CHAPTER – 1
INTRODUCTION

The Mughal Empire founded by Babur in the sixteenth century, expanded over a vast area. Its boundaries marched in the north with the Karakoram mountains and the Oxus river and reached down to the Kaveri river in the south. From west to east the empire lay between the kingdoms of Persia and Burma. The Mughals thus ruled over territories larger in extent than any empire for about a period of 213 years.

DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

The eighteenth century marked the decline and fall of the Mughal Empire. On its ash arose a number of petty states by the governors of the provinces, Hindu tribal chiefs - the Rajputs, the Jats and the Marathas. The Sikhs appeared upon the scene last. and it is doubtful whether they entertained the ambition to rule over all India from Delhi. Then there were neighbouring chiefs who had supplied ruling dynasties in the past. In the eighteenth century Nadir Shah or Ahmad Shah Abdali was a likely aspirant to the Mughal throne.

What no one could have foreseen, but what actually came to pass, was the appearance upon the scene of a foreign race. With its homeland several thousand miles away and separated from India by vast oceans, which entered into the race with the other competitors, won it and inherited the empire of the Mughals - the English.

MUSLIM INDIA AFTER THE BRITISH ACCESSION TO POWER

The “Red Fort which had once been the Versailles of India was reduced”¹ to a very low condition. Bishop Heber who visited it in the early 19th century corroborates this. He states: “The Shah–Burj was dirty, lonely, and wretched; the bath and fountain dry; the

¹ T.A.Nizami, Muslim Political Thought and Activity in India during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century, T. M. Publishers, Aligarh, 1969, p.3.
inlaid pavement hid with lumber and gardener's sweeping, and the walls stained with the dung of birds and bats."\(^2\) The East India Company, stretching its tentacles wider and wider, swept away the last vestiges of the Muslim rule by annexing Sind in 1843 and the Kingdom of Awadh in 1856, and finally by exiling the last of the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah II, from the Red Fort in Delhi to Rangoon.\(^3\) The Muslims all over the country, therefore, found themselves in a hopelessly precarious condition, shorn virtually of all political power and a prey to manifold inimical forces which threatened their very existence.\(^4\)

Under these circumstances, there were only two alternatives before the Muslims. Either to face boldly their misfortune, cast out the moral weaknesses which had paralyzed their will; build up a clean, God-fearing and upright society on the basis of the teachings of the \textit{Holy Quran}.

In cooperation with their countrymen of other faiths, evolve a political order which would guarantee free exercise of faith, equal opportunities of welfare and advancement, and a self-respecting dignified life for men of all creeds, all races and all colours. Or, to surrender the dream of independence for all time, accept the rule of the alien masters and endeavour to enlist their goodwill to obtain government patronage – a share in the services and in the positions of influence like the Municipal Councils, Legislative Bodies, and in other places.

The first alternative was adopted largely by the Ulema – the custodians of traditional learning and ideals. The Muslim leaders educated on modern lines in the schools and colleges established to propagate the Western arts, sciences and political ideologies followed the second. In the words of Qeyamuddin Ahmed, “In the field of religion, it witnessed some major reform movements affecting both the Hindu and Muslim communities in various ways. These reform movements were both of a modernist and

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\(^3\) J.N. Vajpeyi, \textit{The Extremist Movement in India}, Chugh Publications, Allahabad, 1974, p.3.

fundamentalist type, though the line of distinction between the two is not always clear-cut, nor can it be drawn strictly chronologically.\textsuperscript{5}

\textbf{FAKIR MOVEMENT}

All these factors incited the Muslim masses, under the strong and noble persons and with constant support from the Hindus and the other non-Muslims, to break into open rebellion against the foreign rulers. The first and foremost among them were the \textit{Fakirs}. The establishment of British rule in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa after the battle of Buxar in 1764 set the people afire. There was a diabolic loot and plunder of India. Vast masses of peasantry and some of the old \textit{zamindars} were driven to the forests to fight for their very survival.\textsuperscript{6} Against this ruthless invader, the fakirs under the leadership of Majnushah and \textit{sanyasis} under the leadership of Bhawani Pathak unfurled the flag of revolt in 1763. It lasted upto 1800.\textsuperscript{7}

These fakirs, although not properly organized throughout the land\textsuperscript{8}, were able to successfully inspire the oppressed peasantry. With an ideal to fight for their independence, culture and religion throughout Bengal and Bihar these fakirs and sanyasis presented a united front under the leadership of Majnushah. His lieutenants were Musa Shah and Chirag Ali, Bhawani Pathak, Debi Choudhurani, Kripanath, Nurul Mohammed, Pitamber, etc. Majnushah displayed a great ability of an organizer, a great commander-in-chief who fought in the midst of a very trying situation against the superior armed forces of the British; by inflicting a series of defeats to the British armies led by Mackenzi (1766)\textsuperscript{9} and Commander Keith (1769). The latter was defeated and killed.\textsuperscript{10}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{5} Q. Ahmed, \textit{Wahhabi Movement in India, Challenge : A Sage of India's Struggle for Freedom} (ed.), 1984, Chittagong Uprising Golden Jubilee Committee, Delhi, January 1984, p. 274
  \item \textsuperscript{6} A.N.Chandra, \textit{The Sannyasi Rebellion}, Ratna, Calcutta, 1977, p.9.
  \item \textsuperscript{7} Santimay Ray, \textit{Freedom Movement and Indian Muslims}, PPH, New Delhi, 1979, p.1.
  \item \textsuperscript{8} G.H.Khan, \textit{Siyar-ul-Muta-Kherim} (Persian), Lahore, 1902, p.72.
  \item \textsuperscript{9} Santimay Ray, op.cit.
  \item \textsuperscript{10} Rennel's \textit{Journal}, February, 1766. Also in S.Ray, ibid, p.2.
\end{itemize}
In February 1771, Majnushah eluded the army of Lt. Taylor and entrenched himself in his fortress at Mahasthangarh.\textsuperscript{11} From there, he slipped to Bihar to organise the discontent peasantry and artisans against the British.\textsuperscript{12} He even sent an urgent appeal to Rani Bhabani of Natore to make a common cause to drive away the firingis. But it evoked no response.\textsuperscript{13}

On 14 November 1776, Majnushah inflicted another crushing defeat on English army. In this battle hundreds of Englishmen died and Lt. Robertson was badly injured.\textsuperscript{14} But dissension from among the fakirs and sanyasis posed a serious problem to Majnushah.\textsuperscript{15} Yet, he strove hard to patch up the differences and moved through North Bengal from Purnea to Jamalpur for regrouping his army.\textsuperscript{16}

On 29 December 1786, Majnushah suddenly appeared at the village Mungra in Bogra district to surprise Lt. Brenan’s army. Majnushah was injured, but with open sword he kept forward his horse and managed to escape. But this time, he succumbed to his injury at an unknown village called Makhanpur. "Thus, ended the most heroic figure of sanyasi and fakir rebellion of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century."\textsuperscript{17} After his death, Musa Shah carried the struggle forward.\textsuperscript{18} The fakirs and sanyasis collaterally inflicted heavy losses on Company’s army.\textsuperscript{19} But their internecine conflicts doomed them soon and they were surrounded and captivated by the firingis.\textsuperscript{20}

Inspite of its failure, the revolt of the fakirs and sanyasis left an indelible imprint upon the future struggles for freedom during the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, particularly upon the Wahabis and the revolutionaries of Agniyuga.

\textsuperscript{11} A.N.Chandra, op.cit., p.49.  
\textsuperscript{12} Letter from Supervisor of Rajshahi to the Controlling Council of Revenue, 25 January 1772, WBSA.  
\textsuperscript{13} Rai Sahib Jamini Ghosh, Sanyasi and Fakir Raiders, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, p. 47.  
\textsuperscript{14} Letter from Lt. Robertson to the Collector of Bogra, 14 November 1776, WBSA.  
\textsuperscript{15} Rai Sahib Jamini Ghosh, op.cit., p. 74.  
\textsuperscript{16} Board of Revenue, Connel, 14 March 1780, Revenue Office file, WBSA.  
\textsuperscript{17} Rai Sahib Jamini Ghosh, op.cit., p.208.  
\textsuperscript{18} A.N.Chandra, op.cit., p.108.  
\textsuperscript{19} Letter from Collector of Dinajpore to Collector of Murshidabad, 3, WBSA.  
\textsuperscript{20} Letter from the Magistrate to Dinajpore to Governor-General, 20 February, 1800, WBSA.
WAHABI MOVEMENT AND ITS EXPONENTS

(1) Shah Walliullah of Delhi (1703–1762)

The school of the ulema which advocated religious reform and political freedom traced its affiliation to Shah Walliullah who had inspired the leaders of the so-called Wahabi Movements and the many divines who had joined the Revolt of 1857. The most seminal personality in the history of Indian Islam in the 18th century was Shah Walliullah of Delhi. He was not only a religious teacher of great eminence but a refined and profound political thinker also.

The Mughal Empire crumbled to pieces before his eyes and the country passed into an ever-deepening economic crisis in his lifetime. Born in such an age of economic and political disintegration, he applied his mind to an analysis of the causes of political decay and economic chaos. According to Tara Chand, Shah Walliullah “was confronted with some of the knottiest problems of society and state, of religion, ethics and politics ... in the sphere of politics he was probably the only Muslim thinker who had a clear insight into the intimate relations between ethics, politics and economics. Walliullah’s conception of justice invites comparison with that of Plato in its comprehensiveness and depthness. The process of thought by which they arrived at the idea was, however, different.”

In his monumental work, Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah, he gives the following reasons for the political and economic crisis of his age. “The ruin of the state these days is due to two reasons: firstly, pressure on the public treasury which is due to the fact that the people have developed a habit of obtaining money from the exchequer without performing a corresponding duty. They both come out with the excuse that they are soldiers or ‘ulema’ and have therefore a claim on the treasury. Or they claim to belong to that group of men to whom the king himself presents rewards, i.e. pious sufis or poets or other groups who receive stipends without doing any service to the state. These people diminish the sources

21 T. A. Nizami, ibid, p.19
22 Tara Chand, History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. I, Publication Division, Delhi, 1961, p.206-08
of other people’s income and are a burden on the economy. The second cause of this widespread desolation is the heavy taxation on peasants, merchants and workers and unjust dealings with these groups. The result is that all those who are loyal to the state and obey its orders are being slowly ruined. The refractory and the evaders of taxes are becoming more refractory and they do not pay the taxes. The prosperity of a country depends upon light taxes and reasonable and necessary appointments in the army and other departments. The people should clearly understand this secret.  

He completely lost faith in the Mughal Empire as well as in the institution of hereditary monarchy, which killed all democratic spirit, developed narrow-mindedness of the ruling class, led to economic exploitation of the people, placed unnecessary burden of taxation on the people and increased the misery and oppression of the peasants and artisans. He boldly criticized the ruling class for its exploitation of the masses, its corruption and inertia. He reacted to the attitude of the nobility in these words: “Oh Amir! Do you not fear God? (How is it that) you have so completely thrown yourself into the pursuit of momentary pleasures, and have neglected those people who were committed to your care! The result is that the strong are devouring the (weak) people ...All your mental faculties are directed towards providing yourselves with sumptuous food and soft-skinned and beautiful women for enjoyment and pleasure. You do not turn your attention to anything except good clothes and magnificent palaces.”  

In his writings, one hears the distant echoes of a democratic spirit, which viewed the existing political and social structure from the point of view of a common man, something that was unique in those days. The way he addressed the people to play their legitimate role in their political life gives a significant democratic touch to his whole approach. His political ideas centred round the growing needs of the workers, the artisans and the peasants and these ideas could only be practiced in the peaceful conditions and, consequently, he directed his energy for the restoration of peace and tranquillity in the

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country on the one hand and broke the monopoly of the religious classes by translating the \textit{Quran} into Persian and making its content intelligible to all people.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{(2) Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824)}

His thought determined the drift and direction of Muslim political and religious thought of the succeeding generations. The most obvious impact of his thinking could be seen in the life and activities of his son, Shah Abdul Aziz. During this period Delhi passed through one of the most momentous period of her history. From the Third Battle of Panipat (1761) to the entry of Lord Lake’s forces in Delhi (1803), he saw Delhi passing through many political vicissitudes. This quick drama of political change conditioned his political thought.

While he condemned the Sikh, the \textit{Jat} and Maratha depredations, he did not declare the country under their control as \textit{Dar-ul-Harb} (enemy territory). But when the British power was established in Northern India – though it had checked the unstable conditions prevailing previously - he issued a \textit{fatwa}\textsuperscript{27} declaring all land under the British occupation as \textit{Dar-ul-Harb}.

While Shah Abdul Aziz was exhorting his followers to resist the establishment of the British rule in India, he was quick in realizing the great potentialities of western science and learning. He permitted his pupils to acquire knowledge of English and praised the technical skill of the Englishmen.\textsuperscript{28}

Some Muslim young men had braved the frowns of the conservative elements in the community when they joined the English schools and colleges at Calcutta; even the Calcutta \textit{Madrasa} opened classes for the teaching of English. In Delhi, the college, which was opened in 1828, gave instruction in western knowledge and began the movement for translating western science into the Urdu language. As a result, from Calcutta to Delhi,

\textsuperscript{26} T. A. Nizami, ibid., p. 21
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Fatwa-i-Azizi}, Matha-i-Mujtabai, Delhi, p.17. Also in T. A. Nizami, \textit{op.cit.}, 23-24.
small numbers of Muslim youth were educated under the western system during the first half of the 19th century. But the community as a whole stood aloof.  

It is reported that they (Muslims) had expressed their disapproval officially when they submitted a memorial signed by 8,000 Muslims to Lord William Bentinck on his signing the order of 7 March 1835, protesting against the utilization of the Government grant exclusively on English education. Their chief objection to English education was that it weakened the faith of young Indian students in their religion and also opened the way for the propagation of Christianity among them. W.W. Hunter wrote: “Our system of public instruction, which has awakened the Hindus from the sleep of centuries, and quickened their inert masses with some of the noble impulses of a nation, is opposed to the traditions, unsuited to the requirements, and hateful to the religion of the Mussalmans.”

English education as held by Shah Abdul Aziz was extremely realistic and enlightened but “This position was not, however, maintained by the succeeding generations. Those who studied the English language and sciences willingly accepted British rule, and those who refused to accept British rule totally refused to learn the English language and literature. As was inevitable, two diametrically opposite tendencies developed in Muslim religious and social attitudes, one represented by the Aligarh Movement under Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the other by the Deoband School of thought under Maulana Mohammed Qasim.”

Wahabism made its appearance in India in the early nineteenth century as a religious reform movement and attacked the “religious corruptions” which had crept into Muslim society. In India, it had a special appeal, as many of the converts from Hinduism had brought over into their new faith ideas and practices, which were contrary to the spirit of Islam. The Wahabis branded all other Muslims as idolatrous because of the practice of

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30 W. W. Hunter, Indian Mussalmans, Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1876, p.177.
31 Encyclopedia of Islam, revised edition, article on Hind-Islam by Prof. K. A. Nizami. Also see T. A. Nizami, ibid., p. 26
visiting the tombs of the saints and appealing to them in emergencies, which the Wahabis identified with the practice of pre-Islamic pagans.32

(3) Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareli (1786 – 1831)
Wahabism fiercely advocated a return to the “simplicity of faith (and society) of the prophets of Arabia”33 and rejected “all accretions to and declensions from the pure Islam.” The Wahabi ideology came to India some decades after the death of Shah Walliullah, who had been deeply impressed by Wahabi doctrines. It was Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareli who, during his visit to Mecca in 1822-23, was deeply impressed by the Wahabi ideology and on his return to India organised his work on the lines of Abdul Wahab. The real name of Indian Wahabis was Mohamedia Tariqaa.

To quote Hunter, “Whatever was dreaming in his [Syed Ahmed] nature now gave place to a fiery ecstasy, in which he beheld himself planting the crescent throughout every district of India...”. Whatever had been distinct in his teaching henceforth assumed the precision of that force, formulated theology, by which “Abdul Wahab had founded a great kingdom of Arabia, and which Syed Ahmed hoped would enable him to rear a still greater and more lasting empire in India.”34

But Q. Ahmed believes that it is wrongly assumed that Mohammad Bin Abdul Wahab of Arabia influenced Syed Ahmed and his followers. There are certain similarities between the two movements because of a common root, but there are some differences too, and

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33 The teaching of Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab, the founder and one of the most powerful personalities in the history of Islamic people in the 18th century, may be summarized as an “attempt to restore Mohamadanism to the exact form it possessed during the lifetime of the founder (Prophet), discarding as idolatrous all modern exaltations of Mohammad or any other Prophet, Imam or Saint, and all forms, ceremonies and observances originated since the time of the Prophet, and finally insisting on the duty of spreading Islam by the sword, the chief duty of the faithful and the most direct way to Paradise.” (Allen Issac, Revival of Islam, C. R., Vol. I.VIII, 1874, p. 46. Also in R. C. Majumdar, ibid, p. 951-2.)
34 W. W. Hunter, The Indian Mussalmans, 2nd edition, p. 61. Also in T.A. Nizami, p. 32
there is no evidence of Syed Ahmed being directly influenced by Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab. P.N. Chopra corroborates this.35

In his Wahabism, there was room not only for the Sunnis but also for the Shias who, quite contrary to the practice of Wahabis, follow various Imams. But there was hardly any difference as regards the ends: “Pure Islam must be re-enacted and regenerated, society must again be mighty.”36 The movement for Islamic regeneration expressed itself in two directions – against internal decay and abuses in society, and resistance to and even fight against, infidel rulers.

Syed Ahmed had come under the influence of Shah Abdul Aziz, son of the famous saint of Delhi, Shah Walliullah, who had preached similar views, though less vehemently, about half century earlier. By this time the Indo-Muslim society had been reduced to a low status, particularly in the political field, where the power had passed on to the Sikhs in the Punjab and the British in Bengal. He was fully conscious that the lost political supremacy in India could be re-established only by starting a struggle in the North and consolidating power in the North-West Frontier which would be used as a base of operations for further expansion.

Syed Ahmed undertook tours to different districts and enrolled a large number of disciples. Gradually, the movement took a political turn and Syed Ahmed, like his teacher Abdul Aziz declared the country to be Dar-ul-Harb, thus, making it incumbent on Muslims (or his followers), either to wage a jihad against the non-Muslim rulers, or to migrate to some other Muslim country (Dar-ul-Islam).

P.N. Chopra writes, “Syed Ahmed seemed to have fully realized that the British ‘traders’ constituted the main threat to India’s independence, and an all-out effort is needed to drive them out.” In his letter to Raja Hindu Rao (A Maratha Chief), Syed Ahmed sought the help of the native states in his endeavour, as he said “to clear the unfriendly

35 Ibid., p.887
36 Quoted by P.N. Chopra, R.C. Majumdar (ed.), op.cit., p.884.
foreigners of a distant land who have become masters of the country” out of India. A number of pamphlets were written urging upon the members of the sect “to unite as one body and carry on a crusade against the ‘infidels’ for the conquest of India”.37

It was one of the earliest, most consistent and protracted and the “most remarkably anti-British” movements which dominated the Indian history of the 19th century.38 Syed Ahmed had already won favour for his movement in India and founded a permanent headquarter at Patna, appointed four khalifas39 and an Imam and finally in 1824, he was on the Peshawar frontier. In the Battle of Balakota in May 1831, Syed Ahmed was killed in action while fighting with Sikhs under the command of Sher Singh. The movement remained dormant for some time after his death but was revived by Syed Ahmed’s followers particularly by Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali, both brothers of the Sadiqpur family of Patna.40 All the members were imbued with the same spirit of sacrifice and service and the system worked smoothly on the basis of tacit understanding.41

In the Muslim religio-political thought of the early decades of the 19th century, Syed Ahmed occupies a unique place. He was not merely a political thinker, he was an active political agitator and organizer also. He brought the Wahabi ideology with him as a political instrument for the restoration of Muslim supremacy. His ardent faith in the unity of God and the supremacy of the Quran as the true guide of Man inspires his letters and political statements.

His thought and attitude towards life and politics confirmed that, “the essence of Tauhid as a working idea, is equality, solidarity and freedom. The state, from the Islamic stand

38 W. W. Hunter, Quoted by Santimay Ray, Freedom Movement and Indian Muslims, New Delhi, 1979, p. 4.
40 Patna Khalifas have been praised by Hunter for their high character, Missionary zeal and supreme devotion to their cause. “Much of their teaching was faultless and it has been given to them to stir up thousands of their country men to a purer and a truer conception of the Almighty.” (W. W. Hunter, op.cit., p.68.)
point, is an endeavour to transform these principles into space – time forces, an aspiration to realize them in definite human organization."\(^{42}\) Besides, he had a burning love for India and earnestly believed in the freedom of the country.

In history, we find that the early reformers and statesmen who wished the continuance of Islamic tradition only appealed to the intellectuals and tried to have the cooperation of rulers and powerful political personalities and ignored the masses. But in the movement of Syed Ahmed, there was due place for the masses as well as for the individual. He came to be known as Syed Badshah, Imam Mahadi, Imam Humam, Amir-ul-Muslimin\(^{43}\) and the Sikhs called him by the name of Khalifa.

The taking over of Peshawar after so much strike and strain helped in establishing the outstanding political status of Syed Ahmed and he became the most important political personality throughout the region and was regarded as possessing the best political mind and practical ability. His followers travelled to every nook and corner of the country and recruited people.

In the words of Q. Ahmed: "Arrangements were made for ensuring the safety of volunteers travelling to the distant frontier areas by setting up intermediate points of halt, headed by reliable secret agents, all along the Grand Trunk Road from Bengal to the North Western Frontier. Code words and ciphers were developed for transmitting secret messages."\(^{44}\) No one could understand these letters except the few chosen persons.

In his correspondence with different leaders he had clearly and frankly expressed his views about *jihad* and had enumerated some of the causes, which forced him to declare *jihad*. One of his letters to Raja Hindu Rao shows that he was actually "the first fighter for Indian independence and by throwing the English from the country, he wanted to

\(^{42}\) Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p.154. Also in T.A. Nizami, *op.cit.*, p. 43


establish a pure national government in which there was to be no conflict with the rulers religion and ideology.”

He was fully conscious of the danger to the country from the rapidly growing power of the East India Company and therefore he always required the cooperation and help of both the Muslim and non-Muslim leaders to face the common enemy. It was due to his anti-British attitude that he left the camp of Amir Khan as soon as the latter decided to enter into a treaty with the British.

In this way, we can conclude that though he refrained from giving any political theory or doctrine, he is counted among the great political figures as well as “the chief architect of the concept of freedom from the British rule” of the 19th century. The democratic vision of Syed Ahmed started from Rai Bareli with the party (17th January 1826), of which he was the supreme commander. He formed it of five military divisions based on the modern lines. By this, Syed Ahmed made efforts to train his followers in the use of arms and himself, in a soldier’s kit, held military parades.

(4) Haji Shariatullah (1764-1837)

In Bengal, the position of the Muslim from every point of view - religious, political and economic, was precarious. Due to the absence of suitable religious and secular education they had become utterly illiterate, superstitious and obscurantists. Even Hunter sensed this situation and observed: “A century ago (i.e. in the 18th century) Mohammadanism seemed to be dying of inanition in Bengal.”

This situation could only be realized after the British had completely taken over the control of the country. The people of Bengal greatly suffered at the hands of the foreign

45 T. A. Nizami, ibid., p. 50.
46 Syed Ahmed wrote to Shah Abdul Aziz, "This humble fellow is shortly to meet your holiness. The troops here are pell-mell. The nawab has coalesced with Firangi’. The situation now leaves no room to tarry here." Mehr-Sayyid Ahmed Shahid, p. 109. Also in T. A. Nizami, ibid., p. 50.
47 S. Ray, op. cit., p. II.
49 W. W. Hunter, England’s Work in India, p. 47. Also in T. A. Nizami, ibid., p. 77.
power due to their political and commercial monopoly. The land reform of 1793 destroyed their handicrafts and left Muslims economically crippled and physically exhausted.

The following lines from Hunter throw light on the miserable plight of the Muslims, then living in Bengal. He says, “I have seldom read anything more piteous than the private letters and newspaper articles of Bengal Mussalmans. The Calcutta Persian paper\textsuperscript{50} some times ago wrote thus: “All sorts of employment great and small are being gradually snatched away from the Mohammedans, and bestowed on men of other races, particularly the Hindus. The government is bound to look upon all classes of its subjects with an equal eye, yet the time has now come when it publicly singles out the Mohammedans in its Gazettes for exclusion from official post. Recently, when several vacancies occurred in the office of Sunderbans Commissioners, that official, in advertising them in the Government Gazette stated that the appointments would be given to none but Hindus. In short, the Mohammedans have now sunk so low, that, even when qualified for government employment, they are studiously kept out of it by Government notifications. No body takes any notice of their helpless condition, and the higher authorities do not deign even to acknowledge their existence”.\textsuperscript{51} Further he says, “A hundred and seventy years ago it was almost impossible for a well-born Mussalman in Bengal to become poor, at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich.”\textsuperscript{52}

It was under these circumstances that Haji Shariatullah of Faridpur started his movement in Bengal and for several decades kept the British authorities in great suspense and anxiety. After his return from Mecca where he stayed for a long time and influenced by the Wahabis, who were fighting against all innovations and deviations from early Islam, made an extensive tour in the remote villages of East Bengal and very soon drew vast masses of oppressed peasantry to his simple faith of pure Islam.

\textsuperscript{50} Durban, 14th July 1869
\textsuperscript{51} W. W. Hunter, \textit{The Indian Mussalman}, p 175. Also in T. A. Nizami, op.cit., p.77-78.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid,p.158.
His strong point was not his wide knowledge but his simple, moral and ethical appeal, consonant with Islamic justice, and equity to all. His tremendous popularity amongst rural people both Hindus and Muslims very soon earned him the wrath of rich Muslim zamindars for his religious and social reforms.

Shariatullah wanted the people to give up un-Islamic practices and to follow the original teachings of Islam as demanded by Prophet Mohammed. On his call, they left all such practices and become the true follower of God's Commandments i.e. Faraiz. First of all, he advised the people to repent for all their past sins and then to follow faraiz or duties. Consequently, on this doctrine of faraiz developed largely the movement which came to be called the Faraizi Movement.

According to James Taylor, "They reject the rites of puttoo, chuttee, and chilla which are performed between the first and the fortieth day after the birth of a child and observe the rites of 'aqiqa'... In the same way they have divested the marriage ceremonies of its formalities.... The funeral obsequies are conducted with a corresponding degree of simplicity, offering of fruits and flowers at the grave are not raised above the surface of the ground nor marked by any building or brick or stone. The faraizis have the character of being stricter in their morals than their Mohammedan brethren."

When India passed into the complete sovereignty of the foreigners, a discussion arose whether India was still a Dar-ul-Islam. They consulted Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi who gave a fatwa and said that "when infidels get hold of a Muslim country and it becomes impossible for the Muslims of the country, and of the people of the neighbouring districts, to drive them away or to retain reasonable hope of ever-doing so; and the power of the infidels increases to such an extent that they can abolish or retain the ordinances of Islam according to their wishes; and no one is strong enough to seize on the revenues of the country without the permission of the infidels; and the Muslim inhabitants do no longer live so secure as before; such a country is politically a country of the Enemy."

53 James Taylor, Topography, p. 248 – 250. Also in T. A. Nizami, ibid, p. 79-80.
54 Quoted by T. A. Nizami, ibid, p. 81.
So was the condition in Bengal in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Shariatullah began with religious reforms denouncing the superstitions and the corruptions which had developed in the Islamic society, but he proceeded further and declared the country under British occupation to be *Dar-ul-Harb* or the land of the enemy where Friday and Festive prayers need not be held.\(^{55}\)

A critical study and analysis of the *faraizi* movement shows that its followers did not only oppose the Friday prayers but were also deadly against the administrative changes brought about by the English whose policies and attitudes were not conducive to the health of the Muslim society.

Shariatullah was highly venerated for his piety and exemplary life, and in a short time gathered around him a band of devoted followers – disgruntled peasants, workers and artisans who had grievances against their landlords and idol-craftsmen who were thrown out of their industries. Therefore, he mainly concentrated his energy in wiping out the capitalist who were exploiting the economic resources of the country. Probably it was due to this that Shariatullah was sometimes called “*Pir of the Julaha.*” James Wise says that the peasants “looked upon him as their father.”\(^{56}\) Shariatullah’s greatest achievement was that “the apathetic and careless Bengali peasant was roused into enthusiasm.”\(^{57}\)

In 1799, a so-called Conspiracy of the Muslims of Bareily led by Vizir Ali with the active help of some Hindu Chiefs, such as Raja Jheolal, Jagat Singh of Sarnath, Shiv Deo of Benaras and others called for immediate action by the company’s army. In 1816, there was an open rebellion at Bareily ostensibly against the imposition of police tax. Mufti Mohammed Aiwaz, a respected leader of Rohilkhand, led it. This agitation assumed formidable characteristic when the police in course of forcible collection of tax wounded a woman.


Muslims of the entire area flocked to Bareily and made a concerted attack on the police. The army had to be called and about 300 persons were killed and many were wounded the taken prisoners. Apart from this, there was a rebellion of Pagal Panthis of Sherpur (1833) under Tipu Shah, son of Karam Shah. They led a non-rent campaign and looted the house of zamindar. The British forces under Major Monterath were not able to crush the rebels who had taken possession of the country between Sherpur and Garo hills. The army had to be reinforced and the rebellion was crushed after a great loss in men.

(5) Mohammad Mohsin or Dudhu Mian (1819-1860)
After the death of Shariatullah, faraizi leadership passed into the hands of his son, Muhammad Muhsin, popularly known as Dudhu Mian, was more politically minded. He went to Mecca in the prime of his life and began to preach the principles of his father as well as of his own newly framed doctrines.

Though originally the movement was a religious one, yet Dudhu Mian through his well thought out socio-economic programme made it a political movement and was greatly supported by the oppressed majority of Eastern Bengal and Assam. He brought to the front the social, religious, economic and political problems, which were constantly troubling their minds and were hindering their progress due to the domination of the Foreign Power. His name became a household word throughout the districts of Faridpur, Pubna, Bakirgandi, Dacca and Noakhali and his mighty voice in defence of peace and economic prosperity penetrated in every corner of India.

One of the most remarkable achievements of his administrative ability was the establishment of an effective reorganization of society. He made his headquarters at Bahadurpur and divided East Bengal into circles called ‘halqahs’, appointing a deputy or Khalifa to each, whose duty was to keep the sect together, make proselytes and collect contributions for furthering the objects of the Association. His main purpose was to...

58 Perhaps, it was the first ever known campaign before it became a powerful weapon in the hands of later Congressmen.
59 Quoted in R. C. Majumdar (ed.), op.cit., p.885.
unite the cultivators against the tyranny and illegal exactions of landlords. At that time, there was also a general feeling that the real object of the Faraizis was the expulsion of the British and the restorations of Mohammedan power. Soon he became the acknowledged leader with the timely support of peasants, workers, and craftsmen whose cause he advanced with heart and soul. His pure and simple preaching of equality was greatly responsible for winning the heart of the common man. Dudhu Mian could show his indomitable courage when he took very stern action against the levying of illegal taxes by the zamindars. He went a step further by declaring that all land belongs to Almighty God and no one had a legitimate right to levy taxes upon it and continued to oppose land-tax tooth and nail.60

Apart from all this, he undertook the task of removing the difference himself and organised independent courts for the administration of justice. “Anyone daring to take cases to the British courts was dealt with by social penalties.”61 People were sent with his orders to distant villages and he signed his letters, “Ahmed naam na malum” (Ahmed of unknown name). Every Hindu and Muslim obeyed his orders which were carried to every village as they suited the needs of the common man.

The activities of Dudhu Mian, however, united the zamindars and indigo planters against him. He was charged with plunder in 1838, committed to seasons for murder in 1841, tried for trespass and for unlawful assembly in 1844, and for abduction and plunder in 1846. But it was found impossible to induce witnesses to give evidence, and on each occasion he was acquitted. He was however, arrested in July 1857, after repeated complaints from the zamindars, and confined in Alipur Jail as a State prisoner. He died at Bahadurpur on September 24, 1860.

(6) Mir Nasir Ali or Titu Mian
While Dudhu Mian was leading a movement in Faridpur and adjoining districts, Mir Nasir Ali, better known as Titu Mir or Titu Mian of Chandpur, a disciple of Syed Ahmed

60 From the Police source it is gathered that the number of supporters of Dudhu Mian was nearly 80,000. His khalifas looked after the organisations, mostly in the districts of Barasat, Jessore, Pabna, Maldah and Dacca. (S. Ray, op.cit., p.10.)
61 Quoted by T. A. Nizami, op.cit., p. 85.
whom he had met at Mecca (1882), was preaching Wahabi doctrines at Barasat (1827). Returning from Mecca in 1827, he, like his other two great contemporaries Syed Ahmed and Shariatullah, took to socio religious reform. But very soon the logic of this movement threw him in the vortex of Socio-economic struggle on the side of rural poor, both Hindus and Muslims. Not far off from Calcutta, in the village of Narkelberia, Police station Badurea headquarter was established. It was fortified with bamboo stacks. Grains and arms were collected and stored in the house of Maizuddin Biswas. Many peasant -youths joined the rebel Militia organised by Mr. Nasir Ali under the commandership of Mohammed Ghulam Masum.

A crisis occurred in June 1831, when Krishna Dev Ray, a local zamindar, imposed a tax of Rs 2/8 upon each of his tenants professing to be a Wahabi, and collected it in one of his villages, Purna. A riot occurred in adjoining village of Sarfarazpur, and the followers of Titu Mian and the zamindar were involved in an open affray. Titu Mian collected some five hundred of his followers who began jihad.

The Wahabis marched on to Purna, murdered a Brahmin priest, slaughtered two cows and sprinkled the blood on the Hindu temples; plundered the shops, insulted the Muslims who did not join their sect and committed violent outrages on Hindu life, property and faith. They declared that the British Raj was over and proclaimed their “Sovereign power as the hereditary right of the Mohammedans which had unjustly been usurped by the Europeans.”

The Maulvis carried on similar activities without meeting any resistance. Nadia, 24 Parganas, and Faridpur practically lay at their mercy. But during the later stage when the political objective became precise and clear (i.e. the establishment of free Islamic Republic by driving away the foreigners) all sections of people, both Hindus and

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63 Quoted by P. N. Chopra, R. C. Majumdar (ed.), op.cit., p.886.
Muslims particularly of the oppressed sections of the peasantry, flocked round his (Titu Mian) banner of revolt known in history as Barasat Uprising (17 November, 1831).64

A contingent of Calcutta Militia, sent under Alexander to suppress the rebellion, was routed, the rebels under Ghulam Masum inflicting heavy casualties. The manager of Hooghly Factory was taken prisoner with his family and was released only on the condition that “he would become a Zimmi and sow indigo for them as rulers of India.”65 Hearing the news of disaster, Government of India sent a detachment consisting of ten regiments of native infantry, a troop of horse artillery with few guns were deputed to chastise the rebels who were found drawn out on the plain of Narkalbaria.

The rebels fought bravely, but could not stand against the trained British soldiers. Titu was killed in action (3 December 1832), and his lieutenant, Ghulam Masum, with 350 followers, was taken prisoner. Ghulam Masum was later on sentenced to death and 140 of his comrades were condemned to various terms of imprisonment. In Bengali ballads and folk songs, he is still remembered as an anti-imperialist freedom fighter, an immortal martyr to the cause of India’s freedom.

The activities of Wahabis cover the period, roughly speaking for about half a century. In analysing of the role of the Wahabis in the rising of the 1857, K. M. Ashraf has drawn attention to the rather strange fact that although one comes across frequent references to the role of the Wahabis during the period, one does not get a clear or comprehensive understanding of it. He goes on to explain, “...the Wahabis were the only people who came not only armed with a consistent anti-British ideology but also with the backing of a network of organised centres spread all over Northern India, with contacts in the South and moral influence on the Muslim intelligentsia throughout the country. In a sense, the Wahabi outlook on politics and religious life embodied the century-old hostility of the Muslim ruling classes to the growing encroachments of the British, as also the urgings of

65 The expression means that he would be a subject of the Muslim rulers (i.e. the Wahabis), with the status of zimmi. (Quoted by P. N. Chopra, R. C. Majumdar (ed.), ibid., p. 886.)
the working masses for better and happier conditions of life. It is not, therefore, surprising if the Wahabi leaders of the day displayed both the vigorous and tenacity of the working people, and the confusion of a decadent ruling class.”

According to S. Ray, “The indirect influence of the Wahabi movement on some other aspects is also very significant. The Wahabis with their compact organization covering the whole of northern India, their secret calls to the Indian army units and their contacts with various princely states such as Tona, Hyderabad etc., had provided a solid organizational base which was utilized directly by some of the non-Wahabi leaders of the great uprising of 1857-58.”

To strengthen the above viewpoints of the compact organization or the solid organization, Q. Ahmed says: “The Wahabi Movement left behind an inspiring tradition of a heroic and sustained struggle against the British, and also a model for the formation of a well-knit all-India organization to conduct that struggle. With their secret cells in the Indian army and their contacts in some of the Indian States such as Tonk, Hyderabad and Gwalior, the Wahabis had prepared the ground, to some extent for the leaders of the 1857 rising. It also enabled the Wahabis themselves to capture the leadership at some places during 1857-59. The role of Bakht Khan in Delhi is a good example of it.”

Q. Ahmed further says; “It is evident that such a wide-spread movement could not have been sustained for long without the active support of wider non-Wahabi masses.”

According to Amalendu Dey, “Wahabi Movement entered upon new phase of directly anti-British struggle after 1847. “Since then Hindus showed sympathy to this movement. There may not be general involvement of Hindu masses. But their sympathies are

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69 Ibid. p.890,901.
unmistakably clear. British government felt very concerned and arrested few Hindus as well".  

The Wahabis were the first to realize the crucial role of the Indian units of the British army in India and made conscious efforts to win them over, or 'to tamper their allegiance', as the contemporary official records put it. Some of the methods initiated and practised by the Wahabis, such as passive non-cooperation, the boycott of British Courts, the Panchayati system, etc., were subsequently adopted and improved upon by the early political parties, including the Indian National Congress.

It may be of interest to refer here to a speech delivered by Surendranath Banerjee at a meeting in Calcutta in July 1883 for raising a National Fund. 'How do the Wahabis', he said, 'raise their fund? I speak of the Wahabi Reformers, and not the Wahabi rebels, so you need not be afraid. They do it in this way. Every householder puts by a handful of rice before he takes his meal, and these handfuls are all collected in course of a week, and then they are taken to a mosque for the Wahabi Missionary to come round and take them up. In this way a Fund is raised for the maintenance of the Wahabi Mission.'

One of the most vigorous reform movements in Islam in India, the Wahabi Movement evoked a strong sense of identity among Indian Muslims and brought about significant social reforms. Politically it drew attention to the foreign domination and made the earliest, most protracted and sustained attempts to counter it. Negatively, its failure in the political field drew the attention of the members of the community to alternative course of action, including that which Syed Ahmed's namesake - Sir Syed Ahmed Khan - was to advocate. That marked the beginning of the modernization of the Indo-Muslim society.

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71 Printed Report of the Programmes of a National Fund meeting held on 17th July, 1883, Sen Press, Calcutta.
72 The distinction between the Wahabi 'reformers' and 'rebels' was drawn purposely, so that the authorities might not take objection to the adoption of a method used by 'rebels'.
73 Quoted by Q. Ahmed, op.cit., p.282-83.
The Wahabis, whose activities were always looked upon with acute suspicion and resentment by the British, were constantly busy for the political and economic emancipation of the country. The Wahabi slogan of ‘jihad’ from the time of Shah Abdul Aziz had prepared the soil for the outbreak of the First Struggle for Independence. The struggle of 1857 constitutes a milestone in the political and economic history of India, as it marks the beginning of a collective effort on the part of the Hindus and the Muslims to oust the British from India and get rid of foreign domination. All the miseries, oppression and disaffection caused by the policies of the British were revealed in it.

Unfortunately lack of discipline, equipment and ignorance of the new methods of warfare, and above all the absence of a dynamic central leadership led to the failure of the Indians. The struggle was crushed by an iron hand by the British. Nehru reports, “In doing so they spread terror everywhere. Vast numbers were shot down in cold blood; large numbers were shot to pieces from the mouth of cannon; thousands were hanged from the wayside trees. An English general, Neill, who marched from Allahabad to Kanpur, is said to have hanged people all along the way, till hardly a tree remained by the roadside that had not been converted into a gibbet. Prosperous villages were rooted out and destroyed.

Nehru remarks, “Anti-foreign sentiment was shared alike by the Hindu and the Muslim aristocracy and the masses. The revolt of 1857 was a joint affair, but in its suppression Moslems felt strongly, and to some extent rightly, that they were the greater sufferers. This revolt also put an end finally to any dreams or fantasies of the revival of the Delhi Empire. That empire had vanished long ago, even before the British arrived upon the scene. The Marathas had smashed it and controlled Delhi itself.”

According to S. Ray, “Nearly 10,000 perished on the gallows and were blown up before the cannon-fire with or without trial. Vast majority of them came from the Muslim community - from Nawabs as well as peasantry; naturally, they had to bear the cross side-

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by-side with their Hindu brethren.” Both Hindus and Muslims were mercilessly killed. In the Narrative of Mainodin, “In the city (Delhi) no man’s life was safe, all able-bodied men who were seen were taken for rebels and shot.”

“One can imagine the level of revengeful British barbarism”, writes K. M. Ashraf, “from the fact that only in Delhi they hanged 27,000 Muslims and besides confiscating the houses and properties of rebels, they ploughed over many residential localities and areas in the capital city.” Even there was a suggestion to raze Jama Masjid to ground, but wiser counsels prevailed and the British authorities desisted from this unholy act. Yet Jama Masjid was turned into the Police post for a long time. Those Muslims who survived were debarred from police and army services. On the other hand import of products made in the mills and factories of England forced Muslim handicrafts man and other workers into the abyss of total unemployment. This was the first experience the people had of the struggle for freedom of the country.

SIR SYED AHMED KHAN (1817-1889) AND THE ALIGARH MOVEMENT

The Muslims continued to be the victims for many years after the Revolt. No options were left to them other than to surrender the dreams of independence or the supremacy of Muslim political power. To overcome old resentments and prejudices and to acquire the knowledge of English, which directed their energy to reorganise the Muslim society on a new basis, became their new goal.

However, the country was in a great turmoil. The old values and the medieval institution had fallen down; the new socio-economic and political order was yet to emerge. A vacuum therefore existed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan rose to the occasion.

76 T.A.Nizami, op.cit., p.92.
79 K.M.Ashraf, op.cit.
Sir Syed had to face a two-fold challenge. One from his own community which was unwilling to co-operate with the British in the consolidation of their power. The second challenge was from the British who were determined to do away with all the vestiges of Muslim predominance in India culturally as well as politically. Thus, Sir Syed had a herculean task before him.

While telling the British to be non-vindictive towards Muslims, he also appealed to the latter to adopt Western education and shed away their prejudices against the rulers. Through the Aligarh Institute Gazette and a number of books and pamphlets, Sir Syed propagated his ideas and started in the seventies the Aligarh Movement to establish an educational institution meant primarily for the education of Muslims.

The Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, was the outcome of this modest effort, which in course of time developed into the Aligarh Muslim University. “Throughout his long career, Sir Syed firmly held that no government could be better for India in the prevalent circumstances than that of the British and if India was to make any progress it could only do so under the aegis of the British.”80

He was conferred upon the title ‘Companion of the Order of the Star of India’ in 1869 in London, where he had gone to study the English method of education. During the disastrous days of 1857, when Bijnore was a rebel centre, he remained loyal to the British and managed to save the lives of many English people.81 For that he was awarded a khilat (robe of honour) and a pension for life.

Sir Syed founded a Translation Society for the purpose of translating and publishing important European works into Urdu. Its objectives were to “bring the knowledge and literature of the Nations of the Western world within reach of the immense masses of the

81 Rajmohan Gandhi, Understanding the Muslim Mind, Penguin, Delhi, 1986, p. 22.
people of the Eastern on 9th January 1863. The Society was later shifted to Aligarh with the transfer of Sir Syed in 1864 and renamed as the Scientific Society. From 1866 he also started his famous weekly, *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, as the official organ of the Society. It was made a bi-lingual paper and every article was published side by side in English and Urdu.

Sir Syed and his associates had witnessed the futility of the attempts to drive out the British from India. To them, independence was not practical politics, the only alternative was to accomplish the betterment of the community under British dispensation. This required the removal of the feelings of mutual suspicions and hatred between the Muslims and the British: to convince the British that the Muslims were not the inveterate enemies of their rule provided it did not interfere with their religious beliefs and practices.

Sir Syed wrote a pamphlet ‘Risalah Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind’ in which, he refuted the charges of disloyalty against the Muslims. He tried to prove that neither the Indians nor the Muslims were really responsible for the revolt but it was the misguided policy of the British government. The failure to admit the Indians to the Legislative Council was the main cause of the revolt.

In order to bring about a change of heart in the British towards the Muslims, he also published the ‘Risalah Khairkhwahan Mussalman’ (The loyal Mohammedans of India) in which he asserted that whatever he was writing in praise of his co-religionists and countrymen was not an exaggeration but supported by unimpeachable documentary evidence. In 1869, he wrote an article ‘Ahkam-i-Ta’am-i-Ahl-i-Kitab’ (Injunctions for partaking food with men of Holy Books).

Through Quranic quotations and *fatwa* of Shah Abdul Aziz, he argued that partaking food with the Christians or eating the meat of the animal slaughtered by them was not an act of impiety. Another unique work of Sir Syed was a commentary in Urdu on Quran and New

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Testament in which, he emphasized the points of similarity between Islam and Christianity and also pointed out the fundamental unity that ran through the two faiths. He also felt that such a re-interpretation of Christianity from the Islamic point of view would bring Islam and Christianity together and obviate misunderstandings that had crept in.

He remarked in *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, "Without flattering the English, I can truly say that the natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shop keepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners and uprightness, are as like them as a dirty animal is to be an able and handsome man."83

All these were the efforts made by Sir Syed to reduce the gulf existed between the British and the Muslims. On the other hand, Sir Syed made same effort so far as the relationship between Hindu-Muslim was concerned. He vehemently opposed the view held by some narrow-minded theologians that the Hindus were infidels.

The enunciation of the principle that the laws of Islam were identical with the laws of nature and that all human beings were bound to obey them, led to the logical conclusion that the differences between those who avowed faith in the Quran and the others who did not, was merely verbal and not real. Again, in so far as man was free to choose between good and evil, a Muslim was as much liable to go wrong as a non-Muslim and in fact, both would have to answer for their deeds before the tribunal of God without the intercession of Prophets and Redeemers.

According to Hali, "Patriotism was an article of faith with Sir Syed, it had its roots in the teachings of the Holy Prophet who said, ‘love of the country is an element of faith’." His concept of one nation also had its sanction in the life of the holy Prophet. He believed that the progress and development of the country could be ensured only through the limited efforts of all the people. In a lecture at Patna on January 27, 1883, he said, "It is the first and foremost duty of all the well-wishers of country to strive for the welfare of

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all the people irrespective of their caste or religion. For, just as human life and its health is not possible without the soundness of all the organs of the body, the prosperity of a nation is also not possible without all round progress of the country.84

He further laid stress upon the unity of the Hindus and the Muslims and said that both the communities live on the air of India and drink the holy waters of the Ganga and Jamuna. Both feed upon the products of the Indian soil and are together in life and death. Their features have become similar; the Mussalmans have adopted numerous Hindu customs; the Hindus have accepted many Muslim traits of conduct. Both have become so fused with each other that a new language of Urdu was developed. Both are a nation, and the progress and welfare of the country depends on the unity, mutual sympathy and love.85

Further he “compared Hindus and Muslims to the two eyes of a beautiful bride whose face would be disfigured if either one or the other was injured.86 Addressing the Hindus of the Punjab, he complained why he was not regarded as a Hindu, and said, “You have used the term Hindu for yourselves. This is not correct, for, in my opinion, the word Hindu does not denote a particular religion but on the contrary everyone who lives in India has the right to call himself a Hindu. I am, therefore, sorry that although I live in India, you do not consider me a Hindu.”87

In one of his article, he wrote, “Undoubtedly, just by ignoring difference of religions we desire that there should be established between the Hindus and the Mussalmans friendship, affection, unity and sympathy. In the same way by ignoring political differences also, we desire that in social dealings there should be mutual friendship, affection, sympathy and brotherhood among them.”88 Sir Syed was undoubtedly a preacher of the Hindu-Muslim unity that can be reflected by many of his speeches, writings and activities.

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84 Munshi Sirajuddin (ed.), Mazarun Lecture Hai Sir Syed (Urdu), Balaji Press, 1892, p. 132.
85 Ibid., p.117-121.
86 Ibid.
87 Hafeez Malik, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, p.245.
88 Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Akhri Mazamin, Dated March 1897 to April 1898, Lahore,1898, p 57.
A school was started in Moradabad in 1858 and another in Ghazipur, following Sir Syed’s posting there, both financed by Hindus as well as Muslims and serving all communities. When the Scientific Society moved to Aligarh, it acquired land there for agricultural experiments; it also acquired in the person of Raja Jaikishan Das, a Hindu, and an able backer. According to G. F. Graham, whose friendship with Sir Syed began in this period, the motto of Sir Syed was: “Educate, educate, educate.”

Sir Syed frontally opposed the idea of a continuing Khilafat; “The Turkish Khalifa’s sovereignty does not extend over us. We are residents of India and subjects of the British Government.” India was the land he was involved with and on one occasion in 1884, he said that the word Hindu could designate all those living in India, Muslims as well as Hindus.

When the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, gave Sir Syed a gold medal in 1886, services to “his countrymen” were cited, not services to the Muslim community. In the Scientific Society, there were many Hindu members as well. When, after 1861, three Indians, all non-Muslims, were included in the Viceroy’s Legislative Council, Sir Syed said that in January 9, 1864, “rejoiced” and expressed “thanks to the Almighty” that the three had “discharged their duties manfully and right well.” That the three – the Rulers of Patiala, Benaras and Sir Dinkar Rao – belonged to a class for which Sir Syed felt instinctive warmth does not cancel the picture of a man interested in India, and not just in Muslims.

The British India Association that was founded in Aligarh in 1866, no doubt inspired by the British Indian Association started in 1851 in Calcutta, was not only a Muslim but a joint Muslim-Hindu affair. Indians he says at the inauguration, should “honestly, openly and respectfully speak out their grievances” to their British rulers; and he refers to “the

89 G.F.Graham, op.cit., p.48.
90 Hafeez Malik, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, p. 237.
91 Ibid., p. 245.
93 Ibid., p. 56-57.
great God above” who is “equally the God of the Jew, the Hindu, the Christian and the Mohammedan.”

In 1867, though still a functionary of the British Raj, he led a walk out at an Agra Ceremony because Indian guests were assigned inferior places. Hindus and Muslims left with him. In the words of Tara Chand, “…Sir Syed Ahmed Khans’ liberalism opened wide the gates for social accommodation and coordination between Muslims, Hindus and Christians.”

In social, cultural and political matters, Sir Syed’s point of view was equally independent. The most controversial among the problems were those related to slavery, polygamy, jihad, interest, and treatment of captives of war. His exposition made out that the Islamic view of these problems was both rational and in conformity with natural laws. He pointed out that Islam had laid down such liberal conditions for the treatment of slaves as to alter the very character of slavery. Men captured in war were not to be executed, nor women made slaves. Polygamy was allowed but only in rare circumstances. Holy war was not justified against non-Muslims except when Islam was attacked. Not every type of interests, but only the usury of pre-Islamic times was prohibited. He was also against the purdah system.

Besides, the above efforts made by Sir Syed for the Anglo-Muslim rapprochement the counter–vailing factors had also begun working in his favour. To begin with, the Muslims did not show the same zeal and fervour for Western education and culture as the Hindu community laid by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Raj Narain Bose, Harish Mukherjee, Keshab

94 Ibid., p.59-62.
95 Tara Chand, op.cit., Vol 2, p. 357.
96 Ibid., p.356.
97 The Seventh Annual Report of the College of Haji Mohammed Molsin of Hoogly, shows that out of 752 students on the rolls of the College Department on the 1st May 1843, only 18 were Muslims and 542 were Hindus. [Second Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1852-53 (No, 627.1), p. 527.] The Memorandum submitted by the National Muhammadan Association on the 6th February 1882 to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal contended that the impoverishment and decadence of the Muslim community were not “the results of the Mohammedan apathy, or of an unwillingness on their part to study the language of an alien race. At any rate, whatever may have been the causes in former times, there is not the smallest
Chandra Sen, Ranade, and others. When the educated Hindus began to criticize the government and several movements among them began to take shape; the suspicion in the minds of the British was aroused. The British government shifted its policy of patronizing Hindus by giving due importance to the Muslims to improve their socio-economic and educational standards.

This attitude was not new for the British. Even at an early stage the British sought to take advantage of the situation by means of the policy of "Divide and Rule". "I cannot", wrote Lord Ellenborough in 1843, "close my eyes to the believe that that race (Muslims) is fundamentally hostile to us, and our true policy is to reconcile the Hindus." 98

For a long time, the British did everything in their power to curb the Muslim intelligentsia and undermine their influence in every sphere of life. Indian history was re-written in a manner which placed one-sided emphasis on the oppressive character of the Muslim rule from which the British had liberated the non-Muslim population of the land. An attitude of hostility toward Muslims was thus encouraged among the other communities.

Simultaneously administrative and political policy was so shaped as to undermine the Muslim's economic and cultural position. The substitution of English for Persian in education institution and government businesses contributed still further to the discomfiture of the Muslims in almost every field. The British till the end of the nineteenth century looked upon the Muslim as their chief enemies or the potential source of danger and gave patronage to the non-Muslims especially Hindus.

98 Quoted by R.C.Majumdar, An Advanced History Of India, Part-III, p.896.

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doubt that within the last quarter of a century strong desire has grown up among the Muslims for the study of the English language and literature. Their backwardness is due to their general poverty." [Selections from the Records of Government, No. ccv, Home Department, serial no-2, p. 240.]

These facts are corroborated by Tara Chand who writes, "In 1845, out of a total of 17, 350 scholars receiving instruction in institutions maintained at public expense in British India, no less than 13,699 were Hindus; Muslims numbered 1,636, Christians 236, and 1,789 scholars belonged to other faiths." (This figure does not include those reading in Madras High School where 133 Hindus, 2 Muslims and 21 Christian students were on the rolls that year.) [Tara Chand, op.cit., p.209.]
This policy was successfully followed for some time till the growth of the national consciousness among the Hindu gradually alienated the British, and made them favourably disposed to the Muslims. In the words of Nehru, "This change was essentially due to the policy of balance and counter-poise which the British government has consistently pursued. Still in this process, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan played an important part."  

The knowledge gained from the Western ideologies regarding the merits of democracy, spirit of nationalism and the importance of self-government opened the eyes of the Indian intellectuals to the negative aspects of colonial rule in India. With broadening of their outlook, there was an awakening of political consciousness, enriching the newly born spirit of nationalism. Slowly the educated class realized the policies of the British affecting the life of the Indians, from the peasants to the educated middle class, in an adverse manner. So the British decided to transfer their patronage from the Hindu middle-class, who were taking English education to their counterparts among the Muslims.

This change in the attitude of the British rulers synchronised with the rise of Sir Syed. He gave a new turn to their policy and activities and was destined to play a conspicuous role in the political resurgence of the Indian Muslims.

In 1872, Sir Syed in his famous reply to Hunter's *Indian Mussalmans* wrote, "There are numerous classes of Hindus who are never in the habit of discussing the doctrines of their faith. They, therefore, had no objection to be educated in that, which was even opposed to it. Mohammedans are, however, bound to know all the tenets of their faith, to discuss them, and to regulate their lives accordingly.

"It is on this account that they have hitherto refrained from availing themselves of an education taught through the medium of a foreign tongue and which they therefore, deem

99 Ibid.
100 J.L. Nehru, *Discovery of India*, p. 344.
opposed to their belief. All history proves that the introduction of new theories, opposed to any established belief, was invariably regarded with suspicion and contempt. It is not to be expected that Mohammedans who are made of much sterner material than Hindus will adapt themselves so readily to the various phases of this changing age.”

The statistics of the number of Muslim candidates who appeared at the Entrance, First Arts and B. A. Examination in 1870-71 at the Calcutta University reveals the following interesting figures with regard to each of these provinces:

**ENTRANCE EXAMINATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>No. of Candidates</th>
<th>No. Passed</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**NORTH WEST PROVINCES**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**OUDH**

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**PUNJAB**

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<td>Christians</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<th>Christians</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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<table>
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<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>OUDH</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<td>5</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>PUNJAB</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>CENTRAL PROVINCES</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Nil</td>
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These figures show that not a single Muslim youth passed the B. A. Examination in any of these provinces and only two appeared at the examination. Only 12 Muslims passed the Fine Arts and 64 the Entrance Examination.

This “disparity in educational qualifications between the Hindus and the Muslims was one of the fundamental causes of difference in ideas and outlook on the political problem between the two communities. If the Hindus demanded the introduction of the representative system in the local bodies and provincial legislature, the Muslims opposed it mainly because they feared that the numerical superiority of the Hindus would put them at a disadvantage. The Hindus thought that the introduction of the simultaneous competitive examination in England and India for the recruitment to the Indian Civil Service would enable larger number of Indians to compete, but the Muslims feared that such a measure would give little chance to men of their community to come out successful. They could tolerate the domination of Europeans but not of the Hindus over whom they had ruled for several centuries.”

To reduce this disparity between the two communities Sir Syed came with his educational programme. The measures adopted by Sir Syed for the achievement of these aims consisted of opening schools, founding Scientific Societies, and organizing Mohammedan Education Conferences. The schemes of education, which he proposed for the community, contemplated three grades of institutions, viz.

(i) The highest grade which was represented by the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College for the pupils above the age of 18; it was composed of three sections – English, Urdu, and Arabic and Persian.

(ii) The middle grade, consisting of secondary schools for children between the ages of 11 and 18 where the medium of instruction was the Urdu language, and

(iii) The primary grade of the elementary school (makhtabs) for those between 6 and 11 years of age.

In all these three types, religious education was to be compulsory. Under these schemes, the Aligarh Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental School was opened in 1874. It was raised to the status of a college in 1878 and became a University in 1920. Sir Syed’s ambition was to make the college a model of which the Oxford and Cambridge Universities were the proto-type. And as these universities had become the main sources for the supply of officers and administrators for the Government of the United Kingdom, he wanted the MAO College to play the same role in India.103 Higher education became for him the panacea for all the social and political ills of India. In the words of Shan Mohammed, “Sir Syed talked less of politics and more of education as he was convinced that politics would be an inevitable result of higher education.”104

In formulating the scheme of education, he held the vision of Plato. “As the success of the College depended on the goodwill and cooperation of the community on the one hand, and the favour and support of the government on the other, he felt that the only way

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103 Tarachand, op.cit., Vol-2, p. 360.
104 Shan Mohammed, op.cit., p. viii.
to secure both was by eschewing everything that offended the community or the government.\textsuperscript{105}

For his educational mission, Sir Syed was assisted by the British. Sir William Muir, the Governor, released 75 acres of land in Aligarh, formerly used by the British military. Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy gave Rs.10,000/- from his personal funds. Lord Lytton, his successor, laid the foundation stone in January 1877. And a Briton observing the ceremony bestowed the unofficial title, “Leader of Advanced Islam in India”, on Sir Syed. Help also came from the Indian rich, including the Muslim ruler of Rampur, the Sikh ruler of Patiala and the Hindu ruler of Vizianagaram. The Nizam of Hyderabad made the grant of \textit{jagir} worth Rs. 90,000/- yielding a monthly income of Rs. 200/-.

Broadly speaking, the political ideas of Parliamentary Democracy of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan can be divided into two phases – pre-Congress era and the Congress era. Before the days of the Indian National Congress, Sir Syed had been a strong advocate of the association of all Indians in the Councils of the government through their chosen representatives and also in the Administration of Districts and Local Boards through their elected members. He had opposed the idea of special favours for the Muslims and had instead advised them to rely upon self-help.

He wrote, “It has been universally allowed that the admittance of the people to a share in the government under which they live, is necessary to its efficiency, prosperity and permanence. It is from the people of the country alone that the rulers can ascertain the propriety or impropriety of a measure previous to the state of things reaching the point when no remedy can prove efficacious.

“It is, therefore, evident that the laws and regulations of the government should be framed so as to suit that habits and customs of the people rather than the latter modified to suit the former. I admit that it was impossible as well as undesirable for the people of this country to be represented in parliament, but certainly there did not exist any objection to

\textsuperscript{105} Tara Chand, op.cit., p. 361.
their admission into the Legislative Council of India, and undoubtedly their non-admission formed the main originating cause of the rebellion to which all other causes were secondary... The voices of the people can alone check errors in the bud, and warn us of the dangers before they burst upon and destroy us.  

He added, "There is no reason, however, why the natives of the country should be excluded from the legislative council, and here it is that you come upon the one great root of all this evil. Here is the origin of all the troubles that have befallen Hindustan... I do not wish to enter here into the question as to how the ignorant and uneducated nations of Hindustan could be allowed to share in the deliberations of the legislative councils; or as to how they should be selected to form an assembly like the English Parliament. They are knotty points. All I wish to prove here is that such a step is not only advisable, but absolutely necessary, and that the disturbances are due to the neglect of such a measure."  

In 1866, when he founded the British India Association, he exhorted Indians to try and secure proper representation of their interests in the Legislative Council. He told them that it would be folly and cowardice on their part if out of fear of the government or the district officials they refrained from demanding their proper representation.

He was in favour of co-operation with the Hindus for securing better conditions. In fact, he went so far as to advise the Muslims that "if the giving up of cow-slaughter will establish amity and friendliness among Hindus and Mussalmans, then please do not sacrifice cows which is a thousand times better."  

According to R.C.Majumdar, "Sir Syed Ahmed was an ardent patriot and nationalist. He supported the Ilbert Bill and the agitation in favour of holding simultaneous examination for the Civil Service. He held that the Hindus and Muslims in India formed one nation..."  

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108 Akhri Mazamin, op.cit., p. 70.
He further expressed the view that "no nation can acquire honour and respect so long as it does not attain equality with the ruling race and does not participate in the government of its own country".  

In the words of Nehru, "He was in no way anti-Hindu or communally separatist. Repeatedly he emphasized that religious differences should have no political or national significance. "Do you not inhabit the same land? "Remember that the words Hindus and Mohammedan are only meant for religious distinction – otherwise all persons, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, even the Christian who reside in this country are all in this particular respect, belonging to one and the same nation".

The most important phenomenon in New India was the growth of a national consciousness and the ideal of liberty, nationality and democracy on the one hand and the socio-religious movements of the 18th and 19th centuries and the realization of the contemporary economic exploitation on the other. The need of aiming for a national movement, which would transcend territories, races, caste and creeds of India and bring them together on a political basis ultimately culminated into the birth of Indian National Congress.

The Indian National Congress was founded by the efforts of a retired Civil Servant Allan Octavian Hume, who had the experience of 33 years’ service and had acquired a very intimate knowledge both of the government and the people. His democratic instincts convinced him that "to dig an overt and constitutional channel for the discharge of the increasing ferment" was the only remedy. Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy at the time, encouraged Hume; there were signs of popular discontent and he thought Congress might serve as a 'safety-value'.

109 R. C. Majumdar, *An Advance History Of India*, p.897.
110 J.L. Nehru, *Discovery Of India*, p.345.
111 Quoted by M. A. Buch, *Rise and Growth of Indian Liberalism*, Baroda, 1938, p.166.
The Tribune wrote: “The National Congress is the mighty lever which is destined to raise fallen and degraded India to the high level of the self-governing countries of Europe.”

The first session met at Bombay in December 1885 under the Presidentship of Womesh Chandra Banerjee. It was attended by 72 Indian and European delegates.

Among the Congress’s aims was “the eradication of all possible racial, religious and provincial prejudices”. Its demands voiced at its first session for “the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members” to the Legislative Councils and for facilitating a wider entry of Indians into the ICS went against Sir Syed’s grain.

“Himself possessing the Raj’s ear, he (Sir Syed), was not keen on the masses obtaining it. “Adult franchise”, “open competition for jobs”, and “one-man-one-vote”, phrases that were beginning to be heard, made him uneasy. They made sense in an educated and homogenous nation but India was neither. Indians possessed neither the maturity nor the unity that democracy demanded. In India it would lead to rule by the lower classes and to Hindu rule.”

In part, it was a class-reaction. “Men of good family”, he said, “would never like to trust their lives and prosperity to people of low rank with whose humble origins they are well-acquainted.” But it was also a qaum reaction. “Now, suppose that all the English were to leave India. Then who would be rulers of India? Is it possible that two quams – the Muslim and Hindu – could sit on the same throne? Most certainly no. It is necessary that one of them will conquer the other and thrust it down.”

There came a change in the attitude of Sir Syed when he found some Hindus in Benaras campaigning for the substitution of Hindi for Urdu in the courts. This shocked Sir Syed because to him Urdu “is a memento of the Muslim rule in this country”, and the heart of any common Hindu-Muslim culture. He was bitterly hurt, and his old friend,

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112 The Tribune, January 4, 1888.
114 Rajmohan Gandhi, op.cit., p.36.
115 Quoted in Symonds, The Making of Pakistan, p.35.
Shakespeare, also posted in Benaras, found that, “for the first time” Sir Syed was speaking about “the welfare of Muslims alone.”

Before this, he was keen about the welfare of his countrymen in general. Sir Syed predicted thus, “Now, I am convinced that both these communities will not join wholeheartedly in anything...On account of the so-called “educated” people, hostility between the two communities will increase immensely in the future. He who lives will see.”116

There was a fresh jolt when a few Hindu members of the Scientific Society, like Raja Jai Kishan wanted Hindi to replace Urdu in the Society’s publications. Sir Syed saw it as “a proposal which will make Hindu-Muslim unity impossible.”117 Fruit as well as cement of friendship, Urdu, was now being seen as a Muslim rather than an Indian possession. Ignoring its largely indigenous vocabulary, some Hindus stressed Urdu’s alien associations. Muslims who loaded their Urdu with ornate Arabic and Persian expressions assisted them. Sir Syed who was already grieved and upset by these signs of a rejection of Urdu and the aggressive demands of the Indian National Congress worked as fuel on fire. This was the situation when Theodore Beck cunningly exploited the situation and tried his best to dissuade Muslims from joining the National Congress.

In the words of R. C. Majumdar, “There can scarcely be any doubt that the change in Sir Syed Ahmed’s attitude was, partly due to the British policy of ‘Divide and Rule’, now applied against the Hindus. This policy found a great exponent in Mr. Beck, the Principal of MAO College at Aligarh from 1883 to 1899. Throughout this long period Mr. Beck worked with unremitting zeal and industry in order to wean Sir Syed from the nationalist movement and to induce the Muslims to keep aloof from the Hindus, and place themselves under the protecting wings of the British Government.”118

116 Hali, Hayat-e-Javeed, Quoted in S.M. Ikram, Modern Muslim India, p.32.
117 Letter of 29 April 1870, ibid.
Simultaneously, the growing influence of the Hindu fundamentalist leaders, widened the gap between the two major communities of the sub-continent and prepared the ground for a communal cold war between the elite Hindu and Muslim political leaders. The secular forces struggled in vain, to curb the rise of communalism in Indian politics. The triangular struggle between imperialism, communalism and nationalism proved to have painful and disastrous consequences.

Theodore Beck, who regarded himself as a disciple of Sir Syed in political matters\textsuperscript{119}, compared the Indian Muslim thought to the old Tory School of England. He wrote that the Indian Muslims were not so enthusiastic about the democratic institutions as was generally believed.\textsuperscript{120} In the words of Tara Chand, “From 1885, however, Syed Ahmed Khan's liberalism started definitely to recede.”\textsuperscript{121}

Sir Syed pleaded for the inclusion of Indians in the Legislative Council in 1858 indeed, but he did not suggest that the people should elect the members. He did not consider Representative System suitable for this country because of the lack of homogeneity amongst the different communities inhabiting India and the fear of the minority community of being dominated by the majority was truly reflected by the vehement attack of Sir Syed, on the proposal for introducing a Representative System in India.

In January 1883, while speaking on the Central Provinces’ Local Self Government Bill in the Supreme Legislative Council, he said: “I am convinced that no part of India has yet arrived at the stage when the system of representation can be adopted, in its fullest scope, even in regard to local affairs. The principle of self-government by means of representative institutions is perhaps the greatest and noblest lesson, which the beneficence of England will teach India. But in borrowing from England the system of

\textsuperscript{119} Theodore Beck, \textit{Essays On Indian Topic}, p.iii.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p.42. In a paper read at a meeting of the East India Association in 1888, C.W. Whish said that the Muslims were "Conservative by nature and national bias." (\textit{The Journal of the East India Association}, 1889, p.33) In a discussion that followed the reading of the paper Raj Narayan disputed this statement and pointed out that even a few years ago Syed Ahmed held liberal political opinions. (ibid., p.66.)
\textsuperscript{121} Tarachand, op.cit., Vol.2, p.364.
representative institution, it is of the greatest importance to remember those socio-political matters in which India is distinguishable from England.”

He argued that the introduction of representative institution in India would be attended with considerable difficulty and socio-political risks. He explained his ideas thus: “The system of representation by election means the representation of the views and interests of the majority of the population, and, in countries where the population is composed of one race and one creed, it is no doubt the best system that can be adopted. But, my Lord, in a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourish, where there is no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education in its modern sense has not made an equal or proportionate progress among all section of the population, I am convinced that the introduction of the principle of election pure and simple, for representation of various interests on the local board and district councils would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations. So long as differences of race and creed and the distinction of caste form an important element in the socio-political life of India, and influence her inhabitants in matter connected with the administration and welfare of the country at large, the system of election, pure and simple, cannot be safely adopted.

“The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community and the ignorant public would hold government responsible for introducing measures which might make the difference of race and creed more violent than ever.”

His democratic ideas can be seen when he wrote on the relation between the people and the government. He made a fervent plea for the maintenance of friendly relation between the governors and the governed.

In an article, contributed to the Aligarh Institute Gazette in November, 1886, he wrote, “In India two section of the people are ready to hand and two sections, whose interests and prejudices constantly clash, and which differ in a far more radical way than any two parties in England, and there seems no reason to doubt that the two parties would

122 Proceedings of Supreme Legislative Council, 1883, p. 16ff. Also see G. F. Graham, op.cit., p.34.
correspond with these fundamental divisions. We find a tendency towards this already in Municipalities. And if at any future time there should be a Parliament with Hindus and Mohammedans sitting on the two sides of the House, it is probable that the animosity, which would ensue, would far exceed anything that can be witnessed in England. For the safeguard of the English System is—that the party in power is always in dread of being left in a minority by the defection of some of the adherents; but this safeguard would not exist in India because a Hindu would not turn Mohammedan and vice-versa. Moreover, the Mohammedan would be in a permanent minority and their case would resemble that of the unfortunate Irish members in the English Parliament, who have always been outvoted by the Englishmen. The majority in a Parliament has absolute control and a study of the habits of assemblies’ points to the conclusion that bodies of men are less generous in regarding opponent than individual rulers are. If this were so, and one side were perpetually outvoted, there is only too much fear that the minority would ultimately take the matter into their own hands and see if they could gain by force what they were unable to obtain by constitutional means.”  

A. O. Hume criticized Sir Syed’s views in an article published in the ‘Hindu’. He cited examples of the Bombay Municipal Council in which Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Parsis sat and transacted business utterly oblivious of religious differences. He added, “Let me say, to begin with that the majority of Hindus and Mohammedans are practically of the same nationality. And not of different ones. Their religious creed is different and their prejudices may at times clash, but as for their essential interests, they are absolutely identical for all are equally interested in an efficient protection to life and property, moderate taxation, a just land revenue system, and generally a wise administration of the country in all respects. Nothing is more absolutely false than the public interests of Hindus and Mohammedans are in any way divergent.”  

The Ilbert Bill controversy produced a rich crop of political speeches and pamphlets. A number of learned men and brilliant orators both Indian and European spoke either in

123 The Aligarh Institute Gazette, 23 November 1886.
124 The Hindu, January 12, 1887.
favour of or in opposition to the Bill. Sir Syed discussed the question from the standpoint of political philosophy. Some Europeans and Eurasians contended that Indian Legislature and had no jurisdiction to make laws for them. To this Sir Syed replied: "We derive our power from the great Parliament of England; and so long as we do not exceed those powers, it seems to me erroneous to doubt the Legislative authority of this Council in all matters connected with India."\(^\text{125}\)

In supporting the right of Indian Magistrates to try to Europeans he said, "The exercise of civil jurisdiction by Native Judges in cases to which Europeans are parties has not given rise to any injustice, not even to complaint on the score of national differences. All Native Magistrates already exercise jurisdiction in criminal matters in cases in which Europeans are complainants and seek redress form the courts as injured parties. I have never yet heard that European British subjects have any objection to resort to Native Magistrates for redress. Indeed they do so without any hesitation."\(^\text{126}\)

"What the people obey in countries blessed with a civilized government is, not the authority of the individuals, but the mandates of the Law. So long as the Law is just, impartial and humane, so long as the proper administration of that law can be secured, the nationality of those who carry out the law should be of no consequence even to sentimentalist. What requires respect, submission and obedience is the authority of the Law, and not that of individuals, and even those who regard the people of India as not entitled to equality with themselves might if they only consider the question calmly, feel that Native Magistrates are only the Servants of the State, charged with the duty of carrying out the behest of the law. It is the duty of the state to provide for the proper administration of the law. To secure this object, the state has to choose the best available agency and it seems a somewhat untenable and unjust proposition for any subjects of the State to insist that, in the choice of officers, government shall confine itself to any particular race or section of the community."\(^\text{127}\) Here Sir Syed has talked about the

\(^{125}\) Quoted by B. B. Majumdar, op.cit, p. 239.
\(^{126}\) Ibid.
\(^{127}\) Proceeding of the Supreme Legislative Council, 9 March, 1883, p. 185.
equality of all in the eyes of law and vigorously fought to end racial discrimination in Indian courts.

Sir Syed was not in favour of handing over the control and management of educational institutions to the government. He knew that the government was not amenable to control of the people of the country. If the management of education were placed under the authority of the government, Indians would have little chance of building up the life and moulding of the character of the citizens according to their own like and liking. In his evidence before the Education Commission he said: “I am personally of opinion that the duty of government in relation to Public Instruction, is not to provide education to people but to aid the people in procuring it for themselves.” He substantiated his point by stating that Indians “cannot obtain suitable education unless the people take the entire management of their education into their own hands, and that it is not possible for government to adopt a system of education which may answer all purposes and satisfy the special wants of the various sections of the population. It would, therefore, be more beneficial to the country, if Government should leave the entire management of their education to the people and withdraw its own interference.”

While paying tribute to the Aligarh College, Theodore Beck who was appointed Principal of the College in 1886 said, “The Students bred in this college trained in the Cricket and Football fields, would be ready to render to the Government and to our beloved sovereign such assistance as would prove that the Mohammedans of India are ready to face the bullets and bayonets in defence of the empire.” He requested Sir Syed to hand over the virtual editorship of the Aligarh Institute Gazette to him, and used its columns to denounce the National movements and its Bengali sponsors. Officially, Sir Syed remained the auditor of the Gazette. He was, therefore, held responsible for the articles and became a target of the attacks of the Bengali Press. Tara Chand further says, “Beck played upon the fears of Syed Ahmed Khan and employed all his persuasive powers to

129 Aligarh Institute Gazette, July-December, 1893.
130 Tarachand, op.cit., p.373-74.
instil in the youth of the college, feelings of hatred towards the Hindus and loyalty for the British government."

In 1886, Sir Syed organised the Mohammedan Educational Conference which in fact, was a political body. Its aim was to organize the Muslims all over the country by establishing its branches in all the cities and towns to report on the educational needs of the community and to investigate their agricultural, commercial and industrial requirements. The conference succeeded in evoking a feeling of solidarity in the community and the consciousness of a Muslim society.

In 1887, he launched a violent campaign against the Congress. He warned all Indians, the Muslims in particular, of the dangers involved in its activities. But his opposition was based on political consideration only and did not affect its social relation with the Hindus community. In order to understand his attitude, it is necessary to point out that Sir Syed was an aristocrat steeped in the tradition of the medieval feudal class; that on political matters his mind was medieval. He was, therefore, wholly engrossed in schemes for the rehabilitation and amelioration of the upper class Muslims and paid no attention to the well being of the masses. This needs further explanation of the historical facts. Syed Ahmed did not believe that representative institutions could be established under foreign rule. It had never been so established in all history. The principles on which an empire was based were different from principles that sustained a Representative System of Government. The method of British imperial rule in India could not be democratic; it was bound to be the same as the method that was pursued by "all kings and Asiatic Empires." The Muslims once established an empire in India; they knew the method of running an empire whereas the English educated Bengalis who were vocal in the Congress were utterly ignorant of them because they had no such experience. Therefore it is wrong to say that his vision was against the democracy.

131 Ibid., p.373.
132 Ibid., p.374.
134 Ibid., p.43.
135 Ibid., p.47.
Telling to an English friend while in England he said, “My religion is Islam and I believe in it firmly. ...Islam does not approve of limited monarchy or hereditary kingship.”

Once he said, the Indians had not come up to the Western standards; he hoped to rebuke or shame them into change. “Hindustanis” had the potential, he wrote from England, “to become, if not the superior at least the equal of England.” In a letter to Badruddin Tyabji on 7th May 1888, he clarified his conception of Indian National Congress, “Our chief objection to the National Congress is one more fundamental than any objection to any specific proposal. We believe that its methods-holding public meetings, showing the ills of the people and circulating the pamphlets like the one printed at the end of the Congress report, etc.-will sooner or later cause a mutiny among the inhabitants of these provinces and the Punjab. If this be joined with a Frontier War, it will be a disastrous affair.”

And he added: “In the first place, the whole Mohammedan community of upper India is distressingly poor. If they are led to believe, as they are already inclined to do, that this is due to the British Government, they will be ready to rise. They feel passionately the loss of their glory. The old imperial buildings of Delhi and Agra are a living sign of their degradation. The older people of Delhi remember the last Emperor of the House of Timour. Add to this their religious fanaticism, which is not dead, the cry of jehad is heard now and again. And add, more over, that the people are really excitable and love a fight, as we saw at Delhi and Etawah and we have the gravest reasons that if this kind of agitation spreads, the whole Upper India may one day be aflame. Personally, I should dislike this for two causes; first, because I have no desire to have my throat cut, and secondly, because the cause I have given my life to, would be hopelessly ruined, and the Mohammedan would fall perhaps never to rise again. We, therefore, do not like agitation of any sort.”

136 Quoted by Hafeez Malik, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, p.295.
138 Vide Badruddin Tyabji’s Correspondence National Archives of India, New Delhi.
When Badruddin Tyabji was named as Congress President, he thought that the Congress was clearly bidding for Muslim support, and Sir Syed felt he ought to give the *quam* a stir. He attacked Congress's demands. Elections would be inappropriate because he believed that if the demands of the Congress for more representative institutions were conceded in full, then the Congress, by means of elections and through the legislative councils, would peacefully gain control over the entire internal administration of the country, and that this would mean that by peaceful means alone as great a change in the importance of the different political groups and communities would be affected as was generally secured by means of a civil war.

Sir Syed again countered Tyabji by saying, “I do not understand what the words ‘National Congress’ mean...you regard the doings of the misnamed National Congress as beneficial to India, but I am sorry to say that I regard them as injurious not only to my community but also to India at large.” Sir Syed’s determined opposition and the support he was receiving made a mark on Tyabji, who wrote to Hume of his regret that, “The Mohammedan have been split into two factions.” He added, “I have come to the distinct conclusion after the most careful consideration of which I am capable that it is time to cease holding the Congress every year.”

Syed Ahmed sought to collect the opponents of the Congress in the United India Patriotic Association which was founded in 1888, had both Hindu and Muslim members - a platform for airing their views. Within a month 50 local groups joined the apex body; accounts of their meetings, at which Congress was invariably denounced, were “Published with great pride” by the Aligarh Institute Gazette. In his speeches in 1887-88 Sir Syed strongly advised his co-religionists not to take any part in the Congress Movement. The Hindu Patriot wrote in 1888 that had the Muslims “been more thoroughly liberalized by Western culture than they are at present they would have to a

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man, sympathized with the objects of the Congress." The Hindu took to western education long before the Muslims. It was natural, therefore, that the Congress which aspired after Western political institutions and pursued Western political methods would find its most ardent supporters among the Western educated Hindus. But though the comparative delay in the spread of Western education among the Muslims was one of the reasons, it was not the sole reason why some Muslims did not support the Congress movement. Sir Syed, who strongly advised his community to welcome English education, was yet opposed to the Congress and argued that if ultimately a Parliamentary form of Government was set up in India, as many Congressmen suggested, then the interests of the Muslims would suffer.

To safeguard the interests of the Muslims and other minorities, the 1889 Congress adopted a 'Minority Clause' to the effect that "Whenever the Parsis, Christians, Mohammedans or Hindus are in a Minority, the total of Parsis, Christians, Mohammedans or Hindus, as the case may be, elected to the Provincial Legislature, shall not, so far as may be possible, bear a less proportion to the total number of members elected there too, than the total number of Parsis, Christians, Hindus or Mohammedans as the case maybe, in such electoral jurisdiction, bears to its total population." Though this proposal was a departure from the practice of representation in Britain, where persons were elected to Parliament by the majority vote of a particular constituency irrespective of the fact whether the person elected belonged to any particular community, it was defended on the ground that because India, unlike Britain was not a

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143 The Hindu Patriot, October 8, 1888.
144 In 1860-62, there was only one Muslim to 10 Hindus in the English schools in India. (W. W. Hunter, The Indian Mussalmans, p. 178.) Though Muslims constituted one fourth of the population of India, in 1870-71 only one-seventh of the students in the schools were Muslims. (F. W. Thomas, The History and the Prospects of British Education in India, Cambridge, 1891, p. 94) Even in 1882, only 11% of scholars receiving higher education were Muslims.
145 Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress, p. 14. Munshi Hidayat Rasul sought an amendment suggesting that the number of Hindus and Muslims in the Councils should be equal. Wahid Ali who believed that the Muslims were the "Superior race", supported the undemocratic thesis that there should be three times as many Muslim as Hindus in the Councils. Other Muslim delegates exhorted the delegates to regard themselves as Indians first and Hindus and Muslims afterwards. Ultimately the 'Minority Clause' was adopted.
politically homogenous country, one could not expect that political methods that were successful in Britain would work equally well in the different conditions of India.\textsuperscript{146}

Sir Syed criticized Congressmen not merely for formulating reform proposal on the assumption that India was a nation\textsuperscript{147}, but also for trying to impart a democratic spirit which he maintained was totally unsuited to Indian conditions. Congressmen argued that admission to the Higher Services or Legislative Councils should not be restricted to men of high birth but also be allowed to able man of even "insignificant origin". They said that if competitive examinations for the recruitment of the civil servants were held simultaneously in England and in India then one of its beneficial results would be that poor persons, who could not afford the expenses of going to England, would have a chance of appearing for the Civil Service Examination. Open Exams for the ICS would be unfair, said Sir Syed, because "one \textit{quam} (the Bengali) is far ahead of the others in Western education." "Can the Mohammedans compete with the Bengalis in the Higher English education?"\textsuperscript{148}

Like Sir Syed, the Rajah of Bhinga, a representative of the landed aristocracy and the author of a work entitled "Democracy Not Suited to India," entertained conservative views on social matters. The Rajah believed that it was undesirable "to give men of inferior origin and caste, power over men immensely their superior in birth and social position", and he emphatically maintained that the territorial aristocrats wanted to pressure the social distinctions that existed between man and man in India from time immemorial.\textsuperscript{149}

The territorial aristocrats had no love for democracy in general or the Congress movement in particular. They were conservative and orthodox; they clung to the old established usages. But the light of orthodoxy had become dim in the minds of many Congress agitators who, the Rajah lamented, were "seeking to introduce into India the

\textsuperscript{146} Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Speech of Eardly Northon, p.31.
\textsuperscript{147} Syed Ahmed Khan, ibid., p.59.
\textsuperscript{149} Rajah of Bhinga, \textit{Democracy Not Suited To India}, p.26.
strange and complicated institution of the far-West.” In spite of the fact that the territorial aristocrats wanted to preserve the old-established and harmful caste inequalities, the Rajahs claimed that the Landed Aristocrats represented the real interests of the people and advised the British rulers to govern India through the landed aristocrats.

In 1893, a number of communal disturbances occurred in many places including Bombay followed by Hindu revivalist movement that encouraged the playing of festival music on the streets which was played before mosque. During the Revivalist movement, leaders like Dayananda Saraswati and Tilak, were eager to celebrate Shivaji and Ganapati festivals and launched an attack on cow-slaughter by the Mohammedans and the Christians by opening a society named ‘Gaurakshini Sabha’ established by Dayananda Saraswati in 1882, further increased the conflicts between Hindus and Muslims.

Beck took advantage of the situations to found the Mohammedan Defence Association with the blessing of Sir Syed of which he and Syed Mahmud became the Secretaries. Moreover, Beck meddled in politics in a way that Principals rarely do. He opposed Congress publicly and strongly; he said, “the English and the Mohammedans should become united in a firm alliance”, and he assailed what he called “the anti-cow-killing movement.” Beck has become, in S. M. Ikram’s phrase, the “Life and Soul” of this Mohammedan Defence Association. In his inaugural address, Beck pointed out the defects of the Patriotic Association, the desirability of establishing a purely Muslim body, and the need of a political organization to fight the Congress, which according to him, aimed at the transfer of power into the hands of Hindu groups and the Hindu revivalists, who threatened the very existence of the Muslims. He explained “With the Press pouring out a stream of political articles, our young educated Mohammedans will be

150 Ibid.
151 Ibid p.102.
152 Shan Mohammad, op. cit., p.160.
153 S. M. Ikram, Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan, p.49.
154 Tarachand, op. cit., p.376.
drawn into the current to support or oppose the measures proposed. I think it would be a mistake to leave them without guidance.\textsuperscript{155}

Addressing the London Muslim Association in 1895, Beck impressed upon them the impossibility of Hindu-Muslim unity and, therefore, of a democratic system of government, because such a system would make the Muslims slaves of the Hindu majority for all time.\textsuperscript{156} Beck said, “Anglo-Mohammedan friendship was possible but friendship between Muslims and the followers of Hindu and Sikh religions was impossible.”\textsuperscript{157} Shan Mohammed contrasts a Beck statement of 1895 on Hindu-Muslim unity with a remark that Sir Syed made in 1897, a year before his death. Syed Ahmed said, “Without any doubt I want friendship, unity and love between the two communities.”\textsuperscript{158}

Not only this in Sir Syed’s last year, Beck ran the College giving rise to the saying “\textit{Quam Khuda Ki, College Sir Syed ka, Hukm Beck Bahadur Ka}.” (“The quam is God’s, the College Sir Syed’s, the rule Beck’s”).\textsuperscript{159} In the words of Tara Chand, “His activities during the last 15 years of his life under the influence of Beck were so unexpected that even his close friends were surprised. Some of them ceased to cooperate with him. Samiullah Khan and his friends resigned from the trusteeship of the College, partly on account of Beck’s increasing influence over the College affairs, Shibli Nomani retired from the College, because he completely differed from the political views of Sir Syed. Other trustees were so worried that they intended to appeal to the community through a series of articles in the Press to intervene and save the institute, but his death made them desist.”\textsuperscript{160} Fortunately, his successors were able to save and strengthen the College. They were helped by the fresh memory of a man who had restored the morale of a crushed quam from the quagmire of degradation and decadence, diffidence and despondency by

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{The Aligarh Institute Gazette}, 30 January 1894.
\textsuperscript{156} Tara Chand, op.cit., p.376.
\textsuperscript{157} Quoted by Shan Mohammed, \textit{Sir Syed Ahmed Khan}, p.162.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid, p.172fn.
\textsuperscript{159} ibid p.163.
\textsuperscript{160} Tara Chand, op.cit., p.377.
using the effective instrument of modern scientific and humanistic knowledge. No doubt, the MAO College helped in developing a scientific attitude of the mind and enabled the Indians, particularly the Muslims, to come out of their medieval grooves. In the words of poet Iqbal; “Syed Ahmed was the first Indian Muslim to react to the Modern age.”

It released forces to transform an indolent and sullen society into a dynamic one. To Hafeez Malik; Sir Syed’s “greatest achievement” is that he liberalized and modernized Islam. He claims that while traditionally Islam applied equally to secular and religious affair, Sir Syed giving a modern orientation, laid down that “religion deals only with spiritual matters.”

It produced a whole generation of eminent men who played a significant role in India’s freedom struggle and in other spheres of national life like Rightists, Leftists, Radicals Nationalists, Communists, Congressites, Leaguers and Educationists etc. Thus, it (Aligarh College) produced Maulana Mohammed Ali, Maulana Shauket Ali, Raja Mahendra Pratap, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, Zafar Ali Khan, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Ayub Khan, Liaquat Ali Khan, Syed Husain, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Sheikh Abdullah, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, G. M. Sadiq, Mir Kasim, Abdul Majid Khwaja, Md. Habib, Khaliq Ahmed Nizami, Tassaduk Khan Sherwani and many more. In this way, his farsightedness was finally realized.

There are a number of writers, thinkers and politicians who after deep analyzing the situation of the emergence of Sir Syed and his impact of the Indian society as a whole were left with an indelible impression and imagination. In the words of J.L Nehru, “The beginnings of the National movement frightened him, for he thought that any opposition to the British authorities would deprive him of their help in his educational programme. That help appeared to him to be essential, and so he tried to tone down anti-British sentiments among the Muslims and to turn them away from the National Congress which was taking shape then... He was not opposed to the National Congress because he

considered it pro-dominantly a Hindu organization, he opposed it because he thought it was politically too aggressive (though it was mild enough in those days), and he wanted British help and cooperation.”163 W. C. Smith agrees and says that Sir Syed “opposed the Congress and advised Muslims to stay out of it because it was too disrespectful, not because it was too Hindus.”164 “However, there is no reference in Syed Ahmed’s numerous criticisms of Congress to its supposed Hinduness. He was against Congress because he did not want to disturb the Raj–quam equilibrium for which he had carefully and successfully laboured.”165

Questioning the analysis, the historian Tara Chand says “the doubtful credit for twisting Sir Syed’s original policy and directing it into communalist channels must be given to Principal Beck and his English colleagues.”166 Shibli, the influential poet who taught at MAO College, believed that, “Sir Syed was not a flatterer but whatever he did in politics was due to the British influence.”167 When Dr. Zakir Husain took over as the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University he visualized the role of Aligarh in independent India – thus, “It seems to me that this institution has a great role to play in the development of India’s national life...That work concerns the building up of a United nation in a democratic secular state and the role and status of its 40 million Muslim citizens within it, the welding together of diverse cultures into a harmonious whole and the promotion of its growth in such a manner that each distinct culture shines and lends beauty and strength to the entire whole. To build a sound healthy national life is, indeed, a grand undertaking. It is necessary that all our strength should be directed to that end. The way Aligarh participates in the various walks of national life will determine the place of Muslims in India’s national life.”

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in his convocation address at Aligarh observed on 20 February 1949: “The nineteenth century marked a period of renaissance for the Indian

163 J. L. Nehru, Discovery of India, p.345.
165 Rajmohan Gandhi, op.cit., p.38.
166 Quoted by Shan Mohammad, op.cit., p viii.
spirit and Aligarh was one of the centres of such renaissance.” According to Hamilton Gibb, the Institution founded by him was the “first modernist organization of Islam.” According to the scholar Mohammad Umar-al-din, “Sir Syed was first and last a religious man.” J.N Farquhar and Christian Troll, have detected a parallel between Syed Ahmed’s and Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s positions vis-a-vis the British Raj. Both saw God’s hand in much of the Bible, while disagreeing with the divinity of Christ and both favoured an India-British Raj understanding. Troll says that the parallel could be “mere coincidence” or “the effect of a common historical situation” or “perhaps a result” of an “influence” that Ram Mohan might have had on Sir Syed.169

THE DEOBAND MOVEMENT
The Aligarh School in spite of all its achievements was not the mouthpiece of the whole Muslim community. Rather, it faced vehement opposition from orthodox ulemas who belonged to the Deoband school of thought.

To begin with, the Deoband Movement was organised by the orthodox section among the Muslim ulema who were the standard bearers of traditional Islamic learning. It was a revivalist movement among the Muslims with objectives similar to the Arya Samaj; i.e. to propagate among the Muslims the pure teachings of the Quran and the Hadis, and to keep alive the spirit of jihad against the foreign rulers. The ulema under the leadership of Muhammed Qasim Wanotavi (1832-80) and Rashid Ahmed Gangoi (1828-1905) founded the school at Deoband in the Saharanpur district of the U. P in 1866. The object was to train religious leaders for the Muslim community. English education and Western culture was totally abandoned. The instruction imparted was in original Islamic religion and the aim was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community. In contrast to the Aligarh Movement which aimed at welfare of the Muslim community through Western education and support of the British government, the Deoband School did not prepare its students for government jobs or worldly careers but for preaching of Islamic faith. It was

168 Quoted in Christian Troll, op. cit., p. 9.
169 Troll, ibid., p.60.
for its religious instruction that the Deoband School attracted students not only from all parts of India but from the neighbouring Muslim countries also.

In politics, the Deoband School welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Some from this school also participated in the revolutionary anti-British activities. In 1888, the Deoband ulema issued a fatwa against Sir Syed’s organizations – ‘The United Patriotic Association’ and ‘The Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Association’. Some critics observe that the Deoband ulemas support to the Congress did not stem from any positive political philosophy or any opposition to British government but was mainly influenced by their determination to Sir Syed Ahmed’s activities. This can be proved wrong by the bustling activities of the ulemas during the Khilafat Movement, the Swadeshi Movement and numerous movements organised by the National Congress. These ulemas also stood by the National Congress during the partition of the country.

The new Deoband leader Mahmud-ul Hasan (1851-1920) sought to impart a political and intellectual content to the religious ideas of the school. He worked out a synthesis of Islamic principles and national aspirations. The Jamiat-e-Ulema gave a concrete shape to Hasan’s ideas of protection of the religious and political rights as of the Muslims in the overall context Indian unity and national objectives.

ANTI-PARTITION OF BENGAL AND MUSLIMS

National consciousness was spreading fast among the people of India and in its face of rising militancy against the foreign rule, the British government decided to divide Bengal on the pretext of administrative inconvenience. But the real motive was political – to draw a rift between the Hindus and the Muslims. “Bengal did not take this measure lying down. There was an unprecedented outburst of political and revolutionary enthusiasm” accounts Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.171

170 Jamiat-e-Ulema was another organization of Orthodox Ulemas formed during 1919 and worked hand-in-hand with the Deoband school and the National Congress.
The publication of this scheme was the signal for an outburst of public indignation. The people of Bengal of all ranks, from Nawabs, Maharajas, Rajas, big zamindars down to the common man, unanimously decided to carry on sustained and systematic opposition to the scheme of partition. The political Associations, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and newspapers of all shades of opinion, including the Englishman, joined the chorus of condemnation. Thousands of pamphlets denouncing partition were distributed all over Bengal. Protest meetings were reported from towns and hundreds of villages in every district.”\(^{172}\)

The government tried to convince the masses and the leaders, but all in vain. Lord Curzon himself undertook a tour of East Bengal “ostensibly with the object of ascertaining public opinion but really to overawe it.”\(^{173}\) He visited Chittagong, Dacca and Mymensingh, and addressed meetings, respectively on February 15, 18 and 20, 1904. In these meetings he tried convince to the masses of the benefits they would derive from it. In one such meetings, he admitted that one object of the Partition proposal was to create a Mohammedan Province where Islam could be predominant and its followers in ascendancy.\(^{174}\)

There is no evidence to prove that Curzon succeeded in winning over the Muslim masses “except perhaps Nawab Salimullah of Dacca and a section of Muslims.”\(^{175}\) By advancing a loan at a very low rate of interest and raising Nawab Salimullah’s hope of leading the new province, Lord Curzon won over Nawab. The hope that the interest of the Muslims will dominate in the new province with Dacca as his capital gradually made Nawab a great supporter of the Partition.\(^{176}\)

\(^{172}\) R.C. Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 1988, p.19.
\(^{173}\) P. Mukherjee (ed), All About Partition, p.186. Also in R.C. Majumdar, ibid.
\(^{174}\) B.L. Grover & S. Grover, Modern Indian History, S. Chand & Co., 12th edn., Delhi, p.293.
\(^{175}\) R.C. Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, p.19.
\(^{176}\) Ibid., p.27.
Bamfield Fuller, who was then Lieutenant Governor, openly said that the government looked upon the Muslim community as its favourite wife. The enlarged scheme for a new province complete with the paraphernalia of legislative council and the board of revenue satisfied some of the early objectors. The government in this way tried to oppose some of its opponents and felt that the opposing “howls” “will quickly become accustomed to the new conditions.”

Among those who supported the partition-scheme were not the Muslims alone from the higher class, but there were some Hindus as well. But it is a generally accepted norm to view “Muslims as the Raj Collaborators.” A number of eminent Muslim leaders continued to associate themselves with the movement despite the deflection of Nawab of Dacca, and “a resolution in favour of it was passed at a big meeting of the Muslims held on 23 September, 1905”. Among those participated mention must be made of Khwaja Atikulla, a partner of the Nawab Estate of Dacca and brother of Nawab Salimullah. He openly declared: “I may tell you ...that Mussalmans of East Bengal [who] are in favour of partition of Bengal...[are] a few leading Mussalmans who for their own purpose support the measure.”

On behalf of the Central Mohammedan Association Nawab Amir Hossain issued a statement questioning the justification of the Government plan of Bengal’s partition. Hundreds of Muslim leaders appealed for the collection of fund and put their signatures under the auspices of Anti-Partition Fund. Prayers against the partition were reported

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177 Maulana Azad, op. cit., p.5.
178 On 26 December 1903, 16 leading zamindars from both Hindu as well as Muslim. Dacca and Mymensingh attended the Belvedere Conference. They found safeguard for their vested interests and except for a few zamindars whose property were in both the districts became “very influential opponent of the present schemes.” Such zamindars included Sitanath Roy and his brothers. (Government of Bengal to Government of India (Home), No 2556J of 6 April 1904, paras 24-25.)
180 Denzil Ibbetson’s note of 8 February 1904-Home (Pub.) A, 155, February 1905, NAI.
181 Rajmohan Gandhi, Understanding the Muslim Mind, Penguin, New Delhi, 1987, p.221
184 Ibid. Also in Sumit Sarkar, Swadeshi Movement, p.170.

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from mosques in Mymensingh in January 1904\textsuperscript{185} and in Barisal and Serampore in August 1905.\textsuperscript{186} There was always a sizeable number of Muslims among the regular Swadeshi orators\textsuperscript{187} and a large number of Muslim masses assembled to listen to them.\textsuperscript{183}

These eloquent speakers of the “Muslim community delivered lectures... urging the people to participate in the Swadeshi Movement. Among the important persons who took part, the names of barrister Abdul Rasul, Kasim, Dedar Bux, Deen Mohammed Ghafur, Liaquat Hussain, Ismail Siraji, Abdul Halim-Ghaznavi, etc. are worth mentioning.”\textsuperscript{189} Barrister Abdul Rasul became the President of Barisal Conference\textsuperscript{190} and was subjected to tremendous physical and mental torture.\textsuperscript{191} Moulvi Ismail Siraji and Chand Mian were imprisoned for one year on the charge of seditious speeches against the British Raj.\textsuperscript{192}

People of both the communities tied rakhis on each other hands. Instances of Bengali clerks and Muslim mill-hands exchanging rakhis\textsuperscript{193} are well known. But it is not widely known that Chaudhari Ghulam Ali Moula of Barisal was a chief signatory of the rakhi-appeals of 1906 and 1907\textsuperscript{194} besides Ghaznavi and Abdul Rasul.\textsuperscript{195} On 23rd September 1905, Hindu and Muslim students of Calcutta marched hand in hand to a 10,000 strong rally at Rajar Bazar.\textsuperscript{196} Brahmin Pandits and Muslims embraced each other at Manikgunj\textsuperscript{197} and at Khulna\textsuperscript{198}; and the slogans of \textit{Bande Mataram} and \textit{Allah-o-Akbar} mingled with each other and sounded as one.\textsuperscript{199} Reference must be made of Mofiuuddin

\textsuperscript{185} The Bengalee, 10 January 1904.
\textsuperscript{186} The Bengalee, 2 and 8 August 1905.
\textsuperscript{188} Sumit Sarkar, \textit{Swadeshi Movement}, p.44.
\textsuperscript{189} Provat Gangopadhay, \textit{Rashtriya Andolaner Khasra}, p.44. Quoted by S. Ray, op. cit., p.31.
\textsuperscript{191} S-Ray, op.cit., p.31.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{193} Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17 October 1905.
\textsuperscript{194} The Bengalee, 9 October 1906. \textit{Bande Mataram}, 8 October 1907.
\textsuperscript{196} Amrita Bazar Patrika, 25 September 1905.
\textsuperscript{197} The Bengalee, 11 October 1905.
\textsuperscript{198} Bande Mataram, 26 May 1907.
\textsuperscript{199} The Bengalee, 17 June 1906.
Bayati, a Muslim folk-poet whose composition stirred the anti-partition emotion of the Bengalis.200

Thousands of Bengali zamindars, talukdars, jotedars, traders and others participated in the anti-partition movement.201 Khwaja Atikulla, the brother of Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, moved the anti-partition resolution at the Calcutta Congress.202 Apparently he had been won over for the Swadeshi cause after a meeting with Motilal Ghosh on 21 September 1906.

Apart from this, Muslims also openly participated in the formation of Swadeshi organization Byomkesh Mustafi, one of the chief organizers of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, worked out a detailed blueprint for the constitution of a Swadeshi Samaj.203 He was also instrumental in chalking out the programme for a Pali Samaj, which was later reproduced by Hemendra Prasad Ghosh in the History of the Congress.204 Liakat Hussein in his famous pamphlet ‘Musalman duniya ke waste mustad aur kafir mat ho’ [Muslims don’t go astray and don’t turn infidels for the sake of the world.] appealed to the masses to use Swadeshi goods.205 The appeal to the effect of the same was also published by Munshi Azizuddin Ahmed Aka Garib Shayar, in his pamphlet Krishak Bandhu.206

Swadeshi stimulated the development of indigenous industries in which the participation of Muslims cannot be ignored. In July 1905, Muslim merchants and zamindars of Chittagong started the Bengal Steam Navigation Company with a capital of Rs. 1 lakhs and Munshi Mohammed Kalamian was its Managing Director.207 In Giridih, Eureka Porcelian Works was set up by M.N. Dutta and Justice Sharfuddin. The latter had five

200 Sarat Kumar Roy, Mahatma Aswini Kumar, Calcutta, 1926, p.130.
201 Mussalaman, 8 February 1907.
202 The Bengalee, 29 December 1906.
204 Hemendra Prasad Ghosh, Congress, Calcutta, 1921. Ibid.
205 Home (poll.) A, 42, February 1908, NAI.
206 Sarkar, The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, p.90.
207 The Bengalee, 11 March 1906.
Muslims and three Hindu directors. The Swadeshi project launched with great fanfare Banga Lakshmi Cotton Mills. Leading zamindars and businessmen were its directors, Nawab Abdus Sobhan Chaudhari of Bogra was one of its original directors. The Serampore Luxmi Tulsi Cotton Mills was purchased by the Swadeshi Samaj for Rs.715,000; and its directors included Nawab of Bogra, Abdus Sobhan Choudhari, Abdul Rasul and A.H.Ghaznavi. These three prominent landlords were also instrumental in starting the Bengal Hosiery Company in 1908 with a capital of Rs. 2 lakhs. In the same year, Cooperative Navigation Limited Company was started by leading landlords like Manindra Nandi, Surjakanta Acharya and Brojendra Kishore Raychaudhari and were helped by Abdul Rasul and Aswini Dutta.

These indigenous Swadeshi industries survived and flourished so long as the programme of boycott was wholeheartedly followed. Although the wholesale boycott of English goods was not possible, yet a “graduated boycott” succeeded in many places. The Bengal nationalists tried to persuade the people to give up the use of foreign articles. The Statesman gives a detailed account of the impact of boycott in certain Mufassil districts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Value of goods purchased in September 1904 (in Rs.)</th>
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209 The Bengalee 6 March 1906.
210 The Bengalee, 20 January and 6 March 1906.
211 The Bengalee, 6 February 1908.
212 Dawn and Dawn Society’s Magazine, October 1908.
213 Bande Mataram, 26 April 1907. Also in Sarkar, The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, p.137.
214 The Statesman, 14 September 1905.
The Swadeshi agitators also paid attention towards the National Education. Inspite of the propaganda made by Nawab Salimullah, this programme worked well with the Muslims. The Uthari School in Mymensingh district had considerable Muslim pupils. The National school in Ramara in Faridpur District met in a Muslim house. The Malda Jatiya Siksha Samiti, which was established in June 1907, had a Muslim Vice President – Moulvi Mohammed Nur Bux. In Bakurganj district, about 15 *pathshalas* had mushroomed up with estimated student strength of about 650, of whom at least 50 were Muslims.215 Swadesh Bandhah Samiti, which was associated with national education, granted aid for such purposes. Apart from this, philanthropic effort in this regard was also made by a Mohammedan Association among the jute mill workers at Kankinara (near Calcutta), founded in 1895 and led by Kazi Zahiruddin Ahmed and Mohammed Zulfaquar Hyder.

Along line the passive resistance, the revolutionaries of Bengal had also become active. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad through the contacts of Shri Shyam Sunder Chakravarty joined one of the revolutionary groups. The revolutionaries were surprised by Azad’s wish to join them.216 “At first they did not fully trust me and tried to keep me outside their inner councils. In course of time they realized their mistake and I gained their confidence,” recalls Maulana Azad.217 Finding “their activities were confined to Bengal and Bihar”, Azad suggested and persuaded the revolutionaries to “extend our activities to other parts of India.”218

During this period Maulana Azad went on a tour outside India in Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey and established links with the active revolutionaries. He “for many years after…return to India”219 maintained correspondence with them. After meeting these

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216 Rajmohan Gandhi, op.cit., p.221.
217 Maulana Azad, op.cit., p.5.
218 Ibid, p.5-6.
revolutionaries, he became "more convinced than ever that Indian Muslims must cooperate in the work of political liberation of the country. Steps must be taken to ensure that they (the Muslims) were not exploited by the British Government." So Maulana Azad decided "to create a new movement among Indian Muslims...and take up political work with great earnestness." "Contrary to what is stated in certain type of historiography in India and Pakistan Hindu-Muslim cooperation was not something that the Maulana (Azad) adopted out of expediency or after his eventual meeting with Gandhi."

Mujibur Rahman was associated with the Calcutta Anushilan at one stage. He was also editing the newspaper Mussalman, which was owned by Rasul and A.H.Ghaznavi and had Abul Kasim as its editor. A distinguished writer, he repeatedly reiterated the need for unity and exhorted his co-religionists to openly participate in the Swadeshi Movement. Liakat Hussain, an elderly Muslim from Patna, "a lion amongst men" broke with the Moderates candidly only to join the Extremists. He underwent three years rigorous imprisonment for writing a seditious pamphlet against the Raj. He headed thousands of anti-partition annotations from presiding over a meeting to composing folklores to investing in Swadeshi enterprises to opening philanthropic societies to organizing workers strike – and yet remained ignominious, an unsung hero in the annals of the history of the freedom movement in India.

Muslims joined the revolutionary groups in thousands. The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam prosecuted hundreds of them. Here mention should be made of Abul Hussain, Abdul Ghafur, Din Muhammed, Maulana Ismail Husain Siraji, Hidayat Bux, Moniruzzaman – these six Swadeshi Muslims shared the honour of being in the proposed

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220 Ibid.
221 Ibid, p.8.
223 Mujibur Rahman was known as Bangabandhu. Subrata Roy Choudhury, The Genesis of Bangladesh, Asia, Bombay, 1972, p.41.
225 Sandhya, 28 September 1907. Also in Sarkar, ibid, p.433.

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list of those prosecuted with Bipin Chandra Pal for sedition.\textsuperscript{226} Apart from these prominent names, there were thousands of unnamed Muslim masses who participated and made the Swadeshi programmes successful and forced the Government of India to annul the partition in 1911.\textsuperscript{227} But the aroused public opinion against the Imperial Government frightened the Government of India to shift its capital to a more peaceful venue – the dethroned City of Mughals – Delhi, next year in 1912.

**WITHDRAWAL OF THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT**

The anti-partition movement slowly lost it cynosure and penchant. The Muslims had joined the swadeshi and boycott programmes because it felt otherwise the Hindus would steal a much over the Muslim. “If the Mussalmans give up swadeshi in a spirit of antagonism to the Hindus or for fear of incurring the displeasure of the English, all the arts and industries of India will be monopolised by the Hindus, and the Mussalman community, which is sufficiently poor even now, will become poorer still.”\textsuperscript{228} Many had joined the Congress movement because they felt that by participating in the Congress the Muslim would be able to block the passage of resolutions detrimental to their interests; and also to focus attention on issues like the treatment of Muslims in South Africa.\textsuperscript{229}

The nationalist minded Muslims had worked mainly as individuals and the one or two attempts they made to give a stable organization form to their activities were not particularly impressive. Liakat Husain proposed Anjuman-i-Islamia which \textit{The Bengalee} welcomed on 4 April 1906 was still born. The Bengal Mohammedan Association was set up in Calcutta on 3 November 1906 with the purpose of rallying “educated Musalman scattered over the province” behind a programme which emphasized “that the true interest of the Mohammedans lies in the growth of friendly relations between the different sections of the Indian community.”\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{226} Home (Public) A, 11, June 1907, NAI.
\textsuperscript{227} Home (Poll.) A, 216-218, November, 1915, NAI.
\textsuperscript{228} The Sultan, 3 January 1908.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid, 21 December 1906.
\textsuperscript{230} Home (Public) A, January 1907, n. 262-63, NAI.
A year later the association’s joint secretary Majibur Rahman admitted that a peace appeal before Bakr-id had been virtually the sole contribution so far of the organization to public life, and the annual meeting dispersed after electing office bearers and delegates to the Congress and passing vaguely-worded resolutions on communal amity and on “steps” (left undefined) to stop “dramas and plays containing things offensive to the Mussalmans.”231 The Indian Mussalman Association set up on 31 December 1906 at a meeting in Rasul’s house was probably even more of a paper organization, though it office bearers included a number of public men including Nawab Syed Mohammed of Madras as President, Syed Hyder Reza of Delhi as one of the Secretaries, Abdul Rasul being the other, and as Vice-President, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.232

This organizational weakness was of course no more than an index to the limited appeal of Swadeshi ideas on the Muslim of Bengal. A contemporary diarist noted that “Educated Mohammedans, who are almost all in Government Service, hope for the continuance of the partition, for it has become the declared policy of the East Bengal Government to prefer Mohammedans to Hindus in Government service…”233 Separatist ideas and ambitions filtered down through the local Anjumans dominated by orthodox mullahs, and merged with the strong currents of anti-Hindu revivalism already at work in Bengali Muslim rural society. As Fraser told Minto, “Ignorant and uneducated Mohammedans follow their leader more readily than Hindus”, provided these leaders “cooperate with the Imams and leaders in the mosques”.234 The Simla Deputation of 1 October 1906, and the subsequent achievement of the separate electorates further fanned communal tendencies. S. Sarkar believes “If the Mussalman after 1908 for a time drifted away from nationalism, that was because of the lure of extra council seats…”235

On the council reform issue national newspapers like The Mussalman at one time sharply
differed from the opinions of the Hindu nationalist. Mujibur Rahman however, personally denounced the Muslim craving for government jobs. The Bengali bhadralok too on his part worked with a sense of alienation flowing from education through a foreign medium, as well as by the fact that the line of demarcation between the bhadralok landholder and the peasant commoners tended in some districts to merge with that separating Hindus from Muslims.

The average Bengali swadeshi agitator or extremist entered politics with a stock of inherited assumptions and attitudes - all the most dangerous for being very largely unconscious - concerning the uneducated common folk and in particular the Muslim among them. The bhadralok sought sustenance more and more in images of ancient Hindu glory and medieval Hindu resistance to Muslim rule, in stories of Rajput, Sikh and Maratha heroism and the real or imaginary exploits of Paratapaditya, Sitaram or the Sanyasi raiders of Bengal. It has been argued that in much of the patriotic literature, the Muslims were serving merely as convenient whipping boys. The sentiments of Muslim contemporaries were not seriously noticed, as the English educated among them were just a handful while the vast majority was ‘ignorant’ peasants. Patriotism tended to be identified with Hindu revivalism; ‘Hindu’ and ‘national’ came to be used as almost synonymous terms.

In 1909, an official survey of the Indian press remarked that “ever since partition of Bengal the influential Hindu paper have tried to win over the Mohammedan to their side” and endeavoured “to weld the different nationalities in India, especially the Hindus and the Mohammedans into one nation.”

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236 The Mussalman, 14 September 1909.
237 The Bengalee, 14 November 1906.
238 Sumit Sarkar, op.cit, p.515.
240 Annual Report on Indian Papers in the Bengal Presidency, Vol IV (1909), pp. 151, 158, WBSA.
Communal harmony was promoted through joint functions during Id and “National Dinners”\(^{241}\). In sharp contrast to much of nineteenth century literature, Muslim rule was now often described to have been far better than the English\(^{242}\) and the 1857 revolt was hailed as “the first war of independence by the Hindus and Mussalman of India.”\(^{243}\)

Yet, side by side with all this went on the evocation - on a totally unprecedented scale - of traditional Hinduism with its taboos and rites and philosophy, as morale-booster for the activists and as the primary communications medium the primary communications medium between the intelligentsia and the masses. As early as February 1904, the Home Secretary of the Government of India noted, “religions festivals are being made the occasions for collecting signatures.”\(^{244}\) The prayer meetings were held at the Faridpur Kalibari\(^{245}\) and at Mymensingh.\(^{246}\) The Muslim response was special prayers reported from the ‘new mosques’ in Barisal\(^{247}\) and by Shias in the Serampore subdivision.\(^{248}\)

This emphasis on religion had its drawbacks. Mystical effusions replaced rational planning. The projection through periodic festivals of a total image of the motherland, with its distinctive culture, tradition and heroes started in Bengal. The observing of the Shivaji Utsavs with intensifications of Hindu tone and introduction of the image of Bhawani aroused a lot of criticism. Similarly Bankim Chandra Chattopadhayay regarded as a father figure, was hailed as a Bengali hero. The Brahmos whose Anti-Circular Society boycotted such functions opposed these attempts. The feeling of the nationalist minded Muslims could be delineated from the pages of *The Soltan* and *The Mussalman*. *The Soltan* on 8 June 1906 sullenly expressed, “In order to give high praise to Shivaji one

\(^{241}\) Amrit Bazaar Patrika, 30 November 1905.

\(^{242}\) Yugantar, 10 June 1906.

\(^{243}\) Ibid, 16 December 1906.

\(^{244}\) Home (Public) A, February 1905, n. 155, Note by H.H. Risley, 7 February 1904, NAI.

\(^{245}\) The Bengalee, 1 August 1905.

\(^{246}\) Ibid, 22 August 1905.

\(^{247}\) Ibid, 2 August 1905.

\(^{248}\) Ibid, 8 August 1905.
cannot but censure Mussalman rule." The Mussalman attacked the "anti-Muslim bigotry" of Bankimchandra on 14 December 1906, and criticized on 26 April 1907 the nationalist plan of holding a Bankim anniversary - this time it made an explicit reference to the Anandmath passages with their abuse of 'Yavanas'. The latter issue also contained a sharp attack on Shivaji festivals.

The fretful Muslim opinions were tried to be reconciled with the suggestion of similar festivals in honour of Mir Kasim and Akbar. To promote Hindu-Muslim unity, Aswinicoomar Banerji proposed for a revival and political use of the cult of Satya-Pir. A few interesting efforts were made to evolve a truly non-sectarian and secular imaginary cults for the promotion of the unity among communities. But such steps could hardly ameliorate the communal feelings.

Furthermore, the future designs for such unity rather evoked antipathy and distrust. Bipinchandra Pal went on to develop his conception of "the future progress of India" as dependent "upon the advance of these particular communities alone their own particular lines. The Hindus shall help the realization of the present national ideal, neither by ceasing to be Hindu nor by ignoring his peculiar course of development, but by developing the higher features of his own culture and civilization. So the Mohammedan shall best contribute to the common progress of the nation by developing his own specials excellences."252

Pal in fact visualized a 'federal India', one in which the units were to be not language-based nationalities, but the religious communities, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and sometimes the aboriginal tribes, each of which "would preserve its distinctive features

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249 The Soltan, 8 June 1906.
250 The Bengalee, 14 October 1906.
251 Indian Mirror, 22 September 1905. Hindoo Patriot, 3 October 1905.
and by cultivating them contribute to the common national life of India."^{253} He used this
theory to justify the ultra-Hindu character of the 1906 festival, and explicitly rejected in
this context the alternative ideal of a purely secular nationalism - on the ground that an
irreligious national life would ultimately lead to immorality and atheism in personal life
also.\(^{254}\)

If the ‘federal’ India of the future were to have the religious communities as its
constituents, a basic disagreement between them would open the door for partition of the
country on communal lines. Thus, Pals ‘composite patriotism’ was only one short step
from the two-nation theory.\(^{255}\)

Rabindranath Tagore in 1905 seems to have had a similar conception of national unity.
He wanted his Swadeshi Samaj to be headed jointly by a Hindu and a Muslim.\(^{256}\)
However, he radically modified his views after the riots of 1906-7. A contemporary
pamphlet thought that all faiths contain elements of truths, but insisted that the Hindus
and the Muslim should stick to their respective beliefs - for the alternative might be loss
of faith, which ruined the Roman Empire.\(^{257}\) Such theories could provide a platform on
which traditionalist Hindus and Muslims could come together for a while without
impairing their orthodoxy – as happened more or less during the era of Khilafat and the
non-cooperation movements. But it hampered the development and modernization of
secular appeals.

Moreover the nationalist - minded Muslims were perturbed by the numerous instances of
Hindus assumptions of superiority, all the more irritating for being largely unconscious,
which still vitiated so much of Bengal’s social life. Mujibur Rahman drew up a

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\(^{253}\) Bangadarshan, August-September 1906.
\(^{254}\) Ibid.
\(^{255}\) Sarkar, op.cit., p. 424.
\(^{256}\) Ibid, p.423.
\(^{257}\) Ashwinicoomar Chattopadhyaya, Kajer Bai Ba Bastals Unnattir Prakritta Patha Chinta (Bengali), (Reflections on the True Way to
Material Progress), Calcutta, September 1907, p.55,65.
formidable catalogue of such grievances still reiterating the need for unity and denouncing those “educated Mohammedans in India who consider themselves as foreigners.”

Hindus ostentatiously throw away the water in their hookkas when they meet a Muslim; the sacrifice of cows horrifies them and their zamindar often deal harshly with Muslim peasants observing Bakr-id – yet aerated water and sugar prepared by Muslims are accepted without the least objection, and no one objects to the daily slaughter of “thousands of the bovine animals…by professional butchers in almost all the town in the country.” Hindus do not always accept even the educated Muslim as their social equals and their literature is full of abuse of the Yavanas which they claim means no more than a non-Hindu.

Mujibur Rahman replies unanswerably that the word ‘native’ is also in strict etymology quite objectionable. All these things, he concludes, are no doubt “small matters” but “It is the agglomeration of small matter, that constitutes a gigantic thing.” Essays like these help to explain why so many Muslim politicians - from Syed Ahmed to Jinnah - after starting as good nationalist have ended as apologists and advocates of communalism.

Nevertheless, the anti-partition agitation was extinguishing with the Surat split and the arrests of the leaders. Only the revolutionaries had kept the torch of anti-British agitation alight and they struck at the government mercenaries occasionally.

ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE

While the anti-partition swadeshi movement was the still going on, Lord Curzon left India and was replaced by the Unionist Lord Minto, who along with the Radical Lord Morley inaugurated a new period in British Indian History known as “Edwardian
India characterising it by two watch words: “Freedom rather than discipline, autonomy rather than efficiency.” Morley, who had discussed the situation in India with Gokhale several times, announced on 20 July 1906, that reforms were contemplated. As it was clear that these would tend towards an enlargement of the elected element in the legislative councils, the Muslims realised that they should do something to safeguard their position. The Secretary of MAO College, Mohsin-ul-Mulk wrote to Archbold, the College Principal expressing their wish to plead their cause with the Viceroy Lord Minto. On 1st October 1906, Lord Minto received a deputation of thirty-five prominent Muslims, headed by Aga Khan at Simla. They urged the institution of separate electorates to ensure a fair representation of the Muslim minority and Lord Minto gave them a reassuring answer.

In these circumstances, the Muslim leaders felt that a political organisation was needed. For the time being, the Viceroy and the Secretary of State had only, more or less vague plans, the definite moulding of which might call for Muslim pressure. At any rate reforms would increase the importance of elections and so an organisation was needed to manage them. But apart from these considerations of current interest, Hindu revivalism had made the Muslims look for organisation in order to safeguard what they felt to be

263 They even wanted something more than that; the number of Muslim representative should not only take into account their numbers but also their political and military importance. (Coupland, ibid, p.34.) This argument about their importance could be used by the Hindus, or any other community, equally well if we replace “military” by “economic” or “cultural”, and so on. Another argument they put forward was better the system of mixed electorates left the Muslims under-represented in the Senate of the Councils (as is conceded by Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims: A Political History 1838-1947*, Bombay, 1964, p.109.), and in the Senates of the Indian universities (S.R. Wasti, op cit., p.76). And above all, they wanted to be represented by true Muslims and not by “a Hindu with a beard.” (Woodruff, *The Men Who Ruled India*, Vol.I, London, 1963, p. 209.)
264 Which was certainly exercised, as Aga Khan testifies: “For Syed Ameer Ali and myself, 1907 was a period of what I can best describe as guerrilla warfare, whose aim was to keep Morley up the mark. We won in the end, but it was hard going” (Aga Khan, *Memoirs of Aga Khan: World Enough and Time*, Cassell, 1954, p.104.)

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their rights. But it is wrong to think that no idea for political development preceded this. As Sir Syed laid its foundation through the Mohammedan Educational Conference in 1886 this organisation became the political mouthpiece of the Muslims.265 But it was Ameer Ali who tried to give Indian Muslims a communal political organization in his Central National Mohammedan Association founded in 1877266, and this lead was followed by Mohsin-ul-Mulk with his Urdu Defense Organization of 1900267, and by Viqar-ul-Mulk with his Mohammedan Political Organization of 1903.268

In the spring of 1906, Fazli Husain founded in Lahore a Muslim League.269 On 30 December 1906, the group of men who had initiated the Simla deputation assembled at the Dacca Session of the Mohammedan Educational Conference and founded the All India Muslim League, with its headquarters at Aligarh.270 Its first secretaries were Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Viqar-ul-Mulk; and from March 1908, Aga Khan was its permanent President.271 (However, he resigned from his Presidentship in 1913 owing to the growth of radicalism among its members, but continued to serve it.)

OBJECTIVES OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

The objectives behind the formation of the Muslim League were to create a sense of loyalty among the Muslims towards the British Government, to safeguard the political and other rights of the Muslim to represent the aspirations and sentiments of the Muslims before the Crown and to maintain friendly relation with other communities while protecting the Muslim interest. In its first session at Amritsar, the Muslim League demanded an increase in the number of Muslim representation in the legislature, nomination of a Muslim to the Privy Council along with a Hindu and adequate representation to the Muslim in government services.

265 A.H.Alberuni, Makers of Pakistan and Modern Muslim India, Lahore, 1950, p.87-90
267 Ibid, p.88
268 Wasti, op.cit., p.59-60
269 Azim Husain, Fazl-i-Husain: A Political Biography, Bombay, 1946, p.95-96. Fazli Husain was not a communalist, but opposed the opinion of Hindu Revivalists that Indian nationalism required “a revival of the Aryan religion and Nagri character.” (Ibid, p.65)
270 Sarkar, The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, p.443.
271 Wasti, op.cit., p.77-83.
The Muslim League was characterised by the choice of an upper class Muslim, on excellent terms with the British. The proposed reforms, finally, became the Indian Councils Act of 1909. The plans obviously, took a long time to mature because it is believed that Lord Morley was not particularly interested in announcing the clause of separate electorates, while Lord Minto was intended to. Gokhale, who welcomed the reforms as late as 1908\(^{272}\) denounced the Act especially the regulations attached to it by the Government of India.\(^{273}\)

It is contended that the Simla deputation, the foundation of the Muslim League and granting of separate electorates are inter-related and were actually a part and parcel of the British policy of those years and intended to intensify the communal tension.\(^{274}\) In his presidential address at the Cocanada Congress Session, Mohammed Ali testifying the above contention declared: “There is no harm in saying now that the Deputation (Simla) was a ‘command’ performance. Although, Mohammed Ali gives testimony, he does not give details of: by whom were they commanded and only substantiates his accusation with the words “from whatever source the inspiration may have come…” As a national leader and as one of the first members of the Muslim League, he may have possessed some facts and wanted to make them public.\(^{275}\) There are hardly any clear and unambiguous documents to prove the deliberate British planning. There is no denying that the desire for privileges and the wish to organise politically was already burning the Muslims for some years.\(^{276}\)

Whether it was deliberate British scheming at the root of the Simla deputation and the subsequent birth of the Muslim League or not, but its consequences ran the communal passion of the Hindus, who assembled themselves politically and founded Hindu Sabha

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\(^{273}\) W.R. Smith, *Nationalism and Reform in India*, New Haven, 1938, p.29.


\(^{275}\) S.A. Husain, *The Destiny of Indian Muslims*, London, 1965, p.55. S.A. Husain have written about a "secret message" received by the deputation.

\(^{276}\) Ibid, p.51.
in 1909 which grew into Hindu Mahasabha by 1915. Nevertheless, even the Congress criticised the birth of a new party.\(^{277}\)

In 1909, Congress passed four resolutions disapproving of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion.\(^{278}\) These separate electorates were to remain a stumbling block in Hindu-Muslim relations throughout the next decades – the period from 1917 until about 1925 excepted. But this exigency was not only between Hindu-Muslim but also between Muslims themselves. The pro-British attitude displayed by the League did not find favour with the Deoband ulemas\(^{279}\), and Jinnah, who was a member of Congress and within a decade was going to earn the epithet of being the ‘Ambassador of Unity’\(^{280}\) was considered by Aga Khan as “our doughtiest opponent in 1906.”\(^{281}\)

Some historians, who seemingly, try to over-look the pro-British aspects of the early National Congress, regard the establishment of the Muslim League in the wake of Simla deputation and its pro-British fascination with contempt. British benevolence towards the Muslim League is treated as something of an original sin from which the League could never free itself. Congress got in its first years certainly no less British, and even official British, patronage than the League. Upto about 1905 Congress certainly took a loyal stand. It wanted reforms but under the British aegis; it wanted increase in Indianisation of the services; but it was only in 1908 that it declared its aim to be obtaining “a colonial type of self-government”\(^{282}\) - a very moderate demand. It was not until 1920 that it changed this aim to “Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means”, and only in 1929 d:d it ask for “Complete Independence.”\(^{283}\)

\(^{277}\) Wasti, op.cit., p.78.
\(^{279}\) Faruqi, op.cit., p.105.
\(^{280}\) Sarojini Naidu gave him this honourable title in 1916.
\(^{281}\) Faruqi, op.cit., p.94.
\(^{282}\) The same was declared by the Muslim League in its Agra Session in 1913. The Congress could put forth such ideals after three decades which the League did within eight years of its birth.
\(^{283}\) P.Sitaramayya, opcit., p.53.
In its early stage, politics was restricted to the Upper class in the Congress. Valentine Chirol upbraided the Congress due to its lack of interest in the social problems. His reproach is a consequence of his view that Congress represented not the people, but only the western educated middle-class. Incidentally, even Gandhi’s first acquaintance with Congress at Calcutta in 1901, without any interest for the problems of the common people evoked the same apathy. Interestingly, even Jawaharlal Nehru registers with daunting spirit that the Congress in 1912 “was very much as English-knowing upper-class affair where morning coats and well-pressed trousers were greatly in evidence.”

It is preposterous to criticise the nascent League, which exhibited similar, penchant.

**AHRAR PARTY OF ALIGARH**

However, soon the younger Muslim intellectuals were disillusioned and dissatisfied with the slavish mentality of the communal leadership and drew towards modern and radical nationalist ideals. The younger Muslims formed a Militant Ahrar Party in 1910. These Muslims were keen on India’s political advancement and were desirous in the changed conditions of ending the aloofness of the Muslims from the general political life of the country. It was led by the young and radicals from Aligarh such as Mohammed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Hasan Imam, Zafar Ali Khan Mazharul Haq etc. They were moved by the nationalist poetry of Shibli and Hali, which had permeated their arteries and veins. This group of youths did not consider Sir Syed Ahmed Khan as a “Yes-man” of the British. Instead they considered him their fearless representative. Sir Syed Ahmed was their ideal. They did everything to bring power and prosperity to India. They opposed the British and befriended the Congress. Now, they also tried to bring the ulemas of Islam from the Deoband and Firangi Mahal school of thought closer to Aligarh Movement.

Maulana Mohammed Ali resigned from his services in Baroda and started the publication of his newspaper “Comrade” from Calcutta, which was hailed as ‘the new star in the firmament of Indian Journalism’; Zafar Ali Khan started his “Zamindar”, the Urdu daily

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287 Bipin Chandra, *India’s Struggle for Independence*, p.420.
from Lahore. During this time, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also started his newspaper in Urdu, *al-Hilal* on 12 July 1912. 288 "The Ahrars transformed nominal political issues into big storms so as to arouse the Muslims consciousness. Even when there was no political issue they would flare up petty issues as Kanpur Mosque incidence just to warm-up the anti-British atmosphere." 289 This group, for a time, dominated the politics of the Muslim League.

In 1910, its central office was shifted from Aligarh to Lucknow. In the same year, the President of the annual League session held at Nagpur, "emphasized the need for Hindu-Muslim unity and for making a beginning by frequent ‘exchange of notes and holding friendly discussions on all questions affecting the general well-being of the country’." 290 In fact, prominent Muslim leaders appeared on the Congress platform in December 1912 signifying the desire for Hindu-Muslim rapprochement.

Aga Khan resigned from the Presidentship of the League, when the Ahrars invited M.A. Jinnah to attend its session. 291 Aga Khan concluded that the League was shaping ‘not as a national organisation but as a political party’ and that it did not need a leader, but leaders. 292 Ameer Ali also resigned the headship of the London branch, but was later prevailed upon to come back. 293 In March 1913, the Muslim League also "modified its objective" and laid down "to be the attainment" of the system "of self-government." 294 A large number of prominent Congress leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Jinnah and Maulana

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288 In starting *al-Hilal*, Maulana Azad had in view the model of al-Minar of Egypt which was edited by Mohammed Rashid Ridha. *al-Hilal* was a scholarly venture to educate the Ulema who, in Maulana Azad’s opinion would be able to influence the Muslims and regenerate them. *al-Hilal* dealt with religious, social and literary topics generally but the political stance was always there to drive out the foreign rulers from India. For Maulana Azad, Islam was the answer to all the problems of humanity, so each issue of *al-Hilal* carried interpretation of some verses of the Quran.

289 K.M.Ashraf, op.cit.


291 S.A.Husain, op.cit., p.68.

292 The Times, 14 November 1913.

293 Abdul Hamid, op.cit., p.105.

Abul Kalam Azad attended the Muslim League Session held in Agra in 1913. This session was presided over by Sir Ibrahim Rahmatullah.

This was also Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan’s first participation in a political activity. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was very much impressed by Maulana Azad, Sir Rahmatullah and Sir Aga Khan’s speeches at that session. In his speech, Maulana Azad thundered thus: “It is certain that a day will come when...the bonds of slavery would have been slashed by the winds of freedom. At that time do you realise what would be written about the Muslims? It would be inscribed that there was an ill-fated community that served as a plaything in the hands of the covetous rulers, a pack of cards for the pleasure of the foreigners...It would be said that when the bungle was blown on the battlefield the Muslims went and hid themselves in the caves.” The Ahrars had motivated the Muslim to such a great extent that the public opinion had matured for Lucknow Pact - a bond of friendship with the National Congress and for an anti-British Khilafat agitation.