), p.289.
15 Kitchlew used some very strong language against the opponents of Tanzim. At a public meeting in Lahore, he is reported to have said, 'The Congress was lifeless till the Khilafat Committee put life in it. When the Khilafat Committee joined it, it did in one year what the Hindu Congress had not done in forty years. The Congress also did the work of uplifting the seven crores of untouchables. This was purely the work for the
In some recent researches it has been argued that Tanzim gained momentum in the 1920s due to the internal squabble between leaders following the petering out of the Khilafat movement.16 With the abolition of the Caliphate in March 1924 by Turkey's new rulers led by Kemal Ataturk, some leaders of the Khilafat movement looked around for an enduring cause to propagate. Muslim League had been revived two years back and there were suggestions that the Central Khilafat Committee (CKC) should hand over its funds to Muslim League. Khilafatists knew that they needed a new and more dynamic programme to survive. So, a few days before the Lahore session of Muslim League (i.e. before May 24-25, 1924), Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew called upon CKC and Jamiyat-a-ulema-a-Hind to meet at a special session and decide on the advisability, or otherwise, of the Khilafat movement. A special session was held and here Dr. Kitchlew outlined his socio-economic Tanzim programme.17 Asaf Ali (from Delhi) asked for the consolidation of all Muslim organisations into one organic body which should work with Congress for the speedy attainment of full Dominion Status. At the end of the meeting of the Working Committee of CKC on May 22, 1924, Maulana

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17 Hindu (Weekly) (Madras), May 22, 1924 as quoted in N.M. Qureshi, op. cit., p. 388.
Shaukat Ali (1873-1938)\textsuperscript{18} issued a long statement in which a major change in policy was announced as a socio-economic agenda was added to the existing political goals.

CKC, according to Shaukat Ali, hoped to settle the Khilafat issue and free Jaziratu‘l-’Arab (or the Arabian Peninsula) from non-Muslim domination but it also sought ‘to ensure the free development and progress of the Muslim community in India itself.’ CKC also wanted that Muslims were to be taught ‘to take their proper share in public life and to accept readily and cheerfully their portion of sacrifices and responsibilities as members of a composite nation struggling to be free.’ The areas identified for special attention to ensure the development and progress of Muslims by CKC were: spreading religious studies to bridge the gulf between the ordinary Muslims and the ulema (because Islam ‘recognises no distinction between the laity and the clergy’); abolition of illiteracy (by spreading both religious and secular education); eradication of social evils like mendicancy; getting rid of ‘evils’ like intoxication and prostitution; reforms to remove poverty; reorganisation of orphanages, especially for the Mapillas; organisation of baitu‘l-

\textsuperscript{18} Shaukat Ali (1873-1938), who played second fiddle to his younger brother Mohammad Ali, was a graduate from Aligarh and he worked as sub-deputy Opium Agent in the State services of Rampur till 1912. A Sunni by faith, he became a founder member of All-India Muslim League; private secretary of the Aga Khan in 1911; founded the Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Kaaba in 1913 with Abdul Bari and M.H.Kidwai; involved with Mohammad Ali in the publication of the English weekly, Comrade, founded in 1911 and the Urdu daily founded soon after, Hamdard; the pan-Islamic writings of Mohammad Ali during World War I led to serious conflict with the Government and both the brothers were, consequently, jailed from May 1915 to December 1919; on coming out, he got involved with the Khilafat agitation and was jailed again with his brother for sedition from September 1921 to 1923; he was President of the All-India Khilafat Conference at Coconada in 1923; he lost influence after the Khilafat movement; like his brother, he was a Muslim representative at the Round Table Conference in 1931; he was also elected member of the legislative assembly in 1935. For biographical sketches of the Ali brothers, see Francis Robinson, Separatism Among Indian Muslims The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims, 1860-1923 (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 361-2 and 364.
mal (or public treasury/ exchequer); zakat (or alms/ alms tax) and auqaf (or plural of waqf meaning charitable endowments).  

It was estimated that at one stage in late the 1920s there were as many as 160 Tanzim-related Anjumans (meaning organisations) in different parts of Kanpur city. These organizations were not communal per se but as a part of their mobilization, Tanzim leaders often made appeals for the economic boycott of Hindus and sang songs with a violent tenor for the defence of Islam. Such mobilizations began converting the existing ignorance of and indifference to one another between ordinary followers of the two religions into a certain amount of distrust and animosity. All this did not directly lead to violence but it fanned communalism and led to confrontational situations which lent themselves more easily to communal violence.

Till impending constitutional reforms drove them to demanding ‘exclusive safeguards’ as a minority in 1927, it was interesting that the goals of Muslim political organizations were similar to that of Tanzim. For instance, Mohammad Yaqub in his Presidential address to the Provincial Muslim League conference in 1926 said that there was just one issue in the coming election to the UP

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19 Hindu (Weekly) (Madras), May 29, 1924 as quoted in N.M. Qureshi, op. cit., p. 388.
20 Mohammad Yaqub (1879-?), a Moradabad based lawyer, was an office holder of London Muslim League in 1908 while studying for his Bar-at-Law there. He was member of Moradabad Municipal Board and became its first non-official Chairman. He was knighted and was a part of the 'Old Party' which believed that the Government was the best defender of Muslim interests. He became President of the All-India Muslim League in 1927; he was Member of the Age of Consent Committee in 1928; member of the Indian Franchise Committee in 1932; and President of the Legislative Assembly in 1930. For a biographical sketch, see Francis Robinson (1993), op. cit., p. 417.
Legislative Council. This issue, according to Yaqub, was that to be a true patriot a Muslim should be a true Musalman also.\textsuperscript{21}

Tanzim got its presence felt, most of all, by enforcing the collective observance of religious rituals by Muslims. Organizations associated with Tanzim had a peculiarly local flavour. Formed to buttress the Muslim identity in the 1920s, these Tanzim-related organisations were called Anjuman Tahafuz-i-Islam (like the one formed in 1924 at Allahabad and led by Maulana Vilayat Hussain), Anjuman Hifazat-ul-Islam (like the one in Kanpur in 1924 and led by Hafiz Hidayat Husain) or Anjuman Islamia (also at Kanpur).\textsuperscript{22} These organisations had a religious orientation to begin with but later their objectives changed and their activities made them, if not full-fledged communal organisations atleast proto-communal outfits.

Anjuman Hifazat ul-Islam was formed in September 1924 at a meeting attended by 2,000 persons over which Hafiz Hidayat Husain presided.\textsuperscript{23} This organisation was formed with the view to promote the observance of religious rituals and sacred practices but it later got involved in fairly mundane affairs also.

To begin with, Anjuman Hifazat ul-Islam insisted that all Muslims should pray five times a day as required by Islam. To enforce compliance with this tenet, it was proposed that those Muslims who do not pray should be boycotted by co-religionists and evicted from houses owned by Muslim landlords.\textsuperscript{24} This did not

\textsuperscript{21} The Leader, 28-4-1926, p. 11. Conference held at Pilibhit.
\textsuperscript{23} PAI, 27-9-1924, pa.307, p.311.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 25-10-1924, pa.334, p.350.
directly inflame communalism but it was a crude attempt to increase religiosity among common Muslims, including labourers. Hence, to protest against the ringing of a school bell during prayers, about 800 Muslim mill-hands reportedly gathered for Friday prayers in a small mosque (which usually accommodated 20 people) and they overflowed into the grounds of the neighbouring Municipal school.25

Anjuman Isalmia was in existence even in the mid-1930s. CID reported that it held a meeting on April 30, 1935, which was presided over by Khan Bahadur Hafiz Hidayat Husain, then the President of UP Muslim League. Husain urged his 850 strong Muslim audience to unite because they were in a minority and to form mohalla committees for their defence. He reminded his co-religionists how at its last session Hindu Mahasabha proved that this body stood for an “India for Hindus.”26

Each Anjuman was usually connected to a mosque. Members and volunteers for these Anjumans could be easily recruited from the vast adult male population of poor Muslims in Kanpur. But organizers and speakers of these Tanzim outfits had to be brought in from outside, basically from Lucknow, Delhi, etc. For this a certain amount of patronage and good will of the richer Muslims was necessary. More patrons for such Anjumans could be found in Kanpur as compared to other cities of United Provinces. The main reason for this was not because the number of Muslims in Kanpur was more but because they were

25 FR – 32 for the II half of October 1927, Home Political Department. NAI.
relatively more prosperous and ignorant here, opined the Congress Enquiry Committee which inquired into the Riots of 1931 in Kanpur. As already stated, Muslim traders of Kanpur were reported to have had a practical monopoly over the leather trade and *bisat-khana* (or general merchandise trade). It were these traders who were the main patrons of Tanzim organizations.\(^{27}\)

The activists of the Tanzim Anjumans became a menace to the peace of Kanpur city by their daily exercises attended by some volunteers in khaki uniform. These activists also persuaded the believers of Islam to say their Namaz five times a day, sometimes by even forcing them to get up for it at four o' clock in the morning. On special occasions, for example for a procession on the Prophet's birthday in August 1930, they mobilized as many as 25,000 persons (out of whom 5,000 were in their uniform of Khaki shirts and shorts). They took out a similar procession of 15,000 persons on Rajbi Sharif in December 1930.\(^{28}\) CID reported that on Barawafat, i.e. August 8, 1930, the 'better class' Muslims stood aloof from the procession and Muslim Congress workers were not allowed to join it by some sections of the Tanzim Committee.\(^{29}\) Not only in the city but Tanzim propaganda was spreading to the more accessible rural areas of Kanpur district.\(^{30}\)

\(^{27}\) The growth of Tanzim organizations in Kanpur city was particularly noticed by by Dr. Bhagwan Dass's Committee investigating the Kanpur riots of March, 1931. See *Congress Enquiry Committee Report on Communal Riots in Kanpur in 1931* in N. Gerald Barrier (ed.) *Roots of Communal Politics* (Indian Reprint) (Columbia, South Asia Books, n.d.), p. 251.


\(^{29}\) *PAI, 16-8-1930*, pa. 672, p. 1412.

Celebrations on the Prophet's birthday were known as Mauluds. Before 1922, the Congress Enquiry Committee noted, "Hindus in every Mohalla subscribed for and sat in the gatherings" to mark these occasions at Kanpur. But in the Mauluds organised after 1922 conversions were freely made and communal leaders from outside Kanpur made inflammatory speeches. These communal leaders warned their audiences that "Hindus were doing harm to Muslims economically and through Shuddhi". They ridiculed Hindu religion and scorned Draupadi’s polyandry as also Sita’s character. One speaker once "announced that sweetmeats sold by Hindus were haram (or forbidden) for Musalmans as Hindu Halwais sprinkled cow’s urine on their preparations."31

The Tanzim zealots made their working style and capacity to mobilize followers look offensive by carrying arms and by singing provocative songs. "Ballams (or spears), Karaulis (or daggers), Khantas (or axes) and even drawn swords were always in evidence" during Tanzim processions. Tanzim Committee constituted a party to patrol the city and preach the observance of religious practices. They advocated the boycott of liquor but carried out their propaganda for the purpose independent of Congress, the CID reported.32 Tanzim volunteers were not always gentle in their ways. They patrolled the city with their arms (viz. lathis, spears and kantas) and exhorted Muslims not to gamble. Annoyed at this

32 PAI, 9-8-1930, pa. 655, p. 1330.
moral policing, some Muslim gamblers stoned Tanzim volunteers on October 23, 1930 but trouble was averted somehow.\textsuperscript{33}

Similarly, there were reports that participants in Tanzim processions made their activities more unpleasant by singing confrontational (if not blatantly communal) songs. Some very offensive lines quoted in this respect by the Congress Enquiry Committee were as follows.

"O, Muslims, become a thorn in the heart of enemies. Suffer and then become the sword of Ali. If there is an opportunity to sacrifice Get beheaded happily on the path to God. ..."

"To beat, fight and loot the kafir is just; Prepare yourself for a battle over every trifle."

"We will destroy the kafirs from the face of the earth."\textsuperscript{34}

The following song sung by participants in Tanzim processions was translated by Lala Diwan Chand who appeared as witness before the Official Committee investigating the Communal riots of 1931 at Kanpur.

"Wake up now, sleeping Muslims: Get ready to support Islam. Time is coming for you to sacrifice yourself Getting beheaded and becoming the Sardar of Muslims.

"Even the sceptics recognize your sensitiveness and courage. It's a trifle for you to fight Those who ridicule your Shar'iat and worship, Such un-pious persons should be consigned to the flames.

"We shall wake the world and shake the world, united, We shall raise the monotheistic cry With the fire of Monotheism we shall obliterate O Infidelity, thy existence out of the world.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 1-11-1930, pa. 887, p. 2163.
\textsuperscript{34} Congress Enquiry Committee Report on Communal Riots in Kanpur in 1931, op. cit., p. 257.
"We shall place our throats on swords
And on spears our heads
Where religion is concerned,
We shall get beheaded.\textsuperscript{35}

These songs and provocative slogans continued to be raised by Tabligh activists in their public actions even after the gory riots of March-April in 1931. In December 1931, during Rajbi Sharif a procession of 10,000 Muslims, confrontational slogans were raised. Some of them challenged, "Kam nahin henge Muslaman Khoon Bahane ke liye" or "For shedding blood Muslims are not any less." Similarly, some other slogans awakened Muslims offensively by saying, "Hoshiar Musalmano – Garaon se bach ke rehna, Who Mil ke Dhoka Denge" or "Muslims Beware – Don’t trust Others, They will betray by pretending to be friends." On this occasion provocative songs were also sung like:

"Ruab Dushman par Hardam Jamaye Jayenge.
Ab to Kafir Musalman Banaye Jayenge."\textsuperscript{36}

(On the Enemy will our force prevail.
Now Kafirs will be converted to Islam.)

The consequence of all this was that the hearts of some Muslims were filled with fears and the minds of some others with poison against the enemies, though not necessarily Hindus. But the singing of such songs was coupled with calls made (and, occasionally, heeded) to boycott Hindu cloth merchants, halwais (sweet-meat sellers), tambolis (mouth-freshner sellers), grocers, etc. and even ekka-wallahs (or drivers of hackney carriages) were not spared from social and economic boycott.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35} Quoted in Sandria B. Frietag, "The Roots of Muslim Separatism in South Asia: Personal Practice and Public Structures in Kanpur and Bombay", in Edmund Burke III and Ira M. Lapidus (eds.), op. cit., p. 126.
\textsuperscript{36} Pratap, 13-12-1931, p. 4.
The credibility of Tanzim to be a genuine organization of Muslims was challenged. Even though Tanzim organizations were apparently not political they had to face the charge of being propped by the Colonial government and of flourishing on official patronage to 'prevent Muslims from joining Congress.' At one private meeting leaders of the Tanzim organization (i.e. Maulana(s) Shaukat Ali, Nisar Ahmed and Abdul Majid Badauni as well as Raja of Salempur) were accused of asking Muslim cloth merchants of Kanpur to sell foreign cloth though Congress was urging the opposite. These charges were flung at Tanzim not only by opponents but also by alleged supporters. A majority of the 40 Muslim witnesses examined by the Congress Enquiry Committee reportedly agreed that that the general belief in the minds of the Muslim community was that “the Tanzim or Jhanda organization was really financed by the Government.” Farzana Shaikh said that Hasrat Mohani, among others, turned to Tanzim after the failure of the Khilafat movement.\(^{38}\) On the other hand, the same Mohani is quoted by the Congress Enquiry Committee to have used the dais of Tanzim on Raj bi Sharif on December 21, 1930 to inform Muslims in Kanpur:

I do not believe in the Tanzim programme, because this movement has been started at the instance of the Government and some of its leading spirits are connected with the C.I.D.\(^{39}\)

Before the relations between Hindus and Muslims got spoilt following the failure of Khilafat movement, Jamiat-ul-Ulema known for its nationalist service


\(^{39}\) Quoted from Sidaqat, Kanpur, 24-12-1930. *Congress Enquiry Committee Report on Communal Riots in Kanpur in 1931*, op. cit., pp. 252 - 255. Sidaqat was Urdu weekly started by Khwaja Abdul Kalim Sahib in March 1925. In the atmosphere of communal acrimony prevailing then, it won the acclaim of Nationalists for advocating Hindu Muslim harmony and national progress. See Pratap, 13-4-1925, p. 16.
had passed a resolution (at its Delhi session on November 19-21, 1920) to establish Tabligh whose purpose was to function as a department for conducting religious propaganda. Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang (1876-1952), a pleader of Ambala in Punjab who had also organised a Muslim school, is said to have been behind the foundation of Tabligh-ul-Islam, the sister of Tanzim organizations which was specifically concerned with religious propaganda about Islam.\(^{40}\) It was to become later the vehicle for promotion of conversions to Islam.\(^{41}\) Besides Tabligh-ul-Islam other organisations were formed for the advancement and defence of Islam in the 1920s. Some of these were Anjuman Taid-ul-Islam in Benaras and Anjuman Moid-ul-Islam in Lucknow. In Kanpur one Madrasa Illahiyat, established under the patronage of leather merchants in 1912, dedicated itself to Tabligh activities in the 1920s.\(^{42}\)

Tabligh-ul-Islam did not seem to enjoy much support at Kanpur. It was formed in 1923 at a private meeting where it was decided to employ a Maulvi each on wages for the city and rural tracts and to provide for the help of these preachers two students of Madrasa Ilahayat.\(^{43}\) Yet, even as late as late as 1929, i.e., in the seventh year of its existence the votaries of Tabligh-ul-Islam found little to cheer so far as the organization at Kanpur was concerned. Speaking at the sixth Anniversary celebrations of Tabligh, Hafiz Hidayat Husain regretted that the Tabligh had failed in its purpose which was to prevent Malkana Rajputs from

\(^{41}\) I.H. Qureshi (1972), op. cit., p. 288. Also N. M. Qureshi, op. cit., p. 347.
\(^{42}\) Nandini Gooplu, op. cit., p. 288.
\(^{43}\) PAI, 2-6-1923, pa. 406, p. 321.
conversion to Hinduism. Husain tried to arouse the anger of his small audience (of just 300 persons) on this occasion by quoting from an obviously exaggerated report from Bharat. This newspaper reported that two lakh Muslims had been successfully converted to Hinduism between 1928 and 1929. This allegedly massive success of the Shudhi activists inflamed conservative Muslim leaders (like Mohammad Salih and Hafiz Mansur) who criticized the Secretary of Tabligh Committee, Kanpur for being inactive and extravagant. The onslaught of such critics led the hapless Secretary to defend his Committee by claiming that during 1928-29 they had reclaimed six apostates and converted 20 non-Muslims.44

The main task of Tabligh was religious propaganda and this it continued doing without much fanfare. Anjuman Tabligh-ul-Islam held meetings to explain, defend and praise the various acts of the Prophet and to expound his teachings.45 The Jamiat-e-Tabligh-ul-Islam of Nairang was not half as successful in converting non-Muslims than the organizations it helped morally and financially. Formed in 1923 to oppose the conversion of Malkana Muslim Rajputs, Tabligh-ul-Islam had converted 15,000 non-Muslims by 1940. On the other hand, Maunatul Islam Association of Ponani (Malabar) which was formed in 1908 but was a recipient of help from Tabligh, converted almost 30,000 non-Muslims till 1946.46

44 Ibid., 18-5-1929, pa. 254, p.206.
45 Meeting on June 2, 1929. PAJ, 8-6-1929, pa. 307, p.246.
46 In addition to the aforesaid number, Tabligh-ul-Islam had re-converted to Islam 10,000 apostates. S.M. Ikram, “Tabligh An Account of Spread of Islam in India and Modern Missionary Activities of the Indian Muslims,” S.M. Jamil (compiler), op. cit., p. 47.
Interestingly, while the proto-communalists of Tabligh focused only on their organizations and were heavily disappointed with their performance, routine conversions used to be taking place outside the Tabligh. In one such case of conversion (in spite of the Tabligh, not due to it) a Bengali Brahmin boy became a Muslim after he joined an Excise Inspector as a domestic servant. After two years of this conversion, the boy’s father complained and the District Magistrate of Kanpur heard this case. But nobody could change the situation because the boy concerned refused to go back to his father.

Tabligh may have failed to rise up to the expectation of its supporters but this failure was not due to want of effort on the part of its members. Its adherents observed April 24 every year and on the Tabligh Day in 1925 they vowed to secure one convert each to Islam. At Tabligh meetings Arya Samaj’s ‘fanatics’ were blamed for the existing friction between Hindus and Muslims. Some speakers went further and suggested strong confrontation as a solution to problems. For instance, at one Tabligh meeting, Sher Mohammad Amin urged his audience to bring a number of cows and slaughter them before mosques on the spot where Hindus played music. This, he thought, would effectively disperse Hindus. This confrontationist method was never tried out by Muslin residents of Kanpur but Sher Mohammad Amin was definitely tried by law enforcing agencies for suggesting it.

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47 PAI, 17-1-1925, pa.16,p.21.
48 Ibid., 24-1-1925,pa.29, p.27.
49 Ibid., 2-5-1925, pa.133, p.183.
50 Ibid., 30-6-1923, pa.477, p.368.
51 Ibid., 28-5-1927, PA.510, P.194.
Tabligh activists continued to be active in Kanpur in the 1930s. On July 23, 1936, 300 of them decided to hold an All-India Tabligh Conference at Kanpur in August. They also decided to defend K.L. Gauba, the ex-Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), who was recently arrested in Kanpur in connection with the Lahore People's Bank case. No information on the follow up of the decision to hold an All-India Tabligh Conference at Kanpur was available. However, a Provincial Tabligh Conference was reported from Kanpur on September 27-9, 1936 in which resolutions were passed condemning the British Government's policy in Palestine and its action in the Madeh Saheba case. The other highlights of this Conference included lectures on the principles of Islam and the three conversions which were made after the lectures.

Conversions continued in the 1930s and most of the times they aroused angry protests. Occasionally these protests were mellowed and so, when Mishri Bazar's Ramswarup Vaishya converted and adopted the name Abdulla, a local newspaper ended the matter by dismissing him as a 'crackpot.' A few months later, two people converted at a Tabligh Conference in the presence of Hiralal Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's son who had adopted Islam. The same newspaper did not go beyond merely mentioning their names and caste, viz. that one of the converted was a Brahmin, Shambhu Dayal Pande and the other was a Kurmi called Dasrath.

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52 Ibid., 1-8-1936, pa. 441, p. 425.
53 Ibid., 10-10-1936, pa. 591, p. 626.
54 Vartman, 14-6-1936, p. 4.
55 Ibid., 1-10-1936, p. 4.
Hell almost broke loose in 1938 when a woman, who earlier converted to Islam, wanted to reconvert to Hinduism. The re-conversion of this woman called Shivrani was to be held at the Arya Samaj Temple. Many Muslims gathered at this venue on the scheduled date and time of re-conversion and tension prevailed. A riot like situation arose. It could only be averted by the timely intervention of the police. Hasan Asghari, in-charge of the Kotwali Police Station, ascertained from the lady whether she was re-converting out of her own wish and she apparently said that she was. Asghari then asked the assembled mob of Muslims to dispose off peacefully which they did and the situation was defused.56

Two important things to note here are that firstly the Tabligh and Anjumans, referred to above, were more active in the 1920s but they did nothing spectacular during this period. Besides, even in their heyday these organizations were not recklessly communal or aggressively separatist. However, though started by a reputed Congressman of Punjab, viz. Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, Tanzim Committees in Kanpur had started showing a certain antipathy to the participation of Congressmen in their activities. Secondly, while Tanzim was trying to create a sense of solidarity among Muslims it was not able to check competition between the believers of Islam. Muslims were united by Tanzim values and symbols but they were simultaneously fragmented by neighbourhood identities within the Tanzim structure. In fact there is evidence that the several Anjumans (or organisations) of Muslims were also busy competing with each other at the mohalla level. Hafiz Hidayat Husain, MLC (U.P.) said regretfully that

56 Ibid., 15-4-1938, p. 5.
Anjumans were into rivalry with one another on issues like who had the largest number of members/volunteers, whose flag was the highest or whose contingent looked smarter in a procession and who resembled this high personage or that high functionary. Hence, solidarity of Muslims even on religious issues like Tanzim and Tabligh came with a certain amount of competition between them during this period.

II. The Muslim League

The organization that became the focal point of Muslim communal mobilization was the Muslim league. The Provincial unit of the League was revived at Kanpur in April 1922. It is well known that the League was not conceived as a separatist organization right from the start. Speaking on the occasion of its revival, Azad Sobhani, who presided over the meeting, declared that the revival of the Provincial Muslim League did not necessarily entail the winding up of Khilafat Committees. Sobhani opined that 'there was no point in demolishing an old house because a new one had been built.' If for Sobhani Khilafat and Muslim League were just like two houses owned by the same person, for Hasrat Mohani the objectives of Congress and Muslim League were similar in the 1920s. Mohani said that Muslim League stood for attaining Swaraj and establishing Hindu-Muslim unity, besides safeguarding Muslim interests.

The pre-1937 period has been characterised as the phase of liberal communalism of the Muslim League. In this phase even M.A. Jinnah spoke, in 1924, of "Hindus and Muslims being brothers" and he said, in 1936, that his "sole

58 PAI, 22-4-1922, pa. 454, pp. 718-20.
59 Ibid., 8-4-1922, pa.425, pp. 662-3.
objective was the welfare of my country without a partisan spirit. Hence, though undoubtedly a communal organization from its inception, Muslim League was not wedded to separatism or extreme communalism from the very beginning.

II.1 Dull organizational Beginnings

Enthusiasm for the Muslim League was not too high right at its inception, at least not in Kanpur. The following example would amply show this. Provincial Muslim League was revived at Kanpur on the same day in April 1922 when Hasrat Mohani was arrested for his role in the Non-cooperation movement. The venue for the meeting to condemn Hasrat Mohani's arrest and for the revival of Muslim League was the same, viz., Khurd Mahal Park. But whereas 700 persons came to condemn Mohani's arrest, just 150 persons turned up to attend the meeting for the revival of Muslim League the same evening. As we have already noted, more than two years later, when Anjuman Hifazat-ul-Islam was formed almost 2,000 persons came for that inaugural meeting. This indicates that the Muslim League was not a great favourite of Muslims right from its inception.

It has been pointed out by scholars that the mobilization capacity of Muslim League was so small that it was like a letter-head organization in the 1920s and even in the early years of the 1930s. For instance, the 1929 session

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60 Biplab Chandra, Communalism in Modern India (New Delhi, Vani Educational Books, 1984), pp. 326-327.
61 Pratap, 17-4-1922, p.1.
62 PAI, 22-4-1922, PA. 454, P.311.
63 Ibid., 27-9-1924, pa.307, p-311.
of All-India Muslim League was adjourned for lack of quorum.\textsuperscript{64} When Muhammad Iqbal presented his address, in 1930, at Allahabad the required quorum of 75 members for the General Body was not complete. At its 1933 session, in Delhi, students of Anglo-Arabic College were asked to come and fill the hall. Almost one-third of the 300 Council members of Muslim League had not paid the arrears of their membership fees. This shows that even those on whom Muslim League bestowed the honour of Council (not ordinary) membership took it lightly. Hence, as late as 1935, a visiting Turkish author maintained that the League was not considered the arbiter of Muslim destiny by anyone in India.\textsuperscript{65} Much the same indifference and lukewarmness to Muslim League was noticed among Muslim masses and leaders at Kanpur also. Hence, other organizations started taking shape to vocalize the 'interests and aspirations' of Muslim residents of Kanpur in the 1920s and the 1930s. We discuss them in Chapter V entitled "Non-League Muslim Organisations".

\textbf{II.2 Phenomenal growth with Dissensions}

Provincial Muslim League had been revived in Kanpur in April 1922 but the party had a fairly weak organizational base in Kanpur. Hence, as late as 1935, its leader, Hafiz Hidayat Husain, was urging activists to form at least Mohalla level Committees.\textsuperscript{66} And the formation of Muslim League committees was reported in 1938 but these area-wise Committees were not at the


\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{66} PAI, 11-5-1935, p. 230.
neighbourhood Mohalla level, instead they were made at the much wider Ward level. 67

It was in the late 1930s that a massive increase in Muslim League's membership was possible. This was due to several factors. Scholars hold that Muslim League rose from being just one party of Muslims in 1937 to becoming the representative organization of Muslims in 1939 due to its conversion into a movement. 68 The political objective of Muslim League came in line with that of Congress when the League adopted 'full Independence' as its goal in October 1937; its ideology of safeguarding Muslim interests was gradually honed to imply opposition to 'Hindu domination' which was equated with the Congress rule after 1937; its fraternal relations with other Muslim organizations (like Khaksars) also added to its acceptability among masses; and the rise of M.A. Jinnah as its undisputed leader was an added advantage for the growth of the Muslim League. 69

The Muslim League was undoubtedly the predominant organization among Muslims in Kanpur from the late 1930s. In our evidence from Kanpur we found that Jinnah was generally recognized as the Quaid-i-Azam (or leader of the masses) from 1937 but Kanpur-based leaders like Hasrat Mohani also questioned his leadership right up to the early 1940s. Mohani was an old-timer in the Muslim League and had been President of All India Muslim League as early

67 Ibid., 5-2-1938, pa. 43, p.34.
69 Ibid.
as 1921. We also found that leave alone fraternal relations with other Muslim organizations, factionalism in Muslim League was endemic till 1940 and the League was also involved in hostilities with Khaksars till as late as 1945 in Kanpur.

The Muslim League's presence in Kanpur became formidable between 1938 and 1941 but its membership remained fluctuating as in other KABAL (acronym for the five largest cities of U.P., namely, Kanpur, Allahabad, Benaras, Agra and Lucknow) towns of the United Provinces. Interestingly, however, as the following table shows, the membership of the Muslim League declined in all KABAL towns, except Lucknow, between 1940-1 and 1943-4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940-1</th>
<th>1943-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kanpur</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>11,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucknow</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>31,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allahabad</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11,009</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benaras</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agra</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total UP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,64,004</td>
<td>1,46,194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This fluctuation/ decline in Muslim League's membership proves that right up to the 1940's there was no singular upsurge for Muslim communal politics even in the urban areas of U.P. However, there was a certain attraction for

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70 Muslim League Papers, Karachi as quoted in Mushirul Hasan, Legacy of a Divided Nation (Delhi, OUP, 1997), pp. 110-1 & p. 90.
71 The Pioneer, 24-9-1938, p. 5. Out of the total members in 1938, 1,000 members were enrolled by Muslim League on Bakr-Id alone. PAI, 26-2-1938, pa. 67, p. 52. The figure of Muslim League's total membership was considerably high because even a multi-religious party like Congress, which also had its Ministry in eight provinces, had just 22,000 members in Kanpur city. Statement by Hamid Khan, Secretary, City Congress Committee in The Leader, 23-8-1939, p. 14.
72 The Pioneer, 9-3-40, p. 5.
militancy in the districts where the KABAL towns were located as reflected in the membership of Muslim National Guards (MNGs). For instance, in 1941, one-third of the total of 4,685 MNGs in U.P. lived in the five KABAL districts. Out of these the highest number, viz. 600, were in Kanpur, followed by 300 each in Allahabad and Agra districts and 200 each in Lucknow and Benaras districts.\footnote{Mushirul Hasan, op. cit., pp. 110-1 & 90.}

The growth of the Muslim League came with its set of problems and one of this was acute group-ism which resulted into factional fights. Ordinary members of the Muslim League were supposed to elect a Council which in turn elected a Working Committee and the office bearers of Kanpur city on an annual basis. These elections of the Kanpur City Muslim League from 1938 to 1940 were never smooth and most often could only be conducted under the supervision of Observers/ Returning Officers appointed by the Provincial Committee of Muslim League. Once, in 1938, Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan,\footnote{Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan (1884-1958), son of Mohammad Ishaq Khan (1860-1918), he was a descendant of a family one of whom served as a Risaldar of Scindia's army and was given the jagir of Palwal by Lord Lake. His ancestors purchased the estate of Jehangirabad in Meerut at an auction in 1813. His father was given the title of Nawab in 1913 on retirement from the Statutory Civil Service which he joined in 1884 and from which he retired as a District and Sessions Judge. Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan was a lawyer who had been educated at Aligarh. He was active in the protest against the internment of Annie Besant in 1917; he organised a protest in Meerut against the Rowlatt Bill; he was then a leading member of Meerut Congress Committee and took part in Khilafat activities in Meerut up to 1922. He founded the Anti-Shuddhi League along with Haji Mohammad Syed Husain in 1923 and it was then that the Government dossier on him noted that 'an organiser, he is a keen Muslim who is far more concerned with Muslim interests than with nationalist politics'; he became a member of U.P. Legislative Council as a representative of Meerut Muhamaddan Rural from 1924-6; he became a prominent All-India Muslim League leader in 1930s and 1940s; he remained in India after Partition. For a biographical sketch of both father and son, see Francis Robinson (1993), op. cit., pp. 378-9 and 407.} President of U.P. Muslim League, himself had to serve as Returning Officer during the election of office bearers to Kanpur City's Muslim League.
In 1938, the annual elections had to be postponed as bogus voting had allegedly taken place for the election of the General Secretary. As more votes were cast than the total number of voters who came to vote, the Returning Officer, Syed Mohammad Jame, not only cancelled this election but also requested the Provincial League to appoint someone else to conduct these elections in future. Muslim Leaguers were divided into two groups and the Right-wingers were led by Syed Mohammad Jame himself as also by Dr. Abdus Samad whereas the winning younger party was led by M. H. Naiyar. These groups agreed with each other on the names of the President and 4 Vice-Presidents but even an Arbitration Board failed to bring an agreement between them on whom to elect as the Secretary of Kanpur City’s Muslim League.

Finally, the President of Provincial Muslim League, Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, came down to conduct elections for the post of office-bearers afresh. Almost 40% of the Right-wing members of the City’s Muslim League Council, owing allegiance to Dr. Samad and Syed Mohammad Jame, boycotted this election and even the presence of their Provincial President as Returning Officer could not arouse any confidence among them. Hence, only 44 out of the 72 members of the City’s Council were elected, though without opposition, Hasrat Mohani as President, Haji Mohammad Qamruddin, Mumtaz Ahmad Lari,

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75 The Pioneer, 3-11-1938, p.5.
76 Ibid., 9-11-1938.
77 Though firmly in Muslim League Haji Qamruddin was not averse to all Congressmen. In 1939 in the District Board elections the Haji voted in support of the Congress candidate and thereby created a flutter in Muslim League. It was after this misadventure of Haji Qamruddin that Muslim League decided to form a Control Board in Kanpur which would check political truancy of any kind. The Pioneer, 13-9-1939, p. 6.
78 A young lawyer who died in April 1940 after a prolonged illness in his native village Lar (Gorakhpur district). Ibid., 5-4-1940, p. 5.
Shariuddin and Hakim Nawab Ali as Vice-Presidents and Hasan Ahmad Shah as General Secretary.\textsuperscript{79}

In 1940, the membership of Muslim League in Kanpur grew phenomenally, a local unit of Radical Muslim League announced its presence by raising two democratic demands and there were the usual factional fights during elections to the General Council and office bearers’ posts in Muslim League. In 1939-1940, the membership of Muslim League in Kanpur jumped by 130\% (from 7,000 to 16,000). 625 members had filed their nominations for elections to the General Council of 146 seats in the party’s Kanpur City unit. It was reported that basically two factions were in the fray, one led by M.H. Naiyar and the other by Ahmad Nabi Khan.\textsuperscript{80}

The Radical Muslim League in Kanpur gave a democratic face to Muslim communalism by adopting two resolutions for the Lahore session of Muslim League in March 1940. One of the resolutions said that there should be political education of masses on full Independence which was the goal of the Muslim League. Secondly, the Radical Muslim League said the Hindu and Muslim masses were equally exploited and oppressed by foreign domination and this was the common ground for them to meet. The resolution asked Congress to accept Muslim demands for safeguards as this would remove the psychological barrier and suspense existing between the two communities.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 22-11-1938, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 9-3-1940, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 19-3-1940, p. 5.
Maulvi Rizwanullah of Gorakhpur was appointed Returning Officer for the elections in 1940 in Kanpur. M.H. Naiyar’s faction complained to him telegraphically that the Secretary was not showing them the voters’ list; that he had shown partisanship in appointing polling officers in different Wards and that the site of polling had also been selected to suit the convenience of the Secretary’s faction. Mohammad Ibrahim, Secretary of Kanpur City Muslim League, denied these charges and alleged that this propaganda was being done to bring some persons into disrepute. Elections were, however, held in all the 18 Wards except Colonelganj. Naiyar’s faction claimed to have captured all the seats in Chamanganj Ward. Yet none of the factions was ready to yield to the other and hence, both M.H. Naiyar and Ahmad Nabi Khan’s factions accepted Hasrat Mohani as interim President and other elections were postponed.

Maulvi Rizwanullah left Kanpur on April 1, 1940 and was reported to have been so frustrated that he told M.H. Naiyar that he would not return and that he would prefer to leave the matter of elections in Kanpur to the Provincial Muslim League. Rizwanullah actually kept his word and did not immediately return to conduct the elections. Instead, Maulana Karam Ali came as the Returning Officer after a week. But there was pandemonium on the day of the election again and Naiyar’s faction felt the notice for elections was insufficient. They also said that holding elections then would deprive the majority party of the right to vote as

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82 Ibid., 13-3-1940, p. 13.
83 Ibid., 15-3-1940, p. 12.
84 Ibid., 19-3-1940, p. 5.
85 Ibid., 21-3-1940, p. 5.
86 Ibid., 7-4-1940, p. 5.
most of their supporters were out of town. The elections were postponed once again. 87

The repeated postponement of organisational polls created enormous bitterness between faction-bound party members and it derailed the election schedule of the Muslim League in Kanpur. Not envisaging the kind of problems it accosted in Kanpur, the Provincial Muslim League had declared its election timetable in July 1939. According to this time table, enrolment of members was to take place in January-February 1940, the election to Primary League had to be completed by the first week of March and election to the City, District and Provincial League had to be finished by the last week of March. 88 Sensing the damage the inordinate delay in electing local Committees would have on the Provincial elections, Rizwanullah was made to swallow his pride and he came once again as Returning Officer in the third week of April. Elections were held but one party, the one M.H. Naiyar led, absented itself en bloc. Hence, just about half the members of the General Council (i.e., against the total strength of 164 members of the General Council only 85 members) were present. They elected Hasrat Mohani as President and Ahmad Nabi Khan as Secretary of Kanpur City Muslim League. 89

The factionalism at the Provincial level was being echoed at the local level even after the goal of Pakistan had been declared at Lahore in March 1940. M.H. Naiyar later revealed that he withdrew from the local Muslim League elections

87 Ibid., April 7 and 9, 1940, p. 5.
88 The Leader, 26-7-1939, p. 5.
89 The Pioneer, 17-4-1940, p. 5.
due to a call by Choudhry Khaliquzzaman. The opponents of Naiyar fomented an agitation against him. Jajmau Primary League, where most of the tanneries were located and tannery workers lived, wrote to the Provincial Muslim League calling Mr. Naiyar’s activities “unfair” and declaring his election earlier as District Muslim League Chief as “unconstitutional.”

Dissensions continued to beleaguer the City Muslim League even later in the 1940s, especially during the crucial period of elections. The Muslim League fought and handsomely won both the last Municipal Board elections of Colonial India in November 1944 and the last UP Legislative Assembly elections in March 1946. But it fought these elections as a divided house and it fought these elections as bitterly with its members as it did against its opponents.

Nothing was going right for the Muslim League in the run up to the Municipal elections in November 1944. These turned out to be the last Municipal elections in Colonial India. The Divisional Parliamentary Board announced from Allahabad the Ward-wise candidates for Kanpur. Rashid Ahmad immediately declared this list ultra vires and not binding on Muslims of Kanpur. He said that Nawab M.I. Khan, President of U.P. Muslim League, had constituted a special Parliamentary Board for Kanpur and claimed to be a member of it. Rashid Ahmad further stated that the special Parliamentary Board of Kanpur would declare candidates for the Municipal elections and issue tickets to them later.

M. H. Naiyyar, Chairman, Muslim League Election Publicity Committee,

90 Ibid., 19-4-1940, p.5.
91 Ibid., 13-10-1944, p. 8.
92 Ibid., 14-10-1944, p. 12.
contradicted Rashid Ahmad's statement and hoped that Kanpur's public would not be misguided by it.\textsuperscript{93} To sort out this mess, Dr. Mohammad Sharif, General Secretary, City Muslim League, waited on Nawab M.I. Khan, the President of UP Muslim League. Nawab M.I. Khan was reported to have said that he would like his party to stay out of Municipal Board elections.\textsuperscript{94}

There was widespread resentment against the selection of candidates by the Provincial Parliamentary Board at other places also, especially in Lucknow, Aligarh and Benaras. A no-confidence resolution against the Provincial Parliamentary Board was sent under the signature of thirty leaders of Provincial Muslim League from Kanpur.\textsuperscript{95} Abdul Waheed Khan, who officiated as the President of the Provincial Parliamentary Board in the absence of Nawab M. I. Khan, denied newspaper reports about any revolt on the selection of candidates. He claimed that those whose friends and relatives were not accommodated were dissatisfied but he assured them that there were no party intrigues or personal grudges behind the decisions taken.\textsuperscript{96} Zahur Ahmad, a member of the Parliamentary Board, quickly rebutted the claim of Abdul Waheed Khan. He accepted the occurrence of dissensions and walkouts in protest during the meeting of Muslim League's Provincial Parliamentary Board. But Zahur Ahmad declared gracefully, 'This is not the time to find fault and we have to fight unitedly

\textsuperscript{93} He even said that Nawab M.I. Khan had been requested to issue a denial about there being any substance in Rashid Ahmad's assertion. \textit{Ibid.}, 19-10-1944, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Ibid.}, 22-10-1944, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{95} The Secretary of Provincial Muslim League was asked to convene a meeting to discuss this issue within a week. \textit{Ibid.}, 26-10-1944, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Ibid.}, 27-10-1944, p. 7.
for the prestige of Muslim League. The situation was so grim that Jinnah intervened and issued a desperate appeal to Muslim voters in U.P. in support of the Muslim League.

This appeal, in addition to other factors, resulted in an electrifying success for the Muslim League. Jinnah had acquired the image of a charismatic hero among Muslims as the following example would show. As already noted, just 100 people turned up in a public meeting to celebrate the first Pakistan Day on March 23, 1941 at Kanpur. But, a week later, when Jinnah visited Kanpur fifty thousand people at Kanpur railway station received him and thirty-five, twenty-five and ten thousand persons attended his three main meetings in the city. The creator of the slogan of Pakistan was more important to Muslim masses in Kanpur than his creation.

In elections to the Muslim seats, the Muslim League achieved cent percent success in Kanpur, Unnao, Lakhimpur, Partapgarh, Kanauj, Hardoi, Sandila, Shahjahanpur and Azamgarh. After this victory, the editorial in Dawn declared the Muslim League as the "sole representative organ of Muslims in India." It claimed that the Congress tactics of employing Muslim 'show boys' stood discredited. It advised Momins and Majlis-wallahs to take heed of Muslim

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97 Ibid., 30-10-1944, p. 6.
98 Ibid., 8-11-1944, p. 8.
sentiment instead of behaving like "stray renegades" and " quislings" who "ventriloquise for Congress."\textsuperscript{101} Z.H. Lari, a prominent leader of Muslim League in U.P., wrote that the Muslim League won 150 out of the 176 seats it contested in 36 Municipalities in U.P. He claimed that by securing cent percent success in Tanda (where Momins had a clear majority), the Muslim League had belied the propaganda that Momins do not vote for it.\textsuperscript{102}

The same dissensions, though on a smaller scale and in lesser intensity, were reported in the Muslim League around the time for elections to the U.P. Legislative Assembly in 1946. Provincial Muslim League suspended the District Muslim League Committee in Unnao, the district neighbouring Kanpur, probably because the local League officials of Unnao had an embarrassingly hostile attitude towards the Congress.\textsuperscript{103} Half a dozen Muslim Leaguers in Bareilly were debarred from the membership of the party for two to three years.\textsuperscript{104} During the elections to the U.P. Legislative Assembly in 1946, dissension arose in Kanpur also. The Kanpur District Muslim League Council passed a resolution recommending the name of M.H. Naiyar for the Kanpur-Etawah (Muslim) rural constituency to the parliamentary Board.\textsuperscript{105} The nomination of Naiyyar for the rural seat along with that of Hasrat Mohani for the Kanpur City seat was

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 17-11-1944, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 30-11-1944, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{103} The Provincial League also appointed an ad hoc Committee in Unnao whose first task was to thank the Premier, G.B. Pant, for transferring the Deputy Commissioner who had 'always ignored the interests of Muslims in the district.' Ibid., 27-12-1946, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 11-6-1946, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{105} By virtue of being its President, interestingly, M.H. Naiyyar himself presided over this meeting which recommended his name. Ibid., 3-1-1946, p.
confirmed a week later by the Provincial Board. However, the decision regarding Naiyyar was revoked three weeks later and Nafisul Hasn was declared the candidate from Kanpur-Etawah (Muslim) rural seat by the Central Parliamentary Board of All-India Muslim League. He was the sitting member from this seat and, hence, was not necessarily some usurper or a crony of some big leader.

Naiyyar had a lot of friends and supporters in Kanpur as he had been in the Muslim League for a long time. The decision to give someone else the Muslim League ticket was resented by the friends and supporters of Naiyyar. The Working Committee of Kanpur District Muslim League resigned against the decision of the Central Muslim League Parliamentary Board to re-nominate Nafisul Hasan of Etawah in preference to M.H. Naiyyar. Naiyyar went ahead and filed his nomination papers for the Kanpur-Etawah (Muslim) rural seat against the officially nominated candidate. He alleged that though his name was initially cleared it was later changed due to 'manoeuvrings by interested parties.' Along with filing his nominations, Naiyyar simultaneously appealed to the Muslim League's High Command and said that he would abide by its decision. He did not withdraw his name and hence, his name was listed among those who contested this election. But, without any support from the Muslim League, Naiyyar managed to get less than 0.21% of the votes polled (i.e. 7, 296) in the

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106 Ibid., 11-1-1946, p. 12.
107 Ibid., 2-2-1946.
108 Nafisul Hasan was elected as an Independent from Etawah-Kanpur (Muslim) rural seat in 1937 but he later joined Muslim League. P.D. Reeves, B.D. Abraham, J.M. Goodman (eds.), A Handbook to Elections of Uttar Pradesh, 1920-1951 (Delhi, Manohar, 1975), p. 299.
110 Ibid., 10-2-1946, p. 16.
Kanpur-Etawah (Muslim) rural seat in 1946.\textsuperscript{111} This proved again that the Muslim League was the strongest organisation among the Muslim electorate and those who challenged it had to bite dust. This incident, however, also indicated that the Muslim League was acutely faction-ridden.

**B. THE IMPACT**

The rise of the Muslim League to pre-dominance in Kanpur was a result of several factors. Firstly, after 1937, Muslim League tried to accommodate within its ambit leaders from a wide ideological spectrum. From the Right wing to the Left and from the violence-breeding Khaksars to the God-fearing Jamiat-ul-Ulema, from the pro-poor Ahrars to the lower biradari of Momins, etc. all found a place in the Muslim League. Secondly, the Muslim League involved itself with issues affecting different sections, especially those of lower class Muslims. Thirdly, even in the 1940s, other organisations did not merge wholesale with Muslim League. Instead the League chipped away slowly, bit by bit, the leaders and members from other Muslim organizations. We have dealt the way Muslim League poached on the members and leaders of other non-League Muslim organisations in the 1930s and the 1940s in Chapter V entitled "Non-League Muslim Organisations."

The ranks of the Muslim League swelled basically due to the aggressive propaganda that Muslim solidarity was desirable as a guarantee against Hindu domination and the League alone had the necessary capacity to ensure unity

\textsuperscript{111} P.D. Reeves, B.D. Abraham, J.M. Goodman (eds.), op. cit., p. 352.
among Muslims. Right from workers and businessmen to students who happened to be Muslims fell for this propaganda. This gave the Muslim League the pre- eminent place among common Muslims and it almost acquired the status of being 'the sole representative of Muslims' at Kanpur in the 1940s.

I. Muslim Workers: Restless but Rudderless

Scholars known for their proximity to working class causes have argued that Muslim workers were probably the 'least respected and most backward section of the entire Muslim society.' The main reason for this situation, according to these scholars, was that Muslim workers were mostly handicraftsmen. In contrast with industrial workers, handicraftsmen remained more individualistic and, bereft of political consciousness; this section was steeped in superstition due to which Mulas dominated their lives.\textsuperscript{112} Kanpur was an exception to this because Muslim workers here had a sizable presence among the industrial working class. Textile mills and tanneries were the two major industries in Kanpur. In the 1940s the percentage of Muslims was 20% in textile mills and 32% in the tanneries.\textsuperscript{113}

Right from the beginning, communal organizations among Muslims had very little concern for workers. This can be inferred from the following example. Anjuman Hifazat-ul-Islam was formed in 1924 at Kanpur. Its ostensible purpose was to defend and help all Muslims. But its programme included eviction from houses of Muslims those tenants who did not pray and opening shops of all kinds in the city allegedly because Hindu shopkeepers over-charged Muslims.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{112} See, for example, Kunwar Mohammad Ashraf, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 198-9.
\textsuperscript{113} Chitra Joshi, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 80 & 240.
\textsuperscript{114} PAI, 25-10-1924, pa. 334, p.350.
one hand, in the name of enforcing Islamic tenets on prayers, this programme empowered landlords against tenants and, on the other, it helped petty bourgeois people to open small businesses, due to alleged discrimination by Hindu shopkeepers. Workers or their problems were of little concern to such community organizations among Muslims. However, this began changing in the 1930s.

The massive increase in membership of the Muslim League in Kanpur since 1937 was made possible by the involvement of the party with different issues of the people. In some cases, the issues were given to the Muslim League as a fait accompli such as, for example, the strike by textile workers in 1938. But, in some cases, we also found that Muslim League took initiative to bring local grievances into limelight and thereby it increased its appeal among people.

A novel event occurred when the Kanpur City and District Muslim League offered support to the 42,000 striking labourers of Kanpur in May 1938. But this support remained a flash in the pan because it was not consistently offered to workers either in the past or in the future. It was decided in May 1938 by the City Muslim League, after much discussion under the direction of Hasrat Mohani, that no effort would be made to break the united front of Hindu and Muslim workers against their employers and no attempt would be made to form a separate union of Muslim workers. It was also resolved that though the Muslim League would guide the interests of Muslim workers, it would support, at all costs, the prevailing united front of Hindu and Muslim workers.115 Two days later even the District

115 The Pioneer, 20-5-1938, p. 16.
Muslim League decided to rescind its previous policy of not participating in the labour movement.\textsuperscript{116}

The support of the District Muslim League in Kanpur to the protracted struggle of workers alarmed some sections but was generally welcomed by the Provincial and All-India leadership of the party. In its Provincial Conference in August 1938 at Kanpur, Muslim League congratulated the labour of Kanpur "on its brave fight against mill owners." The Pioneer, a conservative newspaper owned by Kanpur-based Sir J.P. Srivastava of Hindu Mahasabha since 1933, called this a "dangerous tactics of out-Heroding Herod". It maintained that by supporting the 'misguided' activities of Kanpur's labour which was predominantly Muslim, the Muslim League was shutting its doors against landlords and capitalists who had generously contributed to the progress and well-being of the Muslim community.\textsuperscript{117} On its part, at the end of 1938, Pirpur Committee's report not only endorsed the Kanpur Muslim League's involvement in the labour strike but also applauded its non-sectarian role in distributing succour to striking workers.\textsuperscript{118} Finally, almost a year later, presiding over the Kanpur District Muslim League's Conference, Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, President U.P. Muslim League, stated that his party had sympathy for labour, and he condemned the

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 22-5-1938, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 17-8-1938, p. 8
\textsuperscript{118} According to the Committee, "...we are glad to note that during the Cawnpore labour strike, the District Muslim League there showed no distinction between Hindu and Muslim workers and helped everybody irrespective of his religious beliefs. The Cawnpore League distributed food and other accessories of life to the Hindu and Muslim workers with equal consideration..." Report of the Enquiry Committee appointed by the Council of All India Muslim League to enquire into Muslim grievances in Congress Provinces, (Publisher Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, 1938), p. 315.
Congress Government of UP for not putting the Cawnpore Labour Enquiry Report before the Legislature.\textsuperscript{119}

European entrepreneurs or capitalists who happened to be Hindus owned textile mills. Hence, it was easy for the Muslim League to declare its support to striking workers by arguing that because poor Muslim workers were on strike against non-Muslim capitalists, the League's support to them was logical and necessary.\textsuperscript{120} However, this support of the Muslim League for labour came with a caution in 1940. Presiding over the Kanpur District Muslim League Conference in 1940, Zahur Ahmad said that though he appreciated the economic difficulties of labourers, these workers should put forward only such demands as were reasonable and would not bring destruction to the industry.\textsuperscript{121}

However, this cautious support to labour gave way to indifference and even open sabotage in the 1940s. In 1946, during a strike in the leather tanning industry where the capitalists and workers both were Muslims, the Muslim League had no problem in turning its back on striking workers. Muslim or European capitalists mostly owned the leather tanneries in Kanpur. From the middle of 1946, labour was in ferment due to the high cost of living and a general desire for betterment in the tanning industry at Kanpur.\textsuperscript{122} Employees of tanneries also went on strike, and most of these employees were either Dalits or

\textsuperscript{119} The Pioneer, 5-5-1939, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{120} PAI, 4-6-1938, pa. 205, p. 136 and \textit{ibid.}, 18-6-1938, pa. 223, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{121} The Pioneer, 21-5-1940, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{122} FR – 18/ 7/ 1946 for the II half of July 1946.
Muslims. The focus of picketing by strikers was the tannery of the European controlled Cooper Allen and Company. Yet, the Muslim League was alarmed probably because it apprehended the spread of picketing, like wild fire to tanneries owned by Muslim capitalists also. Hence, it called upon the strikers to withdraw their strike. When the strikers did not heed the call of the Muslim League, the local office of this party was denied to strikers as a venue for their meetings. Consequently, socialist Muslim Leaguers like Hasrat Mohani and independent ones like Sufi Manzur Ali held their meeting in Communist Party of India’s office and, quite expectedly, they asked agitating workers to continue their strike (till their demands were met).123

I.1 The Communist Party of India and the Muslim League

The way the Muslim League and Communists came together in 1940s was interesting and hence, deserves recounting. During the II World War, Kanpur was a big centre for war materials production. Hence, it was the desire of colonial officials to keep Kanpur free from “labour trouble”. When Germany attacked USSR in June 1941, the Communist Party of India (CPI) declared that the Imperialist War had turned into a People’s War. In the remaining period of II World War, the CPI remained officially allied to the War cause. This did not save its activists from colonial repression and there were several examples of it even in a small place like Kanpur.124 But the People’s War policy did bring Muslim League

124 Communists were arrested and Kanpur Mazdur Sabha was de-recognised in July 1941 when they started a strike for typical trade union demands, viz. 40 percent increase in Dearness Allowance for food whose prices had risen badly, six weeks annual leave with pay, old age Pension, Provident Fund etc. (FR - 18-7-1941 for July 1941.) Later in 1943, for making virulent anti-Government speeches, three principal communist leaders, viz. Sardesai, Sant Singh Yusuf
closer to CPI because, since September 1940, the Muslim League had passed a resolution permitting cooperation with District War Committees.\textsuperscript{125}

The other ideological proximity between the CPI and the Muslim League came with the CPI’s adoption of Stalin’s definition of nationalities. This was made to look similar to the religion-based nationality being propagated by the Muslim League. This implied CPI’s acceptance of Pakistan as demanded by the Muslim League. This has been widely commented upon.\textsuperscript{126} It has also been argued that it became necessary for communists to press Stalin’s theory of nationalities into service because the Congress and the Muslim League were organizing “mutually exclusive enclosures” and this undermined the ‘multi-cultural’ communist mass organisations. Hence, till 1940, like Congress nationalists, communists also believed that India was one nation and Muslims were just a religious group. But, after 1940, communists articulated a different principle of uniting the nation. After a series of discussions in 1941-2, communists said the problem of communalism was a problem of “growing nationalities” which had the right to self-determination

and S.C. Kapur, were arrested. (FR - 18-4-1943 for the I half of April 1943). Some communists were arrest for distributing a “most objectionable” leaflet which vilified the Government on issue of the Famine in Bengal and held it responsible for the devastation of the country. In addition to this, 10 communists were arrested at Bithoor Fair for saying that the Government could not be trusted as it could spread famine-like conditions in UP also. (FR - 18-11-1943 for November, 1943). Two communists were arrested when they criticized the Government for giving a seat to Indian Federation of Labour on Kanpur’s Municipal Board. (FR - 18-8-1944 for the I half of August 1944). Three communists were prosecuted for “abusing” permission to organize meetings against black-marketing. These communists criticized the inefficiency of officials instead of just blaming black-marketeers. FR – 18/5/ 1945 for the II half of May, 1945, Home Political, NAI.

\textsuperscript{125} PAI, 14-9-1940, pa. 271, p. 206. Muslim League Working Committee in Kanpur passed a resolution permitting cooperation with District War Committees at a meeting which was of a religious nature and was attended by 1,000 persons. Maulana Jaudat said that this resolution was crucial in deciding he fate of the War because the British were always victorious due to Muslim help in the past. Ibid.

up to the point of political secession. Hence, from that point, communists went on
to argue that in the womb of the Indian national movement were throbbing 'not
one but many baby nations.'

The upshot of this, for CPI, was that the League's demand for Pakistan was
an exercise of the right to self-determination by the Muslim nationality.
Consequently, the Muslim League and Communists participated in some actions
jointly. For instance, in the period of scarcities during the War, both the Leaguers
and Communists jointly addressed meetings on food scarcity and organized Food
Committees. In 1945, again, communists associated with the Kanpur City's unit
of Muslim League to raise the issue of food and cloth scarcity also.

During the II World War, there were reports that communists were courting
the Muslim League. After communists accepted the League's demand that
Muslims had a right to self-determination, they began to be seen by common
people as accomplices of Jinnah in the making of Pakistan. The reality,
however, was that the Muslim League kept a distance from communists because
they apprehended that closer association with communists would create internal
dissensions between (different classes of) Muslims.

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127 Shashi Joshi and Bhagwan Josh, Struggle for Hegemony in India 1920-47 Culture,
332-4.
128 FR – 18/ 10/ 1943 for the II half of October 1943. Home Political, NAI.
129 Ibid., 18/ 3/ 1945 for the II half of March 1945.
130 Ibid., 18-8-1944 for the I half of August 1944.
131 Ibid., 18-9-1945 for the I half of September 1945.
132 Ibid., 18-10-1945 for the I half of October 1945.
Nevertheless, a strategic understanding between the Muslim League and Communists started around election time in September 1945. Here again the initiative was taken by Communists who decided not to contest seats reserved for Muslims. In return, they were assured of support by the Muslim League for the three Labour seats in U.P. Legislative Assembly. In fact, even the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) came forward to support Communists. But despite this support, the communists lost all the labour seats to Congress by wide margins. For instance, the Labour seat reserved for Kanpur's Industrial Factory Labour had 70,439 votes in 1946 out of which Rajaram Shastri, the Congress candidate, polled 70.45% whereas Sant Singh Yusuf, the CPI candidate supported by Muslim League and SCF, got a little less than 29%.

The high cost of living after the War and a general desire for betterment was pushing labour to agitation. But, yet, Muslim labour was reported to have been reluctant to join the strikes then. The reason for this was said to be communal dissensions. It was a period when, allegedly, some Muslim workers returning from their factories went about abusing Hindu workers without any provocation. In Elgin Mills, which remained a big centre of radical trade unionism, mill workers fought with each other along communal lines and three Muslim workers were injured. Communalism, howsoever temporarily, had divided workers along communal lines by the middle of the 1940s. Communists

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133 FR. 18-9-1945 for the I half of September 1945. Home Political, NAI.
134 P.D. Reeves, et. al. (eds.), op. cit., p. 361.
135 FR. 18-7-1946 for the II half of July 1946.
136 Ibid., - 18-6-1946 for the II half of June 1946.
137 Vartman, 25-4-1947, p. 4.
138 Ibid., 22-4-1947, p. 1.
may have been very unhappy with this but Muslim League was not. And by their moral and strategic help to it, communists had helped Muslim League realize its objective of acquiring a mass base by spreading communal ideology among industrial workers.

1.2 The Butchers

Among lower class self-employed Muslims of Kanpur, butchers were the first to nurse big political ambitions. For instance, on May 30, 1930, at the time of the preparation of the Round Table Conference, around 400 butchers held a meeting and demanded that their representative should also be sent for the Conference to London. By resolving to accept the Muslim League's leadership in December 1937, a section of the butchers were the first to join this party among the lower class Muslims in Kanpur. An increase in tax on butcheries, an increase in octroi duty on animals brought to Kanpur for slaughter and the delay/denial of licenses to butchers by Municipal Board were the main grievances of this section. In 1925, these grievances were ventilated with just a slight communal twist. However, after the Muslim League undertook mass mobilization in 1937 and developed a mass base, butchers were the first among Kanpur's lower class Muslims to accept its leadership.

The Municipal tax on butcheries was increased in 1925 and this led to a strike by butchers. Muslim members of the Municipal Board alleged that this was done due to a Hindu conspiracy to harm Muslims. This strike was brought to an end by the Executive Officer of the Board, one Mr. Ryan, who warned that

139 PAI, 7-8-1930, pa. 486, p. 778.
strikers would not be allowed to dictate policy and, hence, those butchers who failed to open their shops in 48 hours would forfeit their licenses.\[^{140}\] Around the middle of the 1930s, the granting of licenses to butchers became a major grievance with this section. As compared to the 112 butcher shops in 1935-6 and 116 butcher shops in 1936-7, only 71 shops were allowed by the Municipal authorities during the first seven months of 1937-8. This led to resentment and protest meetings. Majlis-e-Ittehad (with the support of Muslim League\[^{141}\]) held a meeting where it opposed a resolution of the Municipal Board to disallow a few meat shops. The shop proposed for Raipurwa was rejected because one shop already existed there and the shop proposed for Mishri Bazar was disallowed because it was on the route of the Ramlila procession.\[^{142}\]

In the meeting to protest against the rejection of proposals to open more meat shops, Majlis-e-Ittehad decided to meet the Governor of U.P. to apprise him of the grievances of butchers. This was strange because the Commissioner of Allahabad division, and not the Governor, was directly responsible, *inter alia*, to ensure the smooth functioning of local self-government bodies in the area under his jurisdiction which included Kanpur also. Hence, he should have been the first court of appeal. But by not approaching the Commissioner, who happened to be a Hindu, the Majlis showed its communal intention on this issue. This fact was highlighted by the Hindu Sabha oriented *Vartman* to taunt the Majlis.\[^{143}\] Finally,

\[^{140}\] Pratap, 2-3-1925, p. 16. Some compromise was also worked out on taxes but that came later and the strike was withdrawn essentially due to the threat of cancellation of licenses. PAI, 7-3-1925, pa. 89, p. 108.

\[^{141}\] PAI, 4-9-1937, pa.418, p. 559.

\[^{142}\] Vartman, 28-8-1937, p. 5.

\[^{143}\] Ibid., 20-8-1937, p. 5.
towards the end of 1937, the vocalisation of grievances communally and the
taunts of Hindu communalists led the Muslim butchers of Kanpur to throw in their
lot with the Muslim League. The meeting where this decision was formally taken
was presided over by a Municipal Councillor, Abdul Samad.\textsuperscript{144}

In 1938, butchers went on a strike to protest against the increase in octroi
on cattle and goats brought to Kanpur for slaughter. The Muslim League was
involved in this strike that lasted one whole week before a compromise could be
reached.\textsuperscript{145} More information on this section was not available in the sources
used for this study.

\textbf{II. Muslim Students: Ideological Victims}

Education among Muslims has aroused some debate in the past. One
question on which the debate was centred was whether Muslims in U.P. lagged
behind their Hindu counterparts in education and income, as they did in Bengal.

According to Paul Brass, Muslims of U.P. enjoyed more jobs and received more
rent and education than their Hindu counterparts. He, therefore, empirically
challenged this lag theory of Muslim backwardness.\textsuperscript{146} In our evidence on
Kanpur, as already noted, we actually found that Muslims suffered a lag in
education not only in comparison with Hindus but also in relation to those
Muslims of U.P. who lived in KABAL towns.

The other question was whether Muslim students should abjure politics
while pursuing education, and, if they had to indulge in politics, should the nature

\textsuperscript{144} PAI, 24-12-1937, pa. 553, p. 663.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 19-3-1938, pa. 99, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{146} Paul Brass, \textit{Language, Religion and Politics in North India} (Delhi, Vikas, 1975) pp. 142-56.
of this politics be motivated by humane idealism or plain self interest. In 1937, Humayun Kabir had written an essay in which he argued that the non-cooperation with modern education and science had left Muslims with a heritage of self-centredness and defeatism. Kabir had urged students to work not in narrow self-interest but for political liberty, economic equality and social justice.\textsuperscript{147} We found that Kanpur’s Muslim students and their organisation, Muslim Students’ Federation (MSF), did the opposite of what Kabir thought was their duty. As we will try to demonstrate, MSF actually sided with the colonial administrators and followed the diktat of the Muslim League more sincerely than protecting either the interests of students or even those of U.P.’s Muslims.

The Committee which was appointed in 1925 to look into ‘the state of Primary Education of Boys of the Muslim Community and of Educationally Backward Communities in U.P.’ noted that just thirty-three percent of the boys enrolled in UP went to Islamia schools and Maktabs. The reason for this lack of interest of Muslims in such institutions was reported to be the inferior tuition, insufficient inspection and absence of both competition and Municipal support.\textsuperscript{148} Consequently, there was already a transition to secular education among Muslims in U.P. The Committee reporting on educational backwardness among Muslims in the 1920s did not seem to be very much enthusiastic about strengthening or creating a structure of denominational institutions for them. This


\textsuperscript{148} Report of the Committee Appointed to Enquire into and Report on the State of Primary Education of Boys of the Muslim Community and of Educationally Backward Communities in the United Provinces, (1940), op. cit., pp. 6, 15-6 and 19.
Committee, in fact, even agreed to a gradual conversion of Islamia schools into ordinary ones provided satisfactory arrangements were made for religious instruction within school hours and for the teaching of Urdu in Municipal/ Government schools.\textsuperscript{149}

The desire for secular education in Muslim educational institutions remained intact right up to April 1947 as reflected at the U.P. Muslim Educational Conference. Presiding over this Conference at Aonla (in Bareilly district), Maulana Hasrat Mohani demanded that 'Muslim education had to be divided into secular and cultural or religious education; state funding was needed for Muslim education on the lines given to Christians and Anglo-Indian schools and colleges; and education and politics had to go hand in hand as in Germany and Russia.'\textsuperscript{150}

The Committee on 'the state of Primary Education of Boys of the Muslim Community and of Educationally Backward Communities in U.P.' found that in 1925 in Allahabad division (of which Kanpur was a part) there were more Muslim boys in Middle Vernacular schools in non-descript Farrukhabad and Fatehpur than in the much bigger and more famous Kanpur. It goes without saying that this dearth of Middle School education among Muslim boys prevented them from preparing for entrance to institutions meant to train teachers, clerks, vakils, etc. Only those who passed out of these training institutions were entitled for white-collar employment. Hence, though there was a considerable number of rich and respectable Muslim men in Kanpur but most of them were first generation

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{150} Dawn, 24-4-1947, p. 5.
migrants to the city. Hafiz Mohammad Halim, the successful trader and philanthropist, was from Punjab; Hasrat Mohani was from Fatehpur/Aligarh; M.A. Lari, a prominent advocate and Muslim Leaguer, was from Gorakhpur district as was Rizwanullah; and so on.

Kanpur became the first town to take educational needs of its populace seriously by introducing on October 5, 1922 compulsory Primary education for boys, as envisaged under the U.P. Primary Education Act, 1919. Lucknow did the same on July 1, 1923, Agra on November 15, 1925, and Allahabad and Benaras both on July 10, 1927. But, like in other places, compulsory Primary education was spread in a piecemeal manner. In 1922 compulsory Primary education was initially introduced only in two wards of Kanpur, viz. Moolganj and Patkapur and was extended on April 8, 1930 to two more wards of the city, viz. Anwarganj and Sadar Bazar. Kanpur Municipal Board introduced compulsory Primary education for girls also in the aforementioned four wards on September 11, 1935. The Wards selected to introduce compulsory Primary education were ones in which Muslim population was considerable. Muslims constituted around a quarter of Kanpur’s population and in three out of the four Wards where compulsory Primary education was introduced Muslim population was sizable. While Muslims constituted 19.84% of the Sadar Bazar Ward, they formed 48% of Anwarganj Ward, 34.47% of Moolganj Ward and 25.48% of Patkapur Ward.

152 Calculations based on Census of 1931, Volume XVIII – Part – I, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (Allahabad, 1933), pp. 172-183. Every ward consisted of several Mohallas or neighborhoods. According to the Census of 1931, there were twelve Mohallas in Kanpur where Muslims constituted more than 50% of the population and out of these 7 were in Anwarganj Ward.
Hence, though it is a fact that the introduction of compulsory Primary education was not meant to be a measure to ameliorate the educational backwardness of Muslims, the effect of this measure was probably quite beneficial for the uneducated Muslims in Kanpur.

These Municipal efforts were insufficient as they were confined to just four wards of the city and that too only up to the primary level. Municipal involvement in education, however, was growing, as the following table would show.

**Educational Progress under Municipal Board**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1935-6</th>
<th>1938-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools for boys</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools for girls</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pupils</td>
<td>16,559</td>
<td>20,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure (schools/ colleges) Rs.4.11lakhs Rs.5.60 lakhs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grants (private schools/ colleges) Rs. 38, 304 Rs. 40, 995</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Some prominent members of the Municipal Board got more involved in the politics of credit appropriation more than in the mission for educational expansion. M.H. Naiyar, President of District Muslim League, was elected Secretary of the Education Committee of the Municipal Board in 1939. His election took such a communal turn that the communist-led Kanpur Mazdur alone, viz. Bhusa Toli with 94% (being Chak no. 94), Anwarganj with 81% (being Chak no. 93), Colonelganj with 65% (being Chak no. 101), Talaq Mahal with 64% (being Chak no. 95), Hiraman Purwa with 59.7% (being Chak no. 92), Dalelpurwa with 58% (being Chak no. 91) and Baconganj with 51% (being Chak no. 98%). Out of the remaining five Mohallas with more than 50% Muslim population two were in Mulganj Ward, viz. Butcherkhana Khurd with 85.6% (being Chak no(s). 44 and 45) and Misri Bazar with 66.5% (being Chak no. 42); one was in Palkapur Ward, viz. Palkapur with 76% (being Chak no. 20); and two were in Collectorganj Ward, viz. Butcherkhana Kalan with 58.6% (being Chak no. 81) and Anwarjan (Bans Mandi) with 55% (being Chak no. 79). See list of Hindu and Muslim majority Mohallas of Kanpur in Chitra Joshi, “Bonds of Community, Ties of Religion”, No. XVI, *Occasional Papers on History and Society*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, p. 63.

Sabha requested Labour members of Municipal Board to remain neutral and rise above communal considerations as they had in the past.\textsuperscript{154} In June 1939, the Education Committee of the Municipal Board was seized by the question of expanding the area of compulsory education. There was a proposal to make primary education compulsory for boys in the Civil Lines, Collectorganj and Nayaganj wards also.\textsuperscript{155} M.H. Naiyar, Secretary of the Education Committee accused the Congress members of the Municipal Board of voting with the “Hindu reactionary group” to ensure the rejection of the proposal to extend compulsory education to three more wards of the city. Naiyar accused the Congress of siding ‘with reaction against progress’ because it apprehended that some credit for the scheme would have gone to him and the Muslim League to which he belonged.\textsuperscript{156} Congress contested this and its leader in the Municipal Board, Raghubar Dayal Bhatt, said there was no proposal before the body for extending compulsory education. He added, however, that the only resolution of the Education Committee which Congress opposed and got defeated was the one praising M.H. Naiyar for his “valuable services.”\textsuperscript{157}

No educational programme of the Municipal Board or the Provincial Government was specifically targeted towards the removal of educational backwardness of Muslims only. This by itself was turned into a grievance by Muslim communalists by the 1940s. Firstly, the Muslim leadership propagated that Kanpur not only needed more educational institutions but also required

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{154} \textit{The Leader}, 27-4-1939, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{155} \textit{The Pioneer}, 28-6-1939, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{156} \textit{Ibid.}, 4-7-1939, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{157} \textit{Ibid.}, 9-7-1939, p. 6.
\end{itemize}
better schools and colleges for Muslims. One city-based Muslim complained that while Kanpur had grown in population and importance over the years, educational facilities for Muslims here were "not only meagre but insufficient". He claimed that Halim Muslim Intermediate College deserved to be upgraded into a Degree College because it was one of the oldest and most promising institutions in United Provinces.158 In Kanpur, a city of business magnates and philanthropists like Hafiz Mohammad Siddique, wrote another Kanpur-based person, a degree college for Muslims was a must. In 1946, Kanpur boasted of an old Halim Inter College which had 800 students on roll but no play ground, gymnasium, staff-room, decent library or spacious hostel (in place of the one existing which had 4 rooms only).159 Not all, however, wanted an expansion of the infrastructure for general education. Communal ideologues knew that the Congress Government did not relish the idea of supporting denominational institutions, yet, they wanted support for 'separate schools and colleges where education could be imparted in an atmosphere of Islamic culture.'160

The change in the 1940s was that a spirit of self-help to work for educational advancement took root among the local Muslim elite and they had the active involvement of the Muslim League in this enterprise. In the U.P. Muslim Students' Conference at Kanpur on November 24, 1941, inflammatory speeches were made to arouse young men. Mohammad Mohsin of Aligarh displayed communal bravado by asking Hindus to give one-third of India for

159 Letter of Bashir Ahmad Quraishi from Kanpur. Ibid., June 14, 1946, p.4.
160 Editorial comment in Ibid., June 13, 1946, p. 4.
Pakistan or else, Muslims would take the whole of it." Five years later, in 1946, Hasnain Kazmi, ex-Secretary of Muslim Students' Federation, Kanpur, displayed the same aggressive spirit of self-help. He wrote, "We should not beg anything of the British but demand and secure what be want, by our own strength."

The dearth of 'Muslim' educational institutions had become a matter of concern among leaders and different political groups of Kanpur. For example, on January 24, 1943, the Muslim League, the Khaksars and the Ittehad-i-Millat organised a meeting to remember the late Maulana Mohammad Ali (Comrade) and demanded a separate (degree) college for Muslims because they had a large population in Kanpur. S.K. Kazmi, Convenor Muslim Students' Federation informed readers that MLAs (or Members of Legislative Assembly) and industrialists had offered help to get a Degree College started where Halim Inter College stood. Apart from the old Halim Inter College, there grew in Kanpur the Maulana Mohammad Ali Memorial School. In 1942, the Working Committee of City Muslim League placed on record its 'satisfaction on the progress made by this school which fulfilled a crying need of Muslims in particular.' The General Secretary of this school's management committee was a well-known and slightly progressive Muslim League leader of Kanpur, Syed Hasan Ahmad Shah. He claimed that the school was established and had

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161 PAI, 28-11-1941, p. 188.
162 Dawn, 24-2-1946, p. 4.
164 Dawn, 19-6-1946, p. 4.
165 Ibid., 2-11-1942, p. 4.
achieved high standards due to the efforts of a 'handful of youth who persevered day and night against ever increasing difficulties.'

The reference to 'handful of youth' in the address of General Secretary of Maulana Mohammad Ali School is unclear. But it is likely that the youth mentioned there by the General Secretary were members of Muslim Students' Federation (MSF). This organisation was growing rapidly and organizing educated Muslims along communal/ pro-colonial lines. But, in 1940, this students' organisation could only orchestrate support for what the Muslim League decided, it could not even effect or change the declared policy of the League as the following examples may show. Among educational institutions Halim Muslim Intermediate College was the bastion of Muslim communalism in Kanpur. On the death of Mohammad Sharif, a local hide merchant, MSF tried to close Halim Muslim Intermediate College to express solidarity of educated Muslims with a co-religionist businessman. The Principal and management of Halim College opposed the move of this students' organisation. Consequently, MSF gave the call for a strike but 90% of the pupils of Halim College attended classes. Not only this, the College management sought a written apology from the errant students pending which they were debarred from attending classes and the scholarships awarded to them were withheld.

In the later part of 1940 sensing the increased involvement of students in nationalist activities, Director of Public Instruction (DPI) issued a circular banning

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166 Ibid., 14-11-1943, p. 4. The annual prize distribution function of this school in 1943 was presided over by Khaliquzzaman.
167 The Pioneer, 24-8-1940, p. 5.
strikes. This led to a strike call by Kanpur Students' Federation and All India Students' Federation on November 21, 1940. Anjuman-e-watan, a group of left radicals among Muslims, condemned the Circular as a challenge to freedom and civil liberties.\(^{168}\) The Working Committee of Muslim League had decided to support the War effort of the colonial Government in August 1940. So, MSF decided to go by the League's party line and not come out in solidarity with other students despite being a students' body itself.

MSF issued a leaflet declaring that Muslims would not participate in the "Anti-Repression and Anti-DPI Circular Day" on November 21, 1940. It gave two reasons for this decision. Firstly, MSF said, it was undesirable to start political agitation in the educational sphere. Secondly, MSF claimed (without elaborating) that the authors of the strike strengthened activities which were not consistent with the aims and ideals of Muslims.\(^{169}\) Mr. S.C. Chatterji, Principal of Christ Church College – the oldest and most prestigious educational institution of Kanpur, appreciated the pusillanimity of MSF. Chatterji said that, as a person of the minority community himself, he felt that every member of the minority community must assert his legitimate claims and rights at this political juncture but without political agitation in the educational sphere.\(^{170}\)

Incidentally, around this time the mentor of MSF, M.A. Jinnah had swerved away from the plank of protecting the rights of Muslims and declared Muslims to be a separate nation. During his Kanpur visit in March 1941 Jinnah

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\(^{168}\) Ibid., 22-11-1940, p. 5.  
\(^{169}\) Ibid., 17-11-1940, p. 5.  
\(^{170}\) The Pioneer, 19-11-1940, p. 4.
addressed MSF and urged them to understand that Muslims were a separate entity whereas Hindus treated Muslims as a minority to whom safeguards should be given. Jinnah also told MSF activists in Kanpur that by demanding Pakistan, he was 'prepared to let two crore Muslims in the non-Pakistan zone to be "smashed" so as to liberate seven crore Muslims in Muslim majority areas.'

This plain speaking of Jinnah did not deter MSF. Consequently, when it celebrated Muslim Student's Week at Kanpur in May 1941 it observed Pakistan Day, among other things.

The 2nd Muslim Students' Conference was held at Kanpur on November 24, 1941. It was presided over by Nawab Siddiq Hasan, MLA (Central) and, along with other speakers such as Khaliqquzaman, Begum Aijaz Rasul, Z.H. Lari, etc. he urged students to join their separate communal organisation while following the lead of the Muslim League. H.M. Sami was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of this Conference. He asked students to keep aloof from Hindu students' organizations because Congress had floated them to deprive Muslims of their rights and separate identity. Siddiq Ali Khan of Central Provinces aroused fears of Hindu Raj by reminding his audience that Savarkar wanted the Muslims to live in India as the Jews do in Germany.

171 Ibid., 31-3-1941, p. 2.
172 On 18th May MSF celebrated Adult Education Day and on 19th May it observed Scholarship Fund Day. Later, in the rest of the week, MSF was to observe Student's Grievance Day; Anti-Agra University Seal Day; Allahabad University Union Reform Day; Pakistan Day; the Study of Quran Day and the Friday Prayers' Leave Day. The Pioneer, 20-5-1941, p. 4.
174 Ibid.
175 PAI, 28-11-1941, p. 188.
All this political propaganda may have had a negative impact on young minds. Students affiliated to the Muslim Students' Front had begun participating in political activities of the Muslim League in the 1940s. In his message to the 'Muslim nation' on the third Pakistan Day on March 23, 1943, M.A. Jinnah 'particularly appealed to the Muslim intelligentsia and students to come forward and rise to the occasion' so as 'to concentrate on the educational, political, economic, social and moral well-being of our people.'\(^{176}\) When a divided Provincial and City Muslim League went in for Municipal elections in November 1944, leaders of MSF knew that their parent organisation could be defeated. Hence, M.H. Kazmi, President, MSF, appealed to Muslim students of Kanpur to support Muslim League candidates in the forthcoming Municipal Board elections.\(^{177}\)

Several other changes were noticed in this period. Not only participation in electoral politics but even boycotting classes, on a call of the Muslim League, was considered fine in 1946. The Muslim League had given the call for "Direct Action Day" when the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, announced an interim Government to be headed by the Congress. This Day led to gruesome riots in Calcutta but was mercifully, peaceful in Kanpur. Dawn reported that Kanpur Muslims were in a 'Direct Action Mood' on August 16, 1946 to express which they observed a complete strike and met at Parade in a meeting attended by 20,00 persons.\(^{178}\)

\(^{176}\) Dawn, 23-3-1943, p. 1. In his message M.A. Jinnah claimed that 'a solidarity of opinion and a union of mind and thought had been created' due to which what was 'a resolution for Pakistan three years ago had become an article of faith, a matter for life and death with Muslim India.' Ibid.

\(^{177}\) The Pioneer, 29-10-1944, p. 12.

\(^{178}\) Dawn, 24-8-1946, p. 6. The report further said, 'Right from the street hawker to the biggest Muslim businessman there was no transaction of any kind whatsoever. It was a most complete strike. Muslim ekkawalas (or Tonga walas) and thelawalas (or hawkers) sacrificed their day's earnings to maintain the nation's pride. Muslim students did not attend colleges, mills,
Muslim students observed "Direct Action" Day at Kanpur in response to the All-India call by the Muslim League. Before going out in a procession in the city with fellow students, a student, speaking at the Halim Muslim College hall, said,

We will die for India (sic); we want free Pakistan in free India. Thus our worship, our labour, our love, our heart, our wishes will be free.\(^{179}\)

The young educated Muslim entrants were both the pride of the Muslim League and also the cause of its embarrassment occasionally. They blew new life into the Muslim League with their energy. When Leaguers were protesting with 'black flags and bloody eyes' the installation of the 'un-national Government' on September 2, 1946, the youngsters tried to propagate the party's policy through wall writing. They were writing "Arzi Hukumat - Murdabad" (meaning 'Down with the Interim Government') on a wall near the Kotwali (or Police Station) when the police checked them. To avert a 'communal clash', Dawn reported, some influential Leaguers advised the youngsters 'not to proceed with their business' and they obliged.\(^{180}\)

However, the young were sometimes embarrassingly irresponsible and the old and influential were always not so successful in restraining them. It was reported that old Muslim Leaguers had great difficulty in controlling these new student enthusiasts. During a procession on "Direct Action Day" these young men threw stones at ekka and tongawalas and consumed the fruits left behind by

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\(^{179}\) ibid., 25-8-1946, p. 8.

\(^{180}\) ibid., 6-9-1946, p. 6.
fruit sellers who ran away out of fear of these processionists.\textsuperscript{181} This unruly behaviour got bad publicity to them but more importantly, to their cause also. This may have been resented by the old Muslim Leaguers.

III. Muslim Businessmen: Villainous Victims

The number and influence of Muslims in the Indian capitalist class was small. Muslims entrepreneurs seldom entered industry and two of them who tried to do so in the textile industry in Western India had to beat a hasty retreat. Though Kanpur was a big centre for textiles, not even a single Muslim businessman ever tried entering the industry here. So, even the richest Muslims, like Isaphanis of Calcutta, Haroons of Karachi and Sherwanis of Uttar Pradesh, remained confined to trade. Even in trade, Muslims as a community were not very successful. Most of them were just small traders and merchants who normally dealt in leather, glass and silk.\textsuperscript{182}

Muslim businessmen in Kanpur were supposed to have had a monopoly over tanning, leather and timber industries and a significant control over trade in general merchandise (called bisat-khana) and hides and skins.\textsuperscript{183} These businessmen were, like others of their ilk, more self-contented than public-spirited. In the second decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century a meeting was organized to

\textsuperscript{181} PAI, 23-8-1946, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{182} Out of the two early Muslim industrial entrepreneurs of Western India, one suffered huge losses in Bombay and the other could just not sustain himself in that role. Consequently, he sold his mill to a Hindu Patel in Ahmedabad. Only Adamjees in the jute industry in Calcutta were successful in their role as industrialists and were credited with running their business professionally. Dwijendra Tripathi, “Partition and Indian Business,” in S. Settar & Indira Baptista Gupta (eds.), Pangs of Partition Vol. 1 The Parting of Ways (New Delhi, Indian Council of Historical Research & Manohar, 2002), p. 278.
\textsuperscript{183} Claim made by M.H. Abdi, Secretary of UP Muslim Chamber of Commerce, Kanpur in his letter dated April 18, 1944 to the Secretary of the Governor of UP. File No. 60/ 1944, Municipal Department, UPSA, p. 27.
protest against the indifference of the Municipalities Act of 1916 to 'Muslim interests'. Hafiz Mohammad Halim, the famous owner of tanneries in Kanpur, led the organizers of this meeting of Muslims at Kanpur. Bisati Muslim shopkeepers, most of whom were Punjabis like Halim himself, made themselves scarce at this meeting even though their presence was eagerly awaited by the organizers.\textsuperscript{184}

The role of Muslim shopkeepers in the national movement at Kanpur was lukewarm if not outrightly negative. A part of the reason for this lay in the fact they were increasingly coming under the influence of Tanzim organizations which considered service to the community a more worthwhile preoccupation than politics. The growth of Tanzim organizations in Kanpur city was specifically mentioned by the Congress Enquiry Committee headed by Dr. Bhagwan Dass investigating the Kanpur riots of March, 1931.\textsuperscript{185} But a part of the reason for this indifference to nationalist activities could also be strategic because participation in them was not without risk (as fines or punishment could follow participation) but on the other hand involvement in Tanzim could also mean more business. Tanzim organisations and leaders made calls (which were heeded also) to boycott Hindu cloth merchants, halwais (or sweet-meat sellers), tambolis (or paan shops), grocers, etc.; and even ekka wallahs were not spared from social and economic boycott.\textsuperscript{186}

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., p. 32.
\textsuperscript{185} Congress Enquiry Committee Report on Communal Riots in Kanpur in 1931, op. cit., p. 251.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., p. 242.
Examples of the indifference of some Muslim business-persons to nationalist activities in the 1920s and the 1930s at Kanpur were quite a few. For instance, all shops, except those of Muslims, were closed after the death of Deshbandhu Chita Ranjan Das on June 17, 1925. The Simon Commission landed on February 3, 1928 at Bombay to commemorate which a hartal had been called by nationalists. On this day not only markets but even the offices and schools of the Municipal Board were closed at Kanpur. But Muslim shopkeepers still boycotted the call for hartal. This apathy to hartal became stronger in the 1930s. For instance, we find that when some nationalist Muslims organized a swadeshi exhibition in Kanpur, not many Muslim shopkeepers evinced interest in it. The organizers had hoped that Muslim shopkeepers would rent the stalls in large numbers and display their wares for this exhibition. But not many Muslim shopkeepers came; hence, Hindu shopkeepers took up most of the stalls at this exhibition (like they did in others also). On Shahidganj Mosque Day, i.e. September 20, 1935, nationalist Muslims organized a large meeting of 8,500 persons for which lower class Muslims turned up in large numbers. Only two shopkeepers reportedly closed their shops on this day. The aforesaid shopkeepers also closed their establishments basically because their shops fell on the route of the procession taken out by the nationalist organizers. But in

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187 The report in Pratap highlighted the non-compliance of some Muslim shopkeepers on this occasion but did not mention the refusal of the Municipal Board to close its offices even though its Chairman had been requested to do so. Pratap, 22-6-1925, p. 19.

188 Ibid., 5-2-1928, p. 1.

189 PAI, 4-5-1935, pa. 198, p. 206.
other parts of Kanpur city, Muslim shopkeepers did business as usual on Shahidganj Mosque day.\textsuperscript{190}

Muslim shopkeepers were, however, not indifferent to Muslim communalists. In the 1920s Anjuman Hifazat ul-Islam was formed in Kanpur and it received complaints that Hindu shopkeepers over-charged Muslims. The Anjuman, therefore, urged members to open shops of all kinds to save Muslims from being fleeced.\textsuperscript{191} Efforts to boycott Hindu shopkeepers continued even outside this Anjuman. For instance, on May 17, 1926, a private meeting of Muslims from every Mohalla was reportedly held under the leadership of the left nationalist, Dr. Abdul Karim. This assembly discussed the possibility of opening \textit{paan}, sweet-meat and flour shops by Muslims so that they did not have to deal with Hindu shopkeepers.\textsuperscript{192} The stridency of such propaganda only became worse in the 1930s. Hence, while the Raja of Mahmudabad was quoted as having said in Kanpur that Muslims should vow to take things from co-religionists only, a Muslim League zealot amplified this into 16 instructions which were as follows:

1) Not to borrow money from Hindu money-lenders.
2) Kunjras to stop buying vegetables and fruits from Muraos and Kachis.
3) Singers to sing only Ghazals, not “raags” produced by Hindu brains.
4) No Muslim shopkeeper should take his shop to a Hindu fair.
5) No commercial transaction with a Hindu firm.
6) Muslims serving under Hindus should resign and seek employment in Muslim states.
7) No Muslim lawyer to accept the case of a Hindu client.
8) Muslim workers (masons, tailors, barbers, painters etc.) not to work for Hindus.

\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Ibid.}, 28-9-1935, pa. 444, p. 484.
\textsuperscript{191} FR – 32 for the II half of October 1927. \textit{Home Political, NAI}.
\textsuperscript{192} \textit{PAI}, 29-5-1926, pa.519, p.297.
9) Ghosis not to purchase cows from and supply milk to Hindus.
10) Muslim doctors not to treat Hindu patients.
11) Conveyance of Muslims to be disallowed to Hindus.
12) No Muslim 'mali' to sell flowers at any Hindu temple.
13) Muslims to stop speaking Urdu which is full of Hindi words; they should speak Persian and Arabic.
14) Butchers, Dhunias and Julahas not to serve Hindus.
15) No Muslim to recite prayers in what may have been a Hindu temple.
16) Muslim Leaguers to stop begging for favours from the seven Congress Governments in provinces.193

Muslim shopkeepers of Kanpur, however, were not always victims of propaganda. Their behaviour with their customers was not very courteous even before communal propaganda acquired harshness in the 1930s. In fact the New Year in 1928, at Kanpur, began with a quarrel between a Sikh customer and a Muslim shopkeeper. This incident occurred on January 1, 1928, and it nearly led to a riot as crowds gathered and shops in one of the bazars of the city had to be closed.194 But the worst had already happened a month before this incident. During a quarrel a Muslim shopkeeper reportedly knifed a customer (who was a Chamar by caste) so badly that the victim died. The supporters of the deceased organized a special funeral procession which purposely went through the Muslim mohallas.195 All this was likely to have escalated tension which in any case was building up around contentious constitutional issues like the continuance of separate electorates or their replacement by joint electorates, safeguards for or the alleged appeasement of minorities, cow slaughter and music before mosque.

What appears interesting in all this is that Muslim shopkeepers should have

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193 Quoted by Hindu Mahasabha-ites to prove Muslim bigotry and arouse fears or fan hatred against Muslims. The Hindu Outlook, 4-5-1938, p. 11.
194 PAI, 14-1-1928, pa.1038, p.420.
195 Ibid., 29-10-1927, pa.1011, p.409.
sometimes become the perpetrators of violence whereas normally this section is considered a victim of violence, arson and plunder.\textsuperscript{196}

Muslim shopkeepers increasingly started joining the Muslim League in the 1930s and thereafter. Yet, some nationalists persisted in their ranks and they gave a symbolic political fight to the Muslim Leaguers as the following examples would show. In April 1937 some Muslim shopkeepers cooperated with nationalists to observe a strike and they did this in defiance of a call to the contrary by the Muslim League.\textsuperscript{197} Similarly, there was trouble in January 1939 at the Provincial Conference of Vegetable-sellers in Kanpur when a person read a pro-Congress welcome address. The Secretary of the Reception Committee of this Conference had pro-Congress leanings. Hence, to get him out of their way some Muslim Leaguers kidnapped him and detained him for the period of the Conference. But, interestingly, a member of Jamiatul Momineen replaced this Secretary to read the welcome address but the substitute also praised the cause of the Congress. This annoyed a Muslim Leaguer so much that he rushed towards the stage and the President of this Conference, Abdul Shakoor of Benaras, chided the substitute that the welcome address was for him individually and not for the praise of any political party.\textsuperscript{198}

\textsuperscript{196} A day after the riots started in March 1931, Ali Husain wired about the victimization of Muslim traders to the Governor of U.P. He said, "RIOT BY HINDUS. MUSLIM SHOPS MOSQUES QURAN LOOTED BURNED. POLICE WERE SIGHTSEERS." File No. 1263, Police Department, UPSA. Eight persons were arrested for looting the shops of Muslims during the riots of June 1939. \textit{The Pioneer}, 28-6-1939, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{197} PAI, 10-4-1937, pa. 179, p. 258.

\textsuperscript{198} \textit{The Pioneer}, 5-1-1939, p. 10.
Muslim businessmen had begun organizing associations after late 1920s. For instance, Madras Muslim Chamber (in 1928), All India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (which did not bear the adjective Muslim in its name but it was very much a Muslim organisation) was started in 1939 and most important of all, Muslim Chamber of Commerce (in 1932) in Calcutta. But no business association set up before 1940 had anything to do with communal politics. Jinnah himself began advocating the formation of Muslim Chambers of Commerce in the 1940s. On Jinnah’s persuasion, Muslim Chambers of Commerce sprang up in Madras, Karachi, Dacca, Chittagong and Lahore by 1943. 

Addressing the All India Muslim League Planning Committee, at Delhi on November 7, 1944 Jinnah said, 'Our first task was to organize Muslims politically and after this was done could we turn to the economic sphere. Now, I ask Muslims, wherever I go, to organize a Muslim Chamber of Commerce at the earliest possible opportunity.'

Muslim businessmen of Kanpur had already formed their organization by then and they were already involved in making non-economic demands when this advice came from Jinnah.

In the 1940s the Muslim Leaguers had a virtual free run among Muslim businessmen in Kanpur at least. U.P. Muslim Chamber of Commerce (UPMCC) was created in May 1943. This Chamber was born due to the backing and it

200 The Leader, 8-11-1944, p. 7. Jinnah addressed the All India Muslim League Planning Committee, on November 7, 1944 at Delhi. He spoke of the ideals in the economic sphere and he also tried to allay the anxieties about the economic prospects of Pakistan. Jinnah said, ‘The ideals should not be capitalistic but Islamic. We should not make the rich richer and accelerate the process of accumulation of wealth in a few hands. We should aim at levelling up the general standard of living of the masses.’ Regarding economic prospects, Jinnah added, ‘Pakistn may not have mineral resources but it will not be bankrupt. It may not be as rich as Hindustan but it will be a powerful state.’ Ibid.
survived on the support of the U.P. Muslim League. In October 1940, Working Committee of the U.P. Muslim League had formed a Sub-Committee (consisting of Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Rizwanullah and Mohammad Farrooq to explore the possibility of establishing a Muslim Chamber of Commerce in United Provinces.\footnote{The Pioneer, 30-10-1940, p. 4.} After 1916, the Kanpur Municipal Board was being re-constituted in 1944 and its membership had been increased from 38 to 43. U.P. Muslim Chamber of Commerce (UPMCC) was only in the first year of its existence then but yet, it claimed two seats on this local body of Kanpur. UPMCC made this claim of two seats for itself on the basis of precedent, legal entitlement and commercial importance as described in detail in the chapter on Local Self-Governance and Politics. Muslim league again lobbied with the colonial authorities to press for the acceptance of this demand of UPMCC but failed.\footnote{RB – 60/ 1944, Municipal Department, UPSA, pp. 73-5.} The important thing to note was that while Muslim League was demanding a separate homeland in this period, its protégé organization among Kanpur's businessmen was pushing its case for a larger share in local self-governance.

Jinnah came to Kanpur on March 29, 1941 and was hosted to a dinner on the day of his arrival by the Punjabi Club which was followed by a welcome address by Bisatkhana Merchants' Association.\footnote{The Pioneer, 30-3-1941, p. 5.} The Punjabis were preponderant among the Bisatkhana Merchants also and elements from this socio-regional group did not come for a meeting organized by a fellow Punjabi, Hafiz Mohammad Halim, to safeguard "Muslim interests" at the time of the
reorganization of the Municipal Boards in 1916. So, in 1941, when they decided to honour Jinnah, they had come a long way from their earlier indifference to public affairs twenty-five years ago.

Muslim cloth merchants formed their Provincial Muslim Kapra Committee in January 1945 at Kanpur and accepted Muslim League’s leadership by electing Rizwanullah as their President. The merchants probably thought that the principle of proportionate representation adopted in services and legislatures could be extended to the cloth trade. Hence, they put forward the demand of reservation in the cloth market for them in proportion to the percentage of Muslim population in the Province. This demand was absurd because it defied market rationality which assumed that competition would ensure the survival of the fittest. This demand for reservation of market share was also out of step with the times because the Muslim League had stopped asking for proportionate representation and was now demanding a separate homeland. However, Muslim cloth merchants made the best choice in electing Rizwanullah as their President. In 1944 he had challenged the established leadership of Taluqadars in UP Muslim League and hence, represented the leaders of the League. He was, therefore, the ideal candidate to represent merchants who were themselves new supporters of the Muslim League.

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204 PAI, 2-2-1945, p. 18.
205 Ibid., 21-7-1944, p. 112. In July 1944, there was a tussle over the Presidency of UP Muslim League between Rizwanullah and Nawab M.I. Khan. Rizwanullah’s faction started canvassing for support in the Muslim League Council where they knew the majority favoured Nawab M.I. Khan. Rizwanullah himself proceeded to Kashmir to apprise Jinnah of the situation in UP. Ibid.
Before the elections in 1946, the Muslim League leaders visited Kanpur in November 1945 and they reportedly collected Rs. 75,000. The participation of Muslim businessmen in agitations of the Muslim League was also witnessed in this period. On August 16, 1946, Muslim businessmen of Kanpur participated whole-heartedly in the strike call given by the Muslim League on Direct Action Day. Kanpur's Muslims greeted the 'inauspicious day', viz. September 2, 1946, when the 'un-national Government' of Congress took charge in Delhi, with 'black flags and bloody eyes', reported Dawn. The reporter added, 'Every Muslim wanted to assure the whole nation his willingness for any sacrifice.' Apart from closing their establishments in solidarity with the Muslim League and hoisting black flags on them, no special 'willingness for any sacrifice' was witnessed among Kanpur's businessmen. The President, Kanpur Muslim Merchants' Association, however, sent the following telegram to the Viceroy on the day a 'Caste Hindu Government' was formed, viz. on September 2, 1946:

Members of our Association are deadly against the formation of the Interim Government to the exclusion of the Muslim League. We therefore request you to form Government in consultation with Qaed-e-Azam. We have no faith and confidence in the Muslims nominated by you.

By sending this telegram, the Muslim Merchants' Association not only pledged loyalty to Jinnah and Muslim League but also expressed its opposition to

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206 Ibid., 9-11-1945, p. 178.
207 'Right from the street hawker to the biggest Muslim businessman there was no transaction of any kind in Kanpur' declared Dawn, 24-8-1946, p. 6.
208 Ibid., 6-9-1946, p. 6. The report added, 'Every building, every shop, every house and every other concern of Muslims was with a distinct 'black flag'. Besides every Muslim individual kept a black badge with him. Muslim institutions had also been with flying black flags. But all these demonstrations were very peaceful.' Ibid.
209 Ibid., 5-9-1946, p. 6. The Muslim nominated by the Viceroy was Syed Ali Zaheer of Shia Political Conference.
non-League organizations. The triumph of the Muslim League among Muslim businessmen was total—it had not only won over Muslim businessmen in Kanpur but it had acquired their loyalty to the exclusion of every other non-League Muslim organisation.

C. CONCLUSION

It is well known that the modern elite among Muslims, not the traditional ulama, demanded protective safeguards against the Hindu majority with the connivance of the colonialists. These demands spiralled into the claim for Pakistan. The rhetoric of Pakistan acquired stridency with each passing year, as the following messages of M.A. Jinnah on “Pakistan Day” would illustrate. In 1943, Jinnah declared triumphantly, “Three years ago, Pakistan was a resolution. Today it is an article of faith, a matter of life and death with Muslim India. We have created a solidarity of opinion, a union of mind and thought.”\(^{210}\) In 1944, Qaid-e-Azam’s message shifted from the ‘well-being of Muslims’ to the ‘glory of Islam.’ Jinnah said, ‘For us Pakistan means our defence, our deliverance and our destiny. It is the only way which will ensure to us our freedom and the maintenance of our honour and glory of Islam.’\(^{211}\) In 1946, around the time of “Pakistan Day,” results of the elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies were pouring in. The Muslim League had done very well. Jinnah boasted that ‘not less than 90 percent Muslim votes had been cast in favour of Pakistan.’ He added, ‘Pakistan to us means our very existence. Blood shall be shed, if

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\(^{210}\) Dawn, 23-3-1943, p. 1.

\(^{211}\) Ibid., 23-3-1944, p. 1.
necessary, to achieve it.\textsuperscript{212} The Leaguers saw the results of elections in 1946 as an empirical endorsement of their dream for Pakistan.

The Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, however, was an instant hit with some Muslims of Kanpur but even they seemed to cool off later. The first "Pakistan Day" was celebrated on April 19, 1940. Attendance at meetings on this day at Lucknow, Agra and Allahabad was 2,000 whereas at Kanpur it was 10,000.\textsuperscript{213} The next year on "Pakistan Day" on March 23, 1941 an audience of barely 100 persons turned up for a public meeting at Kanpur - this was the first anniversary of the demand for a separate nation-state by Muslim League.\textsuperscript{214} In some subsequent years also, "Pakistan Day" probably remained a non-event in Kanpur. For instance, in 1944, preparations for "Pakistan Day" celebrations were reported from Lucknow\textsuperscript{215} and actual celebrations were reported from Aligarh\textsuperscript{216} and even from Jhansi and Moradabad,\textsuperscript{217} but not from Kanpur.\textsuperscript{218} "Pakistan Day" in 1946 became a very mundane affair only responding to the exigencies of the moment. Communists were thanked on March 23, 1946, for helping Muslim League in the recently concluded elections to UP Legislative Assembly, the

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., 23-3-1946, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{213} PAI, 27-4-1940, pa. 141, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{214} On Milad Sharif the previous day ten times more people had gathered for a meeting the CID reported. PAI, 28-3-1941, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{215} Dawn, 23-3-1944, p. 8. A report said that no procession would be taken out on "Pakistan Day" in Lucknow due to the restrictions imposed under section 144 of Cr.P.C. by the Government. It however, claimed that flags will be hoisted in every Ward, there would be illumination in Wazirganj ward and a public meeting would be held in the evening which Ch. Khaliquzzaman would address along with Anamul Hasan. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 26-3-1944, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 27-3-1944, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{218} No report of celebrations on "Pakistan Day" was published from Kanpur. It was not as if Kanpur was out of the scope/ range of Dawn, the English daily founded by Mohammad Ali Jinnah in 1942. We noticed that this daily newspaper reported that lightening struck Manglapore and Narwa villages in the district and killed three on March 24, 1944. See Dawn, 26-3-1944, p. 6.
British were criticised but (socialist) Russia was praised. Bits of printed paper resembling currency notes and bearing Mr. Jinnah's photo were sold at two annas each in 1946. On March 23, 1947, on the last "Pakistan Day" to be celebrated in Kanpur, a large crowd was present at Mohammad Ali Park. These people passed a resolution pledging the full support of Kanpur's Muslims to the struggle for Pakistan. This was a big change from 1941 and this change had been caused by the divisive politics the Muslim League played in Kanpur as well as at the All-India level.

It is also widely accepted that in the 1940s the Muslim League was strongest in the so-called Muslim minority provinces. This was generally true. But we also found was that the Muslim League was tremendously faction-ridden in Kanpur and its local leaders were not very clear about what they wanted. Jinnah told the Muslim Students' Federation in Kanpur in March 1941 that he was willing to sacrifice the two crores of Muslims elsewhere in India for the proposed seven crore strong Pakistan. Yet, it was despite such clear warnings that the slogan of Pakistan caught the fancy of common Muslims in non-Muslim majority areas too and they gradually came to vote and support this party in hordes by 1940s. Pakistan was a touchy issue with Muslims in Kanpur and it seemed some among them were willing to be the sacrificial lambs for its accomplishment. We may,

219 PAI, 29-3-1946, p. 51.
220 Ibid., 22-3-1946, p. 46.
221 The assembled crowd even threw brickbats at a Congress van nearby. The Pioneer, 24-3-1947, p. 12.
222 Ibid., 31-3-1941, p. 2. Same as in footnote 166 above.
223 When someone sang an anti-Pakistan song at the end of an Arya Samaj procession Muslim shopkeepers closed their shops in protest. PAI, 9-2-1945, p. 23. Communal riot was averted when police intervened after some Holi revelers sang an anti-Pakistan song. Ibid., 22-3-1946, p. 47.
therefore, suggest that the success of the Muslim League was caused *more* by
the spread of communal ideology and also by the attraction the severe methods
and contentious issues, it adopted for mobilization, held in uncertain times.

Conversely, the strength and activities of its organization accounted *less*
for the success of the Muslim League in Kanpur. Dissensions plagued the
League organisation, as already noted, during the period of its phenomenal
growth between 1938 and 1940. These dissensions continued to beleaguer the
Muslim League even later, especially during the crucial period of elections. The
Muslim League fought and handsomely won the last Municipal Board elections of
Colonial India in U.P. in November 1944 and the last U.P. Legislative Assembly
elections in March 1946. But these elections were fought as bitterly among its
own factions as vis-à-vis its opponents.

Clearly, there were extremists and moderates among Muslim Leaguers in
Kanpur. The extremists had an upper hand in the 1940s. One extremist said
'Muslims would kill others and make any other sacrifice to achieve Pakistan.' No
soapbox orator made this statement but Sufi Manzoor Ali, Vice President of
Kanpur City Muslim League who was a socialist involved with the labour
movement in Kanpur, made this intemperate statement. Muslim League was
increasingly giving attention to raising the strength of Muslim National Guards

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224 PAI, 13-9-1946, p. 143. In the same period he addressed labour meetings with Mohammad
Faruq. Ibid., 20-9-1946, p. 147. He was involved, along with Hasrat Mohani, in helping employees
of tanneries. When Muslim League refused to provide its office space to them for the meeting of
striking tannery workers, they shifted the venue of these meetings to CPI's office in Kanpur. Ibid.,
and training its members in *lathi* drill. Muslims were reported to be collecting arms and funds to defend/help the families of Government servants who resigned or were likely to be arrested in any future agitation (of the Muslim League). One Dr. Ahmad even exhorted Muslims to collect stones to fight Hindus. The extremist Muslim Leaguers first agitated for the release of Muslim Goondas and, later, they considered whether they should file cases against police officers for detaining Goondas under section 151 Cr.P.C.

The moderate Muslim Leaguers tried to help maintain peace despite provocations of fellow hawks or their antagonist Hindu communalists. At Muslim League meetings they advised Muslims to continue to live peacefully with Hindus no matter what differences cropped up between the Congress and the Muslim League. The moderate Muslim Leaguers appealed to Muslims to remain peaceful on "Noakhali Day." This was in contrast with the editor of a Muslim paper who claimed that Muslims were slaughtered at the Kali Devi temple at Calcutta. These moderate Muslim Leaguers in their individual capacity arranged for the safe passage of Ramnila processions through their localities. They even fed the processionists and showed cordiality towards Hindus.

225 Ibid., 6-9-1946, p. 139. Kanpur City Muslim League earlier decided to increase the number of Muslim National Guards in the light of the 'Great Calcutta Killings' following the Direct Action Day. 

226 Ibid., 6-9-1946, p. 139. Kanpur City Muslim League urged Muslim Government servants to form their own union to safeguard their interests. Ibid., 12-10-1945, p. 162.


228 Ibid., 11-10-1946, p. 155 and PAI, 18-10-1946, p. 159.

229 Ibid., 11-10-1946, p. 151.


231 Ibid., 23-8-1946, p. 131.

232 Ibid., 11-10-1946, p. 156.
Finally, it seems only the line of moderate Muslim Leaguers was useful to Muslims of Kanpur because it provided them a space from which they could return more easily to mainstream national life in the post-Partition period. As is well known, only a microscopic minority of Muslims actually left for Pakistan from Kanpur or elsewhere in the so-called Muslim minority provinces. The anomaly of massive support for the League in Colonial India but strong hesitation in following it after Partition deserves an explanation. Shaista S. Ikramullah, a contemporary observer, explained the nature of the support to Muslim League as being 'intellectual partisanship' to Muslims of the Muslim majority Provinces and claimed that this intellectual partisanship was just like Indians in United Nations Organisation (UNO) fighting for the rights of Indians in South Africa. In her letter to a friend, Ms. Ikramullah echoed the lag theory of Muslim under-development. She claimed that while keeping Muslims out of education and jobs may have been due to nepotism fifty years ago, it had become 'deliberate, thought out and consistent communalism working to keep Muslims out of everything possible' in the last twenty years. On why the Muslims of Muslim minority provinces voted for Muslim League but did not follow it to the extent of out-migrating from their homes, Ms. Ikramullah explained:

233 Out of all the leaders of the Muslim League, only Dr. Abdus Samad, MLA between 1937-1946 from the Muslim seat of Kanpur in U.P. Legislative Assembly, left for Pakistan. He is remembered as a good Samaritan and his departure to Pakistan is considered a misfortune by informed people in Kanpur. Interview, S.P. Mehra (1911- ), ex-Editor, The Citizen, Kanpur. It is possible that Dr. Samad left on Partition because the local factions of the Muslim League marginalized him and though he was the sitting MLA, he was not re-nominated as candidate for U.P. Legislative Assembly from Kanpur in 1946. The marginalisation of Dr. Abdus Samad may also have been due to his belonging to the lower Nai (or Barber) biraderi of Muslims. Interview, Jamil Akhtar Nomani, Editor, Siyasat, Kanpur.

... when the Muslims of the minority Provinces voted for Pakistan it did not mean that they ever envisaged wholesale migration or even wanted to migrate. It was the same thing as Indians in UNO fighting for the rights of Indians in South Africa – a question of intellectual partisanship. The Muslims in the minority Provinces felt that it was fair that those Provinces where the Muslims were in a majority should be ruled by the Muslims.\(^{235}\)

Ms. Ikramullah's letter clearly shows the predominant role ideology played in enlisting the support to the demand for Pakistan from Muslims of the Muslim-minority areas.

\(^{235}\) Ibid., 10-10-1947, p. 4.