Chapter I

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With the decline of the Mughal Empire and the loss of political power to the British, the Hindus and Muslims started drifting away from each other. The Muslims grew apprehensive of Hindu domination and resented the tenacity with which the Hindus had advanced themselves in various spheres. The fears they were entertaining about themselves in relation to Hindus greatly influenced the role they were to play in future. In spite of a common history of a thousand years, the two communities could not present themselves as a single political entity. All efforts of the Indian National Congress to achieve this objective miserably failed and, although the Congress always retained some Muslims in its ranks and a few of them even occupied the highest positions in it, by and large they preferred to organize themselves separately in order to protect and advance their political rights and interests.

An overwhelmingly predominant view of Hindu-Muslim relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is that the Hindus were more advanced in comparison to Muslims; they had moved ahead of the latter by turning more enthusiastically to Western education and government employment. Many books written on the subject have laid stress on Muslim backwardness as being the main cause for the development of Muslim separatism in India.

See for example, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis (London, 1946), p. 163. He observes:

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Some recent historians, however, do not support the hypothesis of Muslim backwardness in all the provinces. On the contrary they argue that Muslims of North-Western provinces and Oudh (U.P.) were more advanced than the Hindus and constituted an administrative and cultural elite. Indeed, according to this view the Muslims of U.P. played a major role in the origin and development of Muslim separatism in India because they were a privileged minority and their leaders were determined to maintain their privileges. That province had been a centre of Muslim power since the end of twelfth century. A large proportion of the community lived in towns and they as well as those who lived in the countryside were mainly landlords. The British policy of keeping Persian and then Urdu as the language of administration and the recruitment of

...Communalism would not have been so effective a divisive force, nor could the upper class Muslims have been so effectively repressed, had the Muslims and Hindu section of the classes concerned been at the same economic level. But they were not. Economic development within the British imperialist system benefitted a group of Indians of whom a larger proportion were Hindus than Muslims.


subordinates from the traditional Muslim bureaucratic elites of Persian origin also benefitted the U.P. Muslims. Their language dominated in the courts and primary schools of the province. They were educationally ahead of Hindus. The Director of Public Instruction of Oudh pointed out in 1874-75 that there were more English schools in Muslim towns than in Hindu towns like Ayodhya. The Muslims were not backward in higher education also. The percentage of Muslims to the total population of U.P. was 14.1 but the percentage of Muslim students in colleges was 18.6 in 1896-97, 19.7 in 1901-2 and 20.8 in 1916-17. In government employment also, the Muslims continued to be ahead of Hindus till 1931. Despite increasing Hindu competition, Muslims in 1880's held more than 45 per cent of all the uncovenanted executive and judicial posts in the provinces. In fact they held much more than what was due to them as their share. As C.J. Lyall noted in 1882, "...The Muhammadans as a class belong to the middle and higher strata, [they] possess much more than the share of government employment would give them, and are comparatively a thriving and energetic element in society."

The fact is that the establishment of British rule in India affected the different classes of Muslims in different

4 Seal, n. 2, p. 306.
5 Basu, n. 2, p. 150.
6 Seal, n. 2, p. 305.
ways and the nature of response of the Muslims to the British rule also assumed different forms in different provinces. There were certain Muslims who gained by collaboration with the British. Peter Hardy, who repudiates the popular belief that Muslims as such suffered discriminatory treatment, has explained it by pointing out that after 1857 "there was a shift in landholding within the Muslim community itself, with those having a Mughal past losing to those with a British future." Such Muslim loyalists as Mahmud Ali Khan of Chhatari, Faiz Ahmad Khan, Abdul Shakur Khan, Inayat Allah Khan of Aligarh and Imdad Ali of Mathura district were typical of those for whom British rule was a blessing and who were prepared to follow Sir Syed in promoting Western education among Muslims. "As the Punjabi Muslims were loyal to the British" adds Hardy, "they gained in grants of land and since the Bengali Muslims had stood aloof from British education they continued to suffer exclusion from British employment."

In Bengal the position of the Muslims was exactly the opposite of U.P. Here they were backward - both economically and educationally. They were also hit by the British rule. The administrative reforms of Cornwallis reserved higher executive posts for Englishmen and they, therefore, were excluded from them. The Permanent Settlement had elevated the Hindu

7 Hardy, n. 2, p. 78.
collectors to the position of landlords and gave them the opportunity to amass wealth which otherwise would have been the share of Muslims. The Muslims were also hit by the dropping of Persian language as the official language in 1837.

It was Hunter, who publicized the conditions of Muslims in Bengal in 1871 and established the myth that they were backward everywhere. He argued that Muslims had kept aloof from English education because it was "opposed to the traditions, unsuited to the requirements and hateful to the religion." The Hunter Education Commission report of 1882 also observed that because of pride of race, a feeling of superiority and religious fears, the Muslims had kept aloof from English education. There is no doubt that the Muslims found it very difficult to tear themselves away from the past. Though they had ceased to be the governing class in India, yet they were so much obsessed with their past glory and privileged status that they considered themselves as composing the aristocratic class of the country. Sir Syed also pointed out to this tendency among Muslims when he wrote from England in 1869 that "...the fatal shroud of complacent self-esteem is wrapt around the Mohammedan community; they remember the old tales of their ancestors and think there are none like themselves. The fatal

shroud which is around them has blinded them to the beautiful flowered garden which lies before them." This complex among the Muslims deterred them from taking to English education in large number. But another factor responsible for the educational backwardness of Muslims was that even though the Upper classes among them showed some keenness to acquire English education, they did not have enough opportunities to do so. The first schools and colleges were opened in Calcutta where Hindus predominated. The Muslim districts of East and North Bengal were neglected by the government. Here 85 per cent of the the Muslims were agriculturists - it was not within their means to afford English education. And because they were cultivators, English education was neither useful nor necessary for them. In the provinces where they were engaged in trade and commerce as in Bombay or in the professions as in U.P., they showed keenness to go for English education. But in Bengal, the Muslims lagged behind the Hindus in higher and professional education.

Hunter's arguments, however, were used to characterize the condition of Muslims in all the provinces and were soon exploited by Muslim leaders to wring concessions from the government and later in the appeals made to their community to

keep aloof from the Congress. These were the arguments used, for instance, in the famous memorial of the National Muhammadan Association presented to Ripon in 1882. The memorial of the Association asked for preferential treatment being given to Muslims because "no measure of reforms adopted within the community would have any appreciable effects in arresting the progress of decay...." Among its demands were reservation of a proportion of jobs for the Muslims, less emphasis on university education as a qualification for office, no simultaneous examinations for the civil services and provision for the special educational requirements of the Muslim community.

Sir Syed also put forward the same argument when he urged the Muslims to concentrate on English education. His plea was that if they did not do so "they would not only remain a backward community but would sink lower and lower." His main concern was for the spread of English education among the Muslims with this end in view he was working for a reconciliation between the British Government and the Muslim upper middle class. After the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885, the efforts made by the leaders to induce the Muslims to join it infuriated Sir Syed: "To his co-religionists",


16 A counter-movement in favour of Congress was started by
he told very bluntly that if they joined the Congress "nothing but national disaster lay in store for them." According to him, the object of the promotion of the Congress was that "the Government of India should be English in name only, and that the internal rule of the country should be entirely in their own hands". What antagonized Sir Syed was not the Congress and its leaders but the demands made by the Congress - its clamour for a system of representative institutions and facilities to Indians to compete for the civil service.

In his famous Lucknow speech of 1887, he laid bare the reasons: "whatever system of elections be adopted there will be four times as many Hindus as Mahomedans and all their demands will be gratified." Also he feared that since the larger community would override the interests of the smaller community, "the ignorant public would hold government responsible for introducing measures which might make the differences of race and creed more violent than ever." He, therefore, advocated that the power of appointing members to local boards

the Deoband Muslims. The Deoband leadership differed fundamentally from Sir Syed. In 1885 a 'Fatwa' was issued declaring that in worldly matters co-operation with Hindus was possible. Maulana Gangohi, the successor of Maulana Nanawati (the founder of Deoband School) warned the Muslims not to co-operate with the activities of Sir Syed. A. Faruqi, Deoband School and the Demand for Partition (Bombay, 1963), p. 43.

17 Rafiq Zaqaria, Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics (Bombay, 1970), p. 53.
18 Ibid., p. 57.
19 Ibid., p. 54.
and district councils should be held by the government which would maintain that "due and just balance in the representation of the various sections of the Indian population which the system of elections pure and simple would fail to achieve".

Sir Syed really despised the institution of democracy and the attempts at democratization by the Congress mainly because of his feudalistic outlook. The main strategy adopted at this time by him and his colleagues, who all belonged to the aristocracy, was to decrease the effectiveness of Bengal Hindus (who were most prosperous at that time) and to preserve their privileged status as a minority. That was the main reason why Sir Syed consistently warned the Muslims against accepting the Western representative system in India which could mean their reduction to a position of permanent minority.

In U.P. which was backward in the spread of English education, the most coveted and best-paid jobs in the public service were not occupied by those who were schooled in English. By 1886, only 18 per cent of the executive and judicial officers in the uncovenanted services had passed the University entrance examination. As competitive examination and a university degree were to be essential requirement for holding office, the local

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20 Ibid., p. 55.

21 Not only Sir Syed but also his colleagues believed in complete subservience to the British. Chief among them were Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Muhammad Salimullah Khan, Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad and Moulvi Zakaullah.
population was bound to be hard hit. Graduates from Aligarh, Muir or Canning Colleges were not numerous and what they dreaded was that graduates from outside the province, Bengalis in particular, would get the jobs.

Sir Syed’s speeches on all the points at dispute with the Congress reflect his bias against democratic institutions. The tenor of his arguments was that since the Muslims were historically more important and influential, their rights should be granted on that basis. Speaking on the question of representation in the councils by election and the holding of civil service examination in India he said:

Will the members of noble families in our country like it that a person of lower class or lower status, even if he has taken the B.A. or M.A. degree and possess the necessary ability, should govern them and dispose of their wealth, property and honour? Never. Not one of them will like it. The seat of the counsellor of the Government is a place of honour. Government cannot give it to anybody except a man of high social status. Neither can the Viceroy address him as "My colleague" or "My honourable colleagues" nor can he be invited to royal levees which are attended by dukes, earls and other men of high rank. So Government can never be blamed if it nominates men of noble families. 23

Badruddin Tyabji, the President of the Third Congress, was a Muslim. He made efforts to persuade the Muslims to

participate in the national mainstream by joining the Congress, as he very strongly felt that Muslims should make a common cause with the fellow-countrymen on issues which concerned the whole country. In his presidential address he appealed to the Muslims not to distrust the Congress: "...So far as general political questions are concerned, I, for one am utterly at a loss to understand why Musulmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen or other races and creeds for the common benefit of all." In order to obviate the suspicions lurking in the minds of Muslims that the Hindus, being numerically stronger, might pass a resolution in Congress, hostile to Muslim interests, he had requested the Standing Congress Committee to consider a proposition that a rule should be passed to drop any subject or any resolution in the case of Muslim delegates unanimously objecting to it. This proposition was duly adopted.

Tyabji approached Sir Syed also in order to win him over to the Congress, but the latter refused to "run a race with persons with whom we have no chance of success". He also objected to the term "National Congress" and observed: "...I do not understand what the words 'National Congress' mean. Is

24 Badruddin Tyabji's Presidential Address to the Third Indian National Congress held in Madras in 1887, Appendix II in A.G. Noorani, Badruddin Tyabji (New Delhi, 1969), p. 150.

25 Ibid., Appendix IV, p. 167.
it supposed that the different castes and creeds living in India belong to one nation or can become nation, and their aims and aspirations be one and the same?" His own contention was that it was "quite impossible" and he asserted that there could be "no such thing as a National Congress nor can it be of equal benefit to all people." He regarded it as "not only injurious to our own community but also to India at large."

Tyabji's reply to Sir Syed is noteworthy. He argued that Muslims should not only advance the cause of India but also safeguard their own interests. He assured Sir Syed that it was within the power of Muslims to oppose such measures of the Congress which they thought were harmful to the Muslims:

...It is in our power, by firm and resolute action, to divert the course the Congress shall take and my strong conviction is that the Mussalmans can by united action confine the Congress to such topics only as they may deem desirable or safe for discussion.... If the Mussalmans as a body do not like that the members should be elected, they could easily modify the proposals so as to suit their own interests. My policy, therefore, would be to act from within rather than from without. I would say to all Mussalmans 'act with your Hindu fellow subjects in all matters in which you are agreed but oppose them as strongly as you can if they bring forward any propositions that you may deem prejudicial to yourselves'.


27 Ibid., p. 71.
The British statesmen and officials were ready to treat Muslims as a distinct political group in India. They were nominated to serve on the Imperial legislative council and on the Education and Public Service Commissions. Before the introduction of the elective principle into the constitution of rural local governments as a result of Ripon's Reforms (1883), Muslims were officially nominated to such bodies. The Education Commission of 1882 conceded that the backwardness of Muslims, as shown in the educational statistics, except in college education, had been exaggerated. Nevertheless, the Commission advocated "a leaning towards generosity in the treatment of Muslims", recommending the recognition of Hindustani in primary and middle schools as the Muslim vernacular, (which in the Punjab, Madras or Bengal it was not), the teaching of Persian and Hindustani in middle and upper schools, the encouragement of higher education for Muslims and a special section on Muslim education in the annual official reports on public instruction. Going outside its term of reference the Commission also recommended that provincial governments should be asked to appoint, by patronage, a proportion of Muslim public servants. Confusing the aspirations of upper class Muslims with those of the lower section of society, the Commission spoke of the Muslims as a class who "have fallen behind in the race of life under British

29 The Government of India resolutions of 23 October 1884 (which spoke of it being desirable to give Muslims exceptional assistance in some respects) and of 15 July 1885 (which assumed that 'the Muhammadans' as such aspired to rival Hindus in State employment) "helped to endow the Muslims with a separate social as well as religious personality which needed to be recognized in British policy". The Indian Councils Act of 1892 accepted many demands of the Congress such as enlargement of Councils, discussion of financial statements and right of interpellation. Muslims felt that the Government had succumbed to Congress pressure. They became more firm in their conviction that unless their interests were protected by the government, they would be completely wiped out. Hence they felt that they must devise measures to secure their full share in the constitutional reforms. In despair, the fight against the introduction of representative element in the legislature was given up. A draft scheme was prepared by Sir Syed and other leaders in December 1896 which dealt with Muslim representation on the Legislative Councils and Municipalities and was presented to the Government by the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association. The idea conveyed in the scheme was that Hindus and Muslims should get

29 Ibid., p. 6.
30 Ibid., p. 122.
31 Zakaria, n. 17, p. 139.
equal number of seats in the Legislative Councils because if the Hindus had "numerical superiority", the latter's "historical position" was equally important. The second suggestion was that in the towns where the Muslims comprised one-fourth or more of the population they should be given equal number of seats with the Hindus because "the importance of a section of population depends not only on its numbers but on other considerations".

The above arguments were made more convincing as a result of the poor show of Muslims in elections, particularly to local Boards and Municipalities. In the elections to the Poona City Municipality held in 1895, the Muslims boycotted the elections as they were sure of not getting even one candidate elected. In the Legislative Councils, including that of Bengal, which had the largest Muslim population in India, the Hindus had almost double the Muslim representation. "Less in number than the Hindus, those Muslims in the Legislative Councils were also not representative of Sir Syed and his group, which undoubtedly had a large Muslim following among the upper and educated classes particularly in North India".

It was during this time that there took place the emergence of a Hindu revivalist movement in order to arouse

32 Ibid., p. 240.
33 Ibid., p. 242.
34 Ibid.
the enthusiasm of the masses for political action. The aggressive Hinduism of Tilak and his colleagues especially during the annual Ganapati and Shivaji celebrations, made the politically conscious Muslims feel even more insecure and apprehensive of their future. The ascendancy of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab reinforced the aggressive Hindu image and strengthened the Muslim suspicion because most of the active members of the Punjab Congress were supplied by the Arya Samaj. This was interpreted by Muslims as foreshadowing the "virtual establishment of a Hindu raj" in India once the British relinquished their power.

Meanwhile efforts were made through the Muslim reform movements of the nineteenth century to transform Muslim attitude towards Hindus. They were generally based on a rejection of medieval Islam in India in favour of the early Islam of Arabia. For they preached against the customs which so many Muslims had acquired together with the Hindus - intercession at the tombs of saints, consultation of Brahmins, even vegetarianism and aversion to the remarriage of widows.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a growing realization among the Muslims that they must have a


36 Hardy, n. 2, p. 59.
political organization of their own. The partition of Bengal (1905) also gave some fillip to the growing political consciousness among the Muslims because in the new province they would have much greater share in its control and administration. The general basis of participation by Muslims in the Swadeshi movement (started against the partition of Bengal) also deserves emphasis. Most sections of Muslim society remained loyal to the British Government. An article in *Islam-Pracharak* in 1905 stated that "under British Rule we are undeniably dwelling in great peace and happiness". Similarly the Muslim press denounced the Swadeshi movement. An article in *Islam Pracharak* in 1907 rejoiced over the failure of this perverse Hindu Swadeshi movement which "survives in name alone in newspaper propaganda and the dry orations of word-spinners, otherwise, it is quite dead."

Despite this professed loyalty of the Muslims towards the British and their strong dislike for the Swadeshi movement, ever since the death of Sir Syed they were not as critical of Congress as they used to be before. The Muslim press also became quite mild and there were occasional demands from some Muslim leaders for Hindu-Muslim unity and Congress-Muslim co-operation. An article in *Naba Nur* in 1905 reveals the political opinion of a section of educated Muslim society.

38 Ibid., p. 50.
The British are reluctant to fulfil the aspirations they have aroused in the hearts of the educated of this country by disseminating political ideas from time to time and by spreading English education.... It is a travesty of truth to say that these political agitations are confined merely to Hindus, with the spread of education, the desire to ameliorate the motherland is spreading the whole country.... For a whole decade the Muslims stood aloof from political agitations. But what good has it done them?

In fact the younger generation among the Muslims had even started thinking in terms of throwing in their lot with the Congress. As regards the nature of a political organization, some Muslims like Nawab Mahdi Hussain of Lucknow wanted to make common cause with the Hindus. Others like Mohsinul-Mulk, Secretary of the Aligarh College and his colleagues cherished the old idea of reviving the Grand Council of chosen leaders to take care of Muslim interests. Some orthodox Muslims also advocated friendship with the Congress on the ground that Muslims were to encounter two kinds of Jehad: (1) Jehad-e-Asgar (small struggle), in defence of religious rights and liberty, and (2) Jehad-e-Akbar (big struggle), involving representation to the rulers for the redress of grievances and the suffering of the subjects. The Congress, they claimed, could expect the support of all Muslims in regard to Jehad-e-Akbar. As a result of this change in attitude among a substantial

39 Ibid., pp. 57-58.
40 Zakaria, n.17, p. 102.
section of Muslims there were 50 Muslim delegates at the Twenty-second Congress (1906) including prominent young men like Wazir Hasan, M.A. Jinnah and Abbas Tyabjee. It was at this Congress that Jinnah moved an amendment for the deletion of the clause which had made provision for the reservation of seats in the legislatures and services for the educationally backward classes.

The leadership, however, was still in the hands of landholders and members of the upper middle class. The government was forced to take note of the growing uneasiness among a community which had been intensely loyal to them and had never resorted to the methods of agitation to safeguard their interests. Lord Minto, who was appointed Viceroy in 1905, was particularly well disposed towards the Muslims and wanted to give full consideration to their interests. Very often Lord Minto has been accused of exploiting the political consciousness of the Muslims and thus diverting it towards communalistic channels. It has been asserted that the Muslim Deputation was engineered by the Government to offer resistance to nationalist activities and that W.A. Archbold, Principal of the Aligarh College, was its originator. But these charges have been repudiated by some recent historians. It is their

41 Ibid., p. 103.
unanimous view that Archbold was acting on behalf of and under instructions from Mohsin-ul-Mulk and not vice versa. It was in reply to the latter's letter dated 4 August 1906 that he wrote his letter of 10 August 1906, which has been repeatedly quoted to prove that the British aroused the Muslims as a counter-poise to Hindus. Mohsin-ul-Mulk had written to Archbold on 10 August 1906 illustrating the trend of Muslim thought and the apprehensions of the Muslims they might be neglected in any increase of representation on the Legislative Council. He wrote:

You are aware that the Mohamedans already feel a little disappointed and young educated Mohamedans seem to have a sympathy for the "Congress".... There is still a general complaint on their part that we (Aligarh people) take no part in politics, and do not safeguard the political rights of Mohamedans, they say that we do not suggest any plans for preserving their rights. I have got several letters drawing attention particularly to the new proposal of "elected representatives" in the Legislative Councils. They say that the

Archbold had written to Mohsin-ul-Mulk: "the Viceroy agrees to receive a deputation of Muslims. The address to be presented to the Viceroy should be signed by important Muslim leaders of all provinces. While expressing gratefulness for the new policy, it should represent that the system of nomination and not election should be adopted... It is necessary that the opinion of zamindars should be given due weight. Time is short, and if we want to build up a movement, we must hurry up."

Quoted in Ram Gopal, Indian Muslims (Lahore, 1959), p. 97.

See A. Patwardhan and Asoka Mehta, The Communal Triangle (Allahabad, 1942); G.N. Singh, Landmarks in Indian

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existing rules confer no rights on Mohamedans; and no Mohamedan get into the Council by election. 45

There is, however, no doubt that the British welcomed Mohsin-ul-Mulk's initiative and did everything possible to encourage it. The latter's letter was presented to Minto by Dunlop Smith, his private Secretary. On 15 August Minto wrote to Morley about the Muslim apprehensions: "I have always had great hopes of the Mohammedan population...and now that they are becoming somewhat alarmed at what they consider Bengali success, the justice of our safeguarding their interests will become all the more apparent." 46 On 1 October 1906 Minto received the Muslim Deputation composed of Muslim nobles, jagirdars, zamindars, taluqdars, lawyers, merchants and retired officials. All these people had connections with the Aligarh movement through the Muslim educational conference. The leader of the deputation, the Aga Khan, was a former President of the Educational Conference. In full compliance with the line adopted by Sir Syed, the deputationists claimed that the number of seats to be allotted to the Muslims in the legislatures

Constitutional and National Development (Delhi, 1950); B.M. Chaudhri, Muslim Politics (Calcutta, 1946); Ram Gopal, Indian Muslims (Lahore, 1959); M. Noman, Muslim India (Allahabad, 1942); Lal Bahadur, The Muslim League, 1954.

45 Wasti, n. 42, p. 62.
47 Matiur Rahman, n. 42, p. 89.
should be estimated not only on the basis of their numerical strength but also on that of their political importance and their service to the empire. It was also added that the system of election or nomination to the Legislative Councils so far in practice had failed to give them proper representation and they insisted that they should send their own representatives through separate electorates. It was most unlikely, it was explained to Minto that the name of any Muslim candidate would ever be submitted for the approval of Government by the general electoral bodies. It was also stressed that Muslims were a distinct community with "additional interests of their own which were not shared by other communities and had till then suffered from the fact that they had not been adequately represented. Even in the provinces in which the Mohamedans constitute a distinct majority of the population they have too often been treated as though they were appreciably small factors that might without unfairness be neglected." Minto replied that he was sympathetic to these views and that "any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent." He further assured the deputationists that Muslim "political rights and

48 Address presented to Lord Minto, Viceroy and Governor-General of India by A Deputation of the Muslim Community of India on 10 October 1906 at Simla, Rare Documents, n. 11, p. 249ff.
interests will be safeguarded in any administration with which I am concerned."

The Congress leaders were quite alarmed at these developments and suspected that Muslims were being put up as counterpoise to them. This is reflected in the comments by the Congress Press. The Amrita Bazar Patrika trying to belittle the importance of the deputation commented that it was not an "all-India" deputation and was a got up affair fully engineered by interested officials. The Bengalee strongly opposed the Muslim demand for separate representation and considered it "not only indefensible in theory" but feared that it would create "serious political difficulties".

The organizers of the deputation were quite satisfied as they had succeeded in pacifying the younger section of their community. Mohsin-ul-Mulk expressed his gratitude to the Viceroy for "a clear and sympathetic recognition of the rights of the Mohammedans of India as a distinct community".

The reactions of the Muslim press to the Viceroy's reply were mixed. The Observer of Lahore was disappointed as there was no reference to the Muslim demand for more employment in the services and the judiciary. The Moslem Patriot (Madras),

49 Wasti, n. 42, p. 72.
50 Ibid., p. 73.
51 Ibid., p. 74.
52 M.N. Das, n. 42, p. 175.
53 Rahman, n. 42, p. 41.
too found it "disappointing in the extreme" as there was no reference to the idea of a Muslim University. The Viceroy's assurance of safeguarding the interests of the Muslims as a community in administrative reorganization was thought to be "too vague and too indefinite to be assuring in the slightest degree".

The Muslim leaders, who were present at Simla also felt the need of having a political organization of their own with a view to safeguarding the interests of their community. The first concrete step was taken by Nawab Salimullah Khan of Dacca who had failed to join in the deputation. He came out with a scheme for "the Muslim All India confederacy", the aims of which would be to support the Government and protect the interests of the Muslims. It was also to aim at countering the increasing influence of the Congress and to impress upon the Muslims not to join that body. The Nawab's scheme became the basis of discussion at Dacca on 30 December 1906. The delegates had assembled there from all parts of India to attend the All-India Muhammadan Educational Conference. After the Conference, they all met in a session under the presidency of Viqal-ul-Mulk and decided to form the All India Muslim League.

54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Wasti, n. 42, p. 73.
In his inaugural speech Viqar-ul-Mulk outlined the attitude which he wanted the Muslims to adopt towards the British and the Congress. It was emphasized that the Muslims should "prove themselves loyal to their Government before they can ask for a recognition of any of their rights." He also pointed out that there was "no quarrel between us and the National Congress...nor do we oppose or disagree with every one of their acts and views." The Nawab of Dacca was asked to move the first resolution which defined the aims and objects of the League: 

(a) to promote among the Muslims of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government and to remove any misconception that might arise as to the intention of the Government with regard to any of its measures, (b) to protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government and (c) to prevent the rise among the Muslims of any feeling of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the other aforementioned objects of the League.

The provision of separate electorates under the Indian Councils Act of 1909 was considered a victory for the League. Soon after, however, Muslim opinion began to be influenced by new voices representing certain new trends of thoughts. Among them were Muhammad Ali and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who had

just entered public life. They were rationalist in outlook and also well-versed with Islamic traditions. They spread their news through their journals. Muhammad Ali edited the Comrade, an English weekly and Azad an Urdu weekly Al-Hilal. Both asserted that there was no conflict between Islam and the Indian Nationalism. Their writings had great impact on the minds of the educated Muslims and helped to bring the League near the Congress. As Jawaharlal Nehru remarks, the League "was drifting though somewhat unwillingly with the tide of nationalism and coming nearer to the Congress." The Muslim attitude also changed because of a number of other developments - both domestic and foreign. Muslims were disappointed by the negative attitude of the government towards their demands for extension of separate electorates to local bodies and for more employment of Muslims in various branches of the public service. The annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1912, particularly proved to be a turning point. A section of the Muslims was convinced that their policy of loyalty to the government would not pay them in the long run. According to this view, unless the League leaders came to an understanding with the Hindus, the future of the community would be bleak. In utter despondency, some members even suggested the winding up of the League so that all Muslims could

The international situation also disturbed Muslims deeply. The events in Turkey, the seat of the Khilafat had created a ferment in the minds of young Muslims. Their sympathies towards Turkey were aggravated when Italy attacked Tripoli in 1911 and subsequently during the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. Muhammad Ali, Azad and Zafar Ali Khan (he had started zamindar from Lahore) started rallying the support of Muslim masses by writing inflammatory articles in favour of Turkey in their respective weeklies. The traditional policy of loyalty towards the government seemed no larger tenable. At the meeting of the League in December under the presidency of the Aga Khan, the aim of the League was laid down as "attainment under the aegis of British Crown of a system of self-government suitable to India through constitutional means."

The outbreak of the first World War in August 1914 brought the Muslim League closer to the Congress. During 1915, the movement for Hindu-Muslim reconciliation was accelerated through the efforts of Jinnah, Wazir Hasan and other nationalist Muslims. On the Congress side, Annie Besant also advocated co-ordination of activities between the two organizations so that they could draw up a mutually acceptable scheme of reforms. For this purpose she wanted the Congress not to make

60 Ibid., p. 272.
an issue of separate electorates. In her presidential address to the United Provinces Provincial conferences in April, she stressed that "it would probably cause too much friction to withdraw separate electorates at present."

Jinnah took the opportunity as President of the Bombay Provincial Conference to warn his fellow congressmen, stressing the need for granting separate electorates to Muslims:

Rightly or wrongly the Muslim community is absolutely determined for the present to insist upon separate electorates...
I would therefore appeal to my Hindu brethren that in the present state of the position they should try to win the confidence and the trust of the Muslims... If they are determined to have separate electorates, no resistance should be shown to their demands.62

At the two joint meetings of the Congress and League reforms committees in the month of November-December 1916, the Congress accepted the demands for separate electorates and also agreed to co-operate with the Muslim League for demanding weightage for Muslims in all those provinces where the Muslims were in minority. Under the Congress-League scheme Muslims got over-representation in the provincial legislatures of Bihar, 63 Bombay, Madras and Central Provinces. Being aware of the

62 Ibid., p. 578.
63 In Bihar (where they were 13 per cent of the population Muslims were to have 25 per cent of the seats, in Bombay (20 per cent) 33-1/2 per cent of the seats, in Madras (7 per cent) 15 per cent, and in the Central Provinces (4 per cent) 10 per cent of the seats. Ibid., p. 584.
dominant position of the Muslims in U.P., they were given 30 per cent of the U.P. seats. The price paid for these concessions was that the principle of weightage for the minority community was also applied to Bengal and Punjab, reducing Muslim representation in the Provincial Legislative Councils from the 55 per cent to 50 per cent in the Punjab and 40 per cent in Bengal.

The Lucknow Pact signified the increasing eagerness of Congress to win Muslim co-operation in the nationalist movement. The Hindus of U.P. and Punjab had misgivings regarding the pact as they felt that their interests had been jeopardized to win Muslim co-operation. On the Muslim side, the Punjab and Bengal were the most vociferous provinces in their condemnation of the Pact. Muhammad Shafi and Nawab Syed Nawab al-Chowdhury became the chief spokesmen of their respective Provinces. Nevertheless it can be said that by entering into an agreement with the League, the Congress gave a formal recognition to communal politics in India as it had consented to recognize the All India Muslim League as the mouth-piece of the Muslims and also accepted separate electorates.

The end of the first World War found the Muslims in a state of great excitement and unrest. For they were very much concerned with the fate of the Turkish Empire which had fought

64 Ibid., p. 586.
65 Owen, n. 61, p. 581.
the war on the side of Germany and thus belonged to the de-
feated side. As the Sultan of Turkey was also the Caliph
and hence the leader of all Muslims regardless of where they
lived, it became a matter of religious faith for many Muslims
to see that his honour and interests were duly protected. The
prospect of the dismemberment of the Turkish empire and the
maintenance of non-Muslim control over the Holy places caused
consternation among Muslims. The Pan-Islamic agitation in
India grew very strong indeed. An idea of the views of the
Muslims on this question can be discerned from the following
extract of a letter which the Ali Brothers (Mohammed and
Shaukat) wrote to the Viceroy at the end of April 1919.

Muslim loyalty and support had so often
been assured to Government in our genera-
tion and even Muslim contentment was so
often unduly taken for granted that other
communities had with some justice made
our attitude towards Government almost a
matter of reproach. It was strange return
for all this loyalty and support that with-
out any effective protest and often with
the concurrence of His Majesty's Govern-
ment blow after blow has aimed at the
temporal Power of Islam.... What the cruel
occurrences in Tripoli and the Balkans, at
Holy Meshad had led Mussalmans to appre-
hend was, that the temporal Power of Islam
might be so weakened that it might become
liable to suffer, without adequate power
to prevent the curtailment of its spiritual
influence through the pressure of the
temporal Power of rival creeds. 66

Given the large-scale Muslim discontent over the
Khilafat question, M.K. Gandhi seized the opportunity of

66 P.C. Bamford, Histories of the Non-co-operation and
Khilafat Movement (Delhi, 1914), p. 136.
championing the course of the Muslims in order to win their confidence and enlist their support for the freedom movement. He called Khilafat "the Kamdhenu" as it was for him "an opportunity of uniting Hindus and Mussalmans, as would not arise in a hundred years. On his advice, the Muslims decided at a meeting held at Delhi on 22 December 1919 to withhold all co-operation from the government if the British cabinet did not revise the Turkish peace terms. On 2 June 1920, an all-parties conference was held in Allahabad which decided upon the policy of non-cooperation and appointed a committee consisting of Gandhi, Ali brothers, Azad, Kitchlew, Hasrat Mohani and Haji Ahmad Siddiq Khatri to draw up a programme. On 1 August the Khilafat Committee entrusted Gandhi with the leadership of the non-cooperation movement. He merged it with the national issues like the Punjab wrongs and the achievement of Swaraj. This was specially done through the special session of the Congress (Calcutta, September 1920) which adopted Gandhi's non-cooperation programme for the redress of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs and the achievement of Swaraj. At the Khilafat Conferences held in Lucknow, 1921, a Maulvi named Abdul Majid of Badaun proposed a resolution to


68 Bamford, n. 66, p. 152.
secure Swaraj for India. Gandhi stated that he had joined the Khilafat movement to help the Muslims, for to him their success meant Swaraj. In the course of his speech Muhammad Ali paid a tribute to Gandhi, "I declare today that the Indian Army is the army of Mahatma Gandhi; the Indian Police is the police of Mahatma Gandhi; every man is on the side of Gandhi; nay on the side of religion and country." Similarly in the All-India Khilafat Conference assembled at Meerut on 7 April 1921, a resolution was passed that Muslims should adhere to non-cooperation until Swaraj was obtained.

Between 1919 and 1922 there was complete unity between Hindus and Muslims. Muslims had pursued their objective with the full concurrence of the Congress, though the main purpose of the latter was enlisting their support in the nationalist movement. But the suspension of civil disobedience movement in 1922 and the abolition of Caliphate in 1924 left the Muslims high and dry. Indeed there was a feeling of frustration among both Hindus and Muslims, many of whom now turned towards communalism. The Shuddhi and Sangathan movements raised their heads among the Hindus and the Tabligh and Tanzim among the Muslims. The Hindu-Muslim unity was based on a fragile foundation; anti-British sentiment had brought the two communities together and with the collapse of non-cooperation movement, communal harmony was over. The Moplah rising of August 1921

69 Ibid., p. 164.
had already created misunderstanding between the Hindus and Muslims. The Kohat riots of September 1924 grieved Gandhi so much that he went on a twenty-one days fast at Mohammed Ali's house in Delhi. It was over Kohat riots that differences between Gandhi and Ali brothers were revealed to the public. While the Muslims accused the Hindus of firing the first shot and thus starting the trouble, Gandhi's reaction made them feel that he was partial towards Hindus. Gandhi was very unhappy because of the damage to temples, breaking of idols and the murder of two Hindus because of their refusal to accept Islam. The statements made by him on the communal disturbances created a chasm between him and the Muslims. On 2 April 1925, he wrote in Young India: "The Musulmans take less interest (in the internal political life and advancement of the country)...because they do not yet regard India as their home of which they must feel proud." With regard to the communal riots he wrote that the Musulman as a rule is a bully and the Hindu as a rule is a coward." The same observation was made by him in in another article written in Young India on 19 June 1924: "the Musulman being generally in a minority has as a class developed into a bully... The thirteen hundred years of imperialist expansion have made the Musulmans fighters as a body. The Hindus has an age old

71 Ibid.
civilization. He is essentially non-violent. He also advised the Hindus to retaliate and not to be "seized with fear." 72 Such remarks were bound to annoy the Muslims. While Muhammad Ali was critical of Malaviya because of his active participation in the Shuddhi and Sanghatan movements, Gandhi was lenient towards them. Muhammad Ali believed and Motilal Nehru agreed with him that Malaviya was "out to defeat Gandhism and to become the leader of the Hindus only since he could not be a leader of both the Hindus and Muslims." 73

The Hindu Mahasabha (founded in 1919) which was lying dormant for a number of years started making efforts to fortify its position in the country in order to check the demands of the League. The Congress stood discredited in its eyes and was accused by its leaders of bartering away the interests of the Hindus in its desire to appease Muslims. At the All India Conference of the Hindus held at Banaras in 1923 under the Presidentship of Malaviya, attempts were made to make it an organization exclusively concerned with safeguarding the political, religious, social and economic rights of the Hindu community. 74

73 Muhammad Ali to Gandhi, 21 July 1924, Muhammad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Library.
74 Prabha Dixit, n. 2, p. 155.
Both the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League now started working for the revision of the Lucknow Pact; the former because it had denied them the advantages of a minority in Bengal and the Punjab and the latter because the Punjab Muslims wanted to remedy the injustice done to them by the Pact. When the League met in its annual session in Lahore in 1924, in the subject committee the following resolution was moved by Khaliquzzaman which received the assent of the majority:

(a) The existing provinces of India should be united under a common Government on a federal basis so that each province should have full and complete provincial autonomy, the function of the Central Government being confined to such matters as are of joint or common concern.

(b) The basis of representation in the Legislature and in all other elected bodies should be on population basis except that very small minorities might be given representation in excess of their numerical proportion in those cases in which they would remain entirely unrepresented in the absence of such exceptional treatment, subject however to the essential proviso that no majority should be reduced to a minority and even to equality. 75

For the next three years, the League was busy defining the position of the Muslims in the forthcoming changes in the constitution of the country. The Congress tried to make attempts at unity by formulating a Hindu-Muslim Pact for

75 Pirzada, n. 57, p. 578.
settlement of the communal question in Bengal. Another Pact known as the National Pact was drawn up by Lajpat Rai and M.A. Ansari for the whole of India. The Bengal Pact was devised by C.R. Das at the suggestion of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. It provided that: (1) Representation in the Bengal Legislative Council should be on the population basis with separate electorates subject to such adjustment as might be made necessary by the All-India Hindu Muslim Pact (the Lucknow Pact) and by the Khilafat and the Congress, (2) Representation to local bodies was to be in the proportion of 60 to 40 in every district - 60 to the community which was in a majority and 40 to the minority. Thus in a district where the Muslims were in a majority they would get 60 per cent and the Hindus 40 per cent. Similarly where the Hindus were in a majority, they would get 60 per cent and the Muslims 40 per cent. The question as to whether there should be separate or mixed electorates was postponed to ascertain the views of both communities, (3) It was decided to give 55 per cent of the Government jobs to the Muslims, (4) And lastly it was decided not to allow any resolution or enactment without the consent of 75 per cent of the elected members of each community.

Similarly, the Delhi session of Indian National Congress (1923) appointed a committee to enquire into and report on the

76 Indian Annual Register, 1923, pp. 123-28.
question of Hindu-Muslim unity. The report was signed by Ansari and Lajpat Rai and proposed the following National Pact: (1) It should be the firm and unalterable object of the communities represented by the signatories to this Pact to secure complete Swaraj for Indians - the Swaraj which would secure and guarantee to Indians, the same status, rights and privileges in India as every free and independent nation enjoyed in its country, (2) The form of Government under Swaraj should be democratic and of the federal type, (3) In view of the existing state of feeling prevailing in the different communities and in view of the insufficient development of political sense and responsibility in them - it was felt necessary for some time to afford adequate protection to the interests of the minority, (4) It was agreed that the various communities should have separate representation in the Legislature, both State and Federal. Ansari wanted to extend this principle to municipalities and local boards but Lajpat Rai did not agree to that. As an alternative he suggested that a time limit should be fixed during which communal representation should be enforced and at the expiry of which it would be abolished altogether. He suggested that such representation should be in proportion to the numerical strength of each community in the constituencies.

But the efforts made by the Congress proved futile.

77 Ibid., pp. 105-6.
because these Pacts were disapproved of by the next session of the Congress held in 1924. Even then the hopes of unity were not abandoned and an all-parties conference was convened in January 1925 by Gandhi where the representatives of the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Justice-Party and the Liberal Federation participated. A Sub-committee consisting of 40 members was appointed in order to (a) frame such recommendations as would enable all parties to join the Congress; (b) to frame a scheme for the representation of all communities on the legislative and other elective bodies and to frame a scheme of Swaraj. The Sub-committee was divided into two small committees. While the first of these committees, asked to frame a report on the constitution submitted its report, the other which was asked to devise a scheme of communal representation met only once and adjourned sine die without coming to any conclusion because Lajpat Rai and other Hindu representatives were not prepared to attend the committee's meetings. They had become too skeptical and suspicious of the Congress because of the latter's desire to arrive at some understanding with the Muslims. The matter came to a head at the time of 1926 General Elections to the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils. Before the election there was a split in the Congress (the Swaraj Party had merged itself with the Congress) and Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lajpat

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78   *Indian Annual Register, 1925*, vol. 1, p. 77.
Rai had formed the Nationalist Party with the object of opposing the Congress candidates and defeating the Congress programme. Initially Malaviya stood for the Central Assembly against Motilal Nehru, but afterwards he withdrew and a Mahant contested the election. The Congress suffered because malicious propaganda was being spread by the Hindu Mahasabha against Motilal who was denounced as a "beef-eater and destroyer of cows, an opponent of prohibition, of music before the mosque and one man responsible for stoppage of the Ramlila process in Allahabad." The election results showed that in Bombay and C.P., the Congress fared badly though in Bengal and Madras it had emerged victorious. The U.P. results were characterized by Motilal Nehru as "nothing short of a disaster" because the Congress had won only one seat (that contested by Motilal Nehru himself). In the Punjab, it had lost all the seats as Lajpat Rai commanded great influence over the Hindu population. This was the price paid by the Congress for condemning the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha. This was the background against which fresh efforts were made in 1927-28 to bring about a rapprochement between the two communities.

79 Motilal Nehru to Jawaharlal Nehru, 2 December 1926, Motilal Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L.

80 Ibid.