Chapter Six
RISE AND GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM IN CENTRAL PROVINCES AND BERAR [1936 -1942]

This chapter attempts to present a narrative of the rise, growth and consolidation of Hindu and Muslim communalism in the province from 1936 to 1942. This phase corresponds with the brick-by-brick building of the edifice of communal politics and consequently ultimately proves to be the foundation of Pakistan. The chapter examines the tripartite struggle between the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part traces the emergence and consolidation of the Muslim league after the 1937 elections in CPB. The League emerged as a fledgling minority party, which asserted its identity of sole representative of Muslims interests very successfully in a short span of two years in the province. The second part discusses confrontations between the Congress ministry and the Muslim league in the province. The third section analyses the rising frenzy of Hindu communalism manifested in the demonic form of Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh and multiple other Hindu volunteer organizations. These sections discuss the intensified surcharged communal atmosphere after the fading out of the Quit India movement due to widespread grass roots expiation and volunteer movements of both Hindu and Muslim communalisms. The last section attempts to evaluate the role of the British government in the context of Hindu and Muslim communal parties vis-à-vis Congress.

The Background

The working of the 1919 Act had contributed powerfully to the process of alienation of the Muslim in a major way. In the following years, this process accentuated and reached a high water mark with the Communal Award of 1932 and later with the assumption of office by the Congress in 1937. Throughout the 1920s, increase in Hindu communal leanings of a section of the Congress led to further Muslim estrangement in the electoral politics of the country.

In CPB, the Muslims constituted only 4.4 % of the total population. Before 1920, an atmosphere of communal amity existed between the Hindus and Muslims.
During Non cooperation and Khilafat days hardly any Hindu–Muslim clash took place. This peaceful coexistence became a cause of anxiety for the opponents of the political advancement of India, who fanned their notorious policy of divide and rule to set one community against the other. Therefore, communalism began to gain ground and largely succeeded in rousing the communal feeling amongst the Hindu and Muslim masses. The first serious communal riot in CPB occurred in Nagpur in 1927. Further, Muslims did not participate in the Civil disobedience Movement in large numbers in CPB in 1932 resulting in their increased alienation from the national movement. \(^1\) Political consciousness among Muslims had not risen to a level that would have made them join The Congress in the freedom struggle.

Until 1936, there was no separate Muslim group in CPB with well-defined objectives & ideology. The Muslim community was divided between the groups of M. Y. Shareef and Rauf Shah. \(^2\) At the call of Jinnah, M. Y. Shareef formed the CP Muslim League in order to contest legislative assembly elections.

In the first meeting of CP Muslim League Party itself, signs of discontent and opposition were visible. The Rauf Shah Group was suspicious of the whole scheme. It objected to the form of the pledge and protested against selection of personnel on the board. \(^3\)

The cleavage subsequently became wider ostensibly due to the dispute between Sharif and Rauf Shah over selection of candidates for Berar and Nagpur constituencies. This resulted in the resignation of Rauf Shah with fourteen of his followers. \(^4\) He formed a new Muslim parliamentary party. All efforts of Jinnah to reconcile both groups failed

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\(^1\) Sir Francis Wylie to the Viceroy, letter no. 32, 22 May 1939, MSS Eur F.125/60, Linlithgow Papers.

\(^2\) Sir Francis Wylie to the Viceroy, letter no. 32, 22 May 1939, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F.129/60.

\(^3\) A. M. Zadi [ed], *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India*, vol. IV, pp.644-45.

due to disagreements between both groups over election issues. Jinnah postponed affiliation of either group to the Muslim League until election results were declared.\(^5\)

CPB was the stronghold of Hindu Mahasabha and RSS. Hindu communal idiom and the emergence of an alignment between the Congressmen and the Hindu Mahasabha on the ground gradually created a distance between Muslims and Congress. Muslim League fought 1937 elections, on communal lines on the basis of separate electorates. The election results confirmed the Muslim's complete rejection of Congress and Muslim groups won all fourteen seats.

After declaration of election results, Jinnah affiliated the Rauf Shah Group that had won eight out of fourteen Muslim seats with Muslim League\(^6\). Later vice-president of Rauf Shah Group joined hands with E. R. Rao's United Party and formed the 'Interim Ministry'.\(^7\) M.Y. Shareef ultimately joined the Congress and was appointed as Law Minister in July 1937 in the Congress Cabinet.\(^8\) Though Muslim groups had won all Muslim seats, Muslim League did not enjoy the popular support claimed.\(^9\)

With the help of Rauf Shah group and independents, E.R. Rao formed the interim ministry in CPB.\(^10\) The concept of interim ministry did not find favour with the Congress party, which observed anti-Constitution day on 1\(^{st}\) April 1937. Muslim response to call for hartal on 1\(^{st}\) April proved a turning point. It was a decisive test of Hindu-Muslim relations in the province. Jinnah asked Muslims not to participate in the hartal.\(^11\) Muslim alienation and separation from the Congress in the province was complete. They remained indifferent towards the hartal.\(^12\) This was the first open expression of a separate Muslim identity.

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\(^5\) FR, December, First half, 1936, *Home Political*, File no. 18/12/36 I.

\(^6\) 28 February 1937, p.1, *Hitwada*.

\(^7\) Vice-President Rizvi was made Finance Minister, 2 April 1937, p.1, *Ibid*.


\(^9\) It is evident from the fact that a large number of Muslims used to attend Congress meetings, 15 August 1937, p. 3, 29 Sept.1937, p. 2, *Ibid*.


\(^12\) “Muhammadans as a class abstained from participating and in Berar seized the opportunity to celebrate the ‘recognition of the Nizam’s rights’ instead” Hyde Gowan to Linlithgow, letter no. 17, November, *Linlithgow Papers*, MSS Eur F.125/113; FR, Second half, March, 1937, *Home Political*, File no.18/3/37.
After six months the Congress ministry was formed and it included M.Y. Sareef as Law Minister. His inclusion in the ministry proved beneficial for Muslim mass contact programme in particular and Hindu-Muslim relations in general. He was the most trusted leader of Muslims in the province in addition to Muslim League leaders. After joining the Congress Cabinet, Shareef launched an anti-Muslim League campaign. He accused the League of creating a rift between Hindus and Muslims. In his speeches, he emphasized that there was no visible reason for Muslims for not joining the Congress which aimed at Independence, in the name of Islam. He also made clear that there was no difference in the basic tenets of the Congress and the Muslim League.

Loss of Shareef to the Congress was a severe blow to the nascent Muslim League in the province. The Muslim League launched a tirade against the Congress in particular and Hindus in general. It criticized the fluctuating policies of the Congress vis-à-vis the consistent policies of Muslim League. It also accused the Congress of violating its holy vow of wrecking the present government by securing ministerial salaried jobs.

Subsequent to formation of the Congress ministry, Muslim League viewed the Congress as an instrument in the hands of Gandhi for establishing Hindu supremacy over entire India.

The Muslim League was critical of Gandhi’s Harijan Movement as it indirectly prevented conversion of backward classes into Islam. Muslim League exhorted Muslims not to join the Congress as it would convert them politically and consequently affect their culture. Shareef was called a “Kafir” for joining the Congress for sake of position and office. He was accused of tarnishing the image of the Muslim community and the Muslim League in the eyes of the world. Muslim League urged Muslims not to support the Congress and youths were encouraged to join the Muslim League for self-protection. The League

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13 Texts of Resolutions passed by Nationalist Muslim Conference of CP, AICCP, B-13/1938.
14 15 August 1937, p. 3 and 29 September 1937, AICCP, B-13/1938, Hitvad.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 FR, August, Second half & September first half, 1937, Home Political, Files no.18/8/37 & 18/9/37.
alleged that the Congress ministry was communal and did not have the consent, approval & support of Muslims.\textsuperscript{19}

The All India Muslim League during its session in October 1937 declared a war against the Congress. It passed a resolution on failure of the Congress provincial governments to safeguard Muslim interests.\textsuperscript{20} The first confrontation between the Congress ministry and Muslim League took place over the issues of “Bande-Mataram” and “National Flag” immediately after assumption of office. Muslim League accused The Congress of following an exclusively Hindu policy. Muslim League condemned the attitude of The Congress in hoisting the anti-Islamic and idolatrous “Bande Mataram” as the national anthem upon the country, in callous disregard of the feelings of Muslims.\textsuperscript{21} In district branches of Muslim League, resolutions were passed that no Muslim should stand when Bande Mataram was sung.\textsuperscript{22}

The All India Congress working Committee responded to the change by stating that first two stanzas of the song described the beauty and bounty of the motherland and should be sung by all Indians. It added that ‘Bande-mataram’ was not objectionable and offensive to any group or community in India.\textsuperscript{23} However, the issue of ‘Bande-mataram’ proved sensitive with Muslims at large. It was raised again in 1939 by a The Congressman Saiyed Kasim Ali, who translated a book “Mystery of Bande Mataram”. His translation sought to demonstrate that the song was a black communal spot on the Congress image and an impediment in Muslim mass contact programme. This acted as a catalyst in provoking Hindu – Muslim tension in Hyderabad.\textsuperscript{24} Kasim Ali was duly informed about the Congress Working Committee’s resolution of November 1937.\textsuperscript{25} He was expelled from Central Provinces Congress Party for his adamant stand.\textsuperscript{26}

Another opportunity to malign Congress came to the Muslim League in the form of Vidya Mandir Scheme proposed by education minister R.S. Shukla. The scheme was based on 'Wardha education system'. It suggested a school for 40 boys and girls within a radius of a mile. The education proposed was industrially and agriculturally oriented with a national outlook. Generous tenants or landlords were expected to donate land for Vidya Mandirs. The medium of instruction was to be Hindi, Marathi, Urdu according to the mother tongue. This scheme was designed to eradicate the problem of mass illiteracy. However, the Vidya Mandir Scheme proved singularly unfortunate. The word 'Mandir' angered Muslim communalists who perceived it as an instrument to destroy their culture and identity. Muslim League Education Committee had earlier rejected Wardha syllabus as it avoided the religious and ethical teachings of Islam. Muslim League also feared that the managing committee of Vidya Mandir would have a Hindu majority and disapproved the scheme.

Hence, Muslims were not willing to donate land for schools. The Congress ministry proposed that Hindi and Marathi teachers would be given two months training in Urdu language to teach Urdu as the number of Urdu knowing teachers was limited. Muslim League rejected this proposal as ineffective and impractical. The Nationalist Muslim Conference also disapproved of the scheme on the ground that it disregarded the educational needs of the Muslims and negated the very principle of nationalism. Communalism like other reactionary movements breeds on the fertile ground of imagined wrongs and artificially manufactured atrocities. The word Mandir was misused for creating communal tension. The provincial Muslim League declared its determination to launch a civil disobedience movement against the Vidya Mandir scheme.

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27 27 January 1938, p. 6. Times of India.
30 FR, October, Second half, 1938, November, First & Second half, 1938, Home Political, Files no.18/10/38 II, 18/11/38 I & 18/11/38 II.
The Congress Government in its various communiqués clarified that “Mandir” implied ‘house’ not ‘Temple’. In the interest of communal appeasement, the Congress ministry promised to change the name of ‘Urdu Vidya Mandir’.31

A representative of All India Muslim League assessed the situation and advised the party against launching civil disobedience movement.32 Subsequently, through a resolution, Honorary secretary, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan was deputed by All India Muslim League, to visit CPB and submit a report before the annual session of the League at Patna.33 In spite of All India Muslim League decision, the provincial Muslim League launched CDM against the Vidya Mandir scheme.34 Anti-The Congress feeling ran high, creating an atmosphere of communal hatred bitterness and tension. Five thousand people attended a Muslim League Meeting at Nagpur, where the League leaders exhorted Muslims to throw away their Gandhi caps. These were subsequently burnt. Mahatma Gandhi was criticized for striving to suppress Muslims by establishing ‘Ramrajya’.35

In February 1939, a conference was convened to discuss the Vidya Mandir scheme and Muslim education by Muslim members of Legislative Assembly, The Congress Cabinet and Nababzada Liaquat Ali Khan. It was re-emphasized by R.S. Shukla that the name of the scheme was not intended to hurt the feelings of any community. It was decided that it was the Muslim’s prerogative to select any name like Anjuman-Madina-Tul -Ilm’ or Baitul -Ilm’ for the Urdu schools of Vidya Mandir.36 The syllabus of the scheme was recommended by the Zakir Hussain Committee appointed by the provincial Government. After this decision, the provincial Muslim League withdrew its agitation.

32 Francis Wylie to Linlithgow, letter no.36, 29 December 1938, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F.125/59.
34 3 February 1939 p. 9. Hitvada.
35 FR, September, Second half, 1938, Home Political, File no.18/9/38 II.
The grants and other facilities provided by the Congress Government for Urdu medium schools were fairly liberal in proportion to Muslim population in the province.\textsuperscript{37}

Congress launched ‘Muslim mass contact programme’ after the elections after realizing that it lacked a strong base among Muslims. Congress considered it politically essential to win Muslim support. This was a logical outcome of the Congress’ resolute decision against coalition governments and an aspect of socialist influence upon the Congress.\textsuperscript{38} Congress launched this programme with great enthusiasm to win Muslim support in urban and rural areas.\textsuperscript{39} It commenced with a spirit of serving Muslims and bringing them into the Congress fold and not essentially for enrolling them as The Congress members.\textsuperscript{40} AICC instructed Provincial The Congress committees to explain and convince Muslim masses about The Congress ideas and objectives.\textsuperscript{41}

The CPB Congress faced opposition from the Muslim League in implementing the Muslim mass contact programme. Muslim League was apprehensive of the Congress since its inception and it reacted with counter propaganda against the Congress.\textsuperscript{42} The suppressed annoyance, dissatisfaction and other grievances of Muslim League over the controversial issues of ‘Bande Mataram’, National flag’, Shareef Case’, The

\textsuperscript{37} There were 323 schools exclusively for Muslims, comprising 278 primary schools, 16 anglo-vernacular middle schools, 1 normal school, 22 vernacular middle schools and 6 High schools. The total number of students during the year 1936-37 was 29,513 and the total grant provided by the Government amounted to Rs. 29,737. A brief note on steps taken by the Congress Government to safeguard interest of Muslims in CPB. \textit{AICC}, File no. PL-6/1939.

\textsuperscript{38} Marguerite Dove, Forfeited Future: The Conflict Over Congress Ministries in British India, 1933-37, p. 404.

\textsuperscript{39} Muslim mass contact work Circular no. 22. The INC President instructed the PCCs to take up the work of Muslim mass contact. \textit{AICC}, File no. G-22/1938; Muslim mass contact programme committee held meetings and enrolled 1766 members in Mahakoshal and 861 in Nagpur PCCs. \textit{Ibid.}; Durgabai Joshi to President INC, \textit{AICC}, Misc. File no. 49/1938. 29 June 1937.; President MPCC to President INC, 32 May 1937, 19 May 1937. \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{40} Gandhi’s draft on the communal question. \textit{AICC}, File No. G-34/1939.

\textsuperscript{41} District Congress mass contact Committee Jabalpur to Manzar Esqu., AICC office, Allahabad for sending the literature and pamphlets, 27 December 1937. Another letter from Convener Muslim mass contact Committee Jabalpur to A.K.M. Ashraf for sending pamphlets and literature to be distributed among the workers and masses, 15 December 1937. \textit{AICC}, File No. Misc. 54/1937.

\textsuperscript{42} “Ministers were touring all the CP& B in order to exhort the Muslims to join the Congress but it had only provoked the Muslim League and is totally unsuccessful in CPB”, Ibad Committee Narsinghpur to President MPCC Jabalpur, \textit{MPCCP}, File No. Misc.8/1934-39; Sir Hyde Gowan to Linlithgow, letter no. 40, 7 October 1937, \textit{Linlithgow Papers}, MSS Eur F. 125/113.
Congress denial of coalition ministry in UP etc., found an outlet in the propaganda against this programme. Muslim League perceived that this programme aimed at the unconditional surrender of the Muslims at the altar of the Congress. The Muslim League had always regarded Congress as a “Hindu” organization and Muslim masses were generally indifferent and alienated from it.

Overall, Muslim mass contact programme proved an utter failure. There were several causes for this fiasco. It was conducted in a half-hearted and unorganized manner. Except for the formal formation of contact committees and enrolment of primary members, no efforts were made to establish direct contact with Muslims in large numbers. This was also confirmed in official reports. The AIML passed a resolution instructing the provincial Muslim League to utilize the influence of ‘Ulema ‘in warning the Muslims against joining the Congress as it was disadvantageous from the religious point of view. Instead of generating Hindu-Muslim harmony, it bred an atmosphere of communal acrimony, provoked hatred and intensified communal tension. Muslim League further accused Congress of wanting to divide the Muslim community by means of its powerful press and purse. It alleged that the sole aim of the Congress was to make the world believe that it represented entire India.

The Governor of CPB attributed the failure of Muslim mass contact programme to Congress enticing a Muslim League member with the Law portfolio in the ministry. The results of bye-elections in Muslim constituencies of Saugar and Narsinghpur bore testimony to Congress unpopularity among Muslim masses. For election campaigning in these constituencies, CPB The Congress had no Muslim volunteers. The Congress propaganda was confined to political and economic issues where as Muslim League

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43 FR, October, First half, May 1937, Second half, Home Political, File No.18/10/37.
44 Home Political, File No. 31/30/30-Pub.
48 Ibid., pp. 63-65.
laid emphasis only on Muslim interests. Consequently Muslim League candidates won from both constituencies.  

‘Hyderabad agitation’ was another significant point of confrontation between Congress and the Muslim League. This agitation was started by the Hindus in the State of Hyderabad to secure redress of restrictions on the free practice of religion. This agitation was organized and controlled by Hindu communal bodies, ‘Hindu Mahasabha’, ‘R.S.S.’ and ‘Arya Samaj’ which had a stronghold in CPB. Four jathas [groups] of Hindu Mahasabha volunteers were sent from CPB to agitate against the Nizam’s Government.

Due to the geographical vicinity of Berar, CPB government could have helped in curbing the agitation but it remained completely indifferent and gave no information or help to Hyderabad authorities. In addition, some The Congressmen were sympathetic towards this agitation. The speaker of CPB assembly, G.S. Gupta was one of the ardent supporters of the agitation. CPB government was reluctant to take any action against the violent speeches of Hindu Mahasabha and The Congress leaders. This response aggravated Hindu-Muslim tension in CPB also. Satyagrahis were assaulted during ‘Prabhat Pheris’. The Muslim League launched a fervently anti-Hindu propaganda resulting in atrocities, clashes and riots. Muslim League recruited volunteers in large numbers for protection. If Hindus organized ‘Prabhat Pheris’ to enlist support for the Hyderabad agitation, Muslims retaliated by taking out ‘Night Pheris’.  

During two years tenure of The Congress ministry, Hindu-Muslim relationship remained surcharged with communal strains due to The Congress and Muslim League confrontations. Muslim League always needed an opportunity to stir the communal sentiments of the Muslim masses. Expulsion of the only Muslim minister from the Congress cabinet gave a fillip to mischievous and disruptive propaganda by an

51 Sir Hyde Gowan to Linlithgow, letter no. 17a, 22 February 1938, Linlithgow Papers Eur F. 125/58. FR, First half, February 1938, Home Political, File No.18/2/38.
*Because Shareef as Law Minister showed leniency to a fellow Muslim convicted of a brutal offence against a Hindu girl.
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Inclusion of Shareef in the Congress cabinet was criticized as trapping a Muslim by the lure of office. Shareef’s resignation and subsequent non-inclusion of a Muslim minister in the cabinet was again criticized by Muslim League. Nationalist Muslims demanded that the vacant seat be filled by a Muslim only, to re-invigorate the mass contact programme and the confidence of the Nationalist Muslims.\textsuperscript{55}

As a consequence of all these factors Hindu-Muslim communal tension intensified in the province. This simmering erupted in communal riots in Jabalpore, Mandla and Saugor during Holi and Muharrum every year.\textsuperscript{56} Throughout the ministry period the following two phrases: [a] Anti-Muslim / Anti Hindu campaign [b] Communal clashes or tension, surface frequently in almost every FR.\textsuperscript{57} With the passing of years, the number of such references increased tremendously.

**Pirpur Committee Report**\textsuperscript{58}

The Pirpur committee was appointed by the Muslim League in March 1938 to conduct an enquiry into the Muslim grievances in the Congress provinces. It concluded that Muslims were poor, educationally backward and a small minority in CPB. They had suffered under the Congress ministry more than in any other province.

Congress government was accused of deliberately offending religious sentiments of Muslims by engaging in biased policies and actions. The Pirpur report raised several issues including singing of Bande Mataram in Vidya Mandir schools, Muslim boys forced to pray before the goddess Sarasvati and attacks on the religious rights of Muslims to slaughter cows. It also alleged the pro-Hindu leanings of Congress government, absence of Muslim representation in local bodies & debt conciliation

\textsuperscript{57} Fortnightly Reports of CPB from July 1937 to September 1939, *Home Political Files*.
\textsuperscript{58} Pirpur Committee report, CPB, pp. 49-58, *Home Political*, File no. 31/30/39, pub.
boards, suppression of Urdu language and ruining of Muslim culture in toto.\textsuperscript{59} Accusations by the Pirpur committee report implied that Hindus, Hindu communalism and The Congress were all synonymous. It also suggested that Congress government policy was not conducive for the creation of peaceful Hindu-Muslim relations.

Congress Government was accused of imposing Hindi on Muslims and discriminating against Urdu language. The report alleged that the CPB Government was reluctant to open Urdu schools and provide grants. Imparting education in Hindi medium to Urdu speaking Muslim students placed them in a disadvantageous position in contrast to Hindu boys, who were receiving education in their mother tongue.\textsuperscript{60} Congress was accused of adopting a systematic policy of indirectly converting Muslim population into a Hindi-speaking entity at the cost of their culture. For instance, Betul district was converted into a compulsory education area where grants were provided with the condition that Hindi was to be the medium of instruction. Government had also abolished Urdu schools in Betul.\textsuperscript{61}

The Vidya Mandir scheme was criticized on the grounds that the word Mandir connotes idol worship, which is against the tenets of Islam and hence a repulsive idea to Muslims. It alleged that the Vidya Mandir scheme not only neglected the Urdu language, in fact, it tried to extinguish it completely.

The Pirpur report tried to ‘expose’ the high handedness and hostility of the Congress regime towards Muslims. It alleged that The Congress government provided large sums of money to Hindu communal institutions like ‘Hanuman Akharas’, which were training grounds for Hindu Mahasabha. It accused The Congress government of diverting grants to ‘Shraddhanand Asthan’ from Muhammad Ali Sarai.

It criticized Congress for allowing, dual membership of Congress and Hindu Mahasabha to some of its members. It also alleged that a Hindu could enlist himself as a member of Hindu Mahasabha and Congress simultaneously whereas no Muslim

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{61} FR, December, Second half, 1938, \textit{Home Political}, File No.18/12/38 II.
could enroll in Muslim League and Congress. Some Congress ministers and workers often attended meetings and lectures of Hindu Mahasabha.\textsuperscript{62}

The report accused Congress ministry of conniving with Hindu mobs who tried to prevent Muslims from exercising their religious and cultural rights. It alleged that there were deeper reasons for communal tensions, outbreaks and riots and suggested involvement of some responsible Congress members. It alleged that incidents leading to riots such as stone throwing, obstructing Tazias', music before mosque and boycott of Muslim festivals were all pre-planned and had the consent of Congress ministry. According to the report, all these actions of Congress ministry reinforced the Muslim perception that Congress government meant “Hindu Raj”.\textsuperscript{63} Thus, Pirpur committee report embarrassed the Congress government. It also instilled a fear among Muslims that under “Hindu Raj” they would always be a weak, powerless and oppressed community.

After Pirpur committee report, A.K. Fazlul Haq published his documentary record “Muslim sufferings under The Congress rule”.\textsuperscript{64} It enumerated Muslim charges against Congress ministry in CPB and accused the ministry of its pro-Hindu policy and incapability to protect Muslim interests. It criticized Congress ministry of providing tacit support to Hindu Mahasabha in its virulent anti-Muslim propaganda. It also criticized Hindus of desecrating Muslim places of worship and boycotting Muslim trade & business. He illustrated in his report that after assumption of office, Congress behavior was biased against Muslims. He proclaimed that this was evident in communal riot investigations, where Muslims were prosecuted and Hindus were released. He charged that Hindu officials prosecuted Muslim subordinates and stopped grants to Urdu schools. Also Muslim peasantry was harassed by Hindu Patels & Patwaris in land issues, imposition of taxes, fees for sale-purchase and slaughter of cattle. Forcible singing of Bande Mataram by Muslims was also criticized by Fazlul Haq. Fazlul Haq’s report concluded with a focus on supposedly grave outrages committed on helpless Muslims. He inferred that Muslims under Congress regime

\textsuperscript{62} Pirpur Committee Report, CPB, pp. 49-58, Home Political, File no.31/30/39, pub.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
were condemned to live in terror under Hindus domination. Further, he deduced that Muslims suffered atrocities while the law moved tardily or did not move at all.\textsuperscript{65}

Congress ministry led by R. S. Shukla denied all charges of Haq as a ‘Himalaya of lies’.\textsuperscript{66} It refuted the Pirpur Committee report and discussed all allegations as baseless. It accused Muslim League of manufacturing an agitation out of a vacuum.\textsuperscript{67} The Congress assured Muslims that these wild allegations would not deflect government from the hitherto pursued policy of justice and fair play towards Muslim community.\textsuperscript{68} However, the expelled premier of CPB, Dr. N.B. Khare, alleged pro-Hindu leanings of the Congress ministry by citing three instances related to his tenure as under:

a. Transfer of Deputy Superintendent of police Niaz Ahmad investigating ‘Haseena kidnapping case’ where D.P. Misra was allegedly involved.

b. Victimization of a Muslim officer as Dr. Khare was forced to not confirm his appointment.

c. Shareef was expelled from Congress and Misra in similar situation was retained in the party based on simply an apology letter.\textsuperscript{69}

The British Governor admitted to the Viceroy that all allegations of Muslim League were baseless and without any impact.\textsuperscript{70} The breakout of Second World War and withdrawal of Congress ministry had a restraining influence on the communal situation.\textsuperscript{71} On the dissolution of the Congress ministry in the province, AJML observed ‘Day of Deliverance’ on account of the complete failure of Act of provincial autonomy.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} The Star of India, Bombay, 16 January, 1940, in Aziz [ed.], \textit{op. cit.}, vol. I, pp. 134-35.
\textsuperscript{71} Francis Wylie to Linlithgow, letter no. 66, 18 April 1939, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F.125/60.
\textsuperscript{72} FR, September, first half & October, second half, 1939, \textit{Home Political}, Files no. 18/10/39 & 18/9/39.

Widening of Communal base

During the ministry period, ground level activism manifested in Hindu and Muslim volunteer movements, intensified tremendously in volume and strength. These movements were communal in nature and emphasized on military or semi-military training of volunteers. The dangers of this tendency were potentially great.\(^{73}\)

Elements in Muslim Activism

Grass root activism had played a significant role in politicization of Muslims from Wahabi to Khilafat movement. After Non-cooperation movement, the common cause between Khilafatists and Congressmen evaporated and they became rivals. During this phase, the Khilafatists found themselves caught between contending forces; nationalist organizations like Congress and Jamat-i-Ulema-i-Hind and Muslim organizations like the Muslim League.\(^{74}\) During the late 1930s, a new kind of Muslim activism grew, reflected in the emergence of ‘Khaksars’.\(^{75}\) Initially through a programme of mobilization, the movement addressed social and religious concerns of Muslims. Gradually it got involved in political action and contributed indirectly to the emergence of Muslim League as a popular party by providing it a popular base. In the beginning there was no institutional link between Muslim League and Khaksars. However, common concerns brought them together.

Khaksars was a closely-knit movement under the control of Inayatullah Mashriqui. He was the main inspiration of the movement and exercised a general control through emissaries in various parts of country. Khaksar ideology was disseminated through a journal ‘Al Islah’. Khaksar movement started in 1936-37, in the districts of Nagpur and Hoshangabad and soon spread to other places in CPB. It offered an opportunity for Muslims to raise a volunteer corps of their own. In this Muslim minority province, Khaksar Movement provided a platform for communal consolidation. Nagpur, Amravati, Ellichpur and Paratwada were the main centers of the movement. ‘Hyderabad Agitation’ led by Hindu Mahasabha and Arya Samaj was indirectly

\(^{73}\) Notes on the Volunteer movements in India, *Home Political*, File no. 4/2/39, Pol.
\(^{75}\) All India Survey of the Khaksar Movement, 11July 1939, *Home Political*, Files no. 92/39, Pol.
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responsible for Khaksars gaining a foothold in the province. Their strength rose to 1200 within two years. Maksud Ali Beg, a landlord of Ellichpur was a provincial leader and organizer of the movement in Berar region. Other prominent leaders included Muhammad Ibrahim Sherar, a pleader and Muhammad Azim, a schoolmaster in Ellichpur, Ahmadullah, ex-sub-inspector of police, Nagpur, and Ismail, hotelkeeper of Paratwada.

In CPB, the Muslim League had no specific volunteers of its own. However, Khilafat Committee Volunteer Corps and Central Board of Muslim Volunteer Corps were two other active associations. Tabliq Committee and Nagpur Muslim association were also very influential in the Muslim community. Both these institutions were highly communal in nature and were involved in conversion of depressed classes to Islam.

In the years 1936-37, Muslim League realized the importance of building a mass support base. Its membership fee was lowered from one rupee to two annas and it opened a number of branches in various parts of the province. As a reaction to growing Hindu communal formations like various ‘Akhadas’, Muslim League also established a Mohammadan Akhada in Basim and added a new strand to Muslim activism.

Elements in Hindu Activism

Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, Mahabir Dal, Hanuman Prasarak Mandal, Balbhim Vyayam Shala and Hanuman Akharas were Hindu communal organizations in their orientation and character. During the ministry period, they were quite active on the ground and maintained an aggressive public presence in the

77 Notes on the Volunteer Movements in India, Home Political, File No. 4/2/39, Pol.
78 FR, February first half, 1936 & March, first half, 1936, Home Political, File No.18/2/36 & 18/3/36.
79 FR, first half, November 1937, January, first half & February, Second half, 1938, Home Political, Files no. 18/11/37, 18/1/38 & 18/2/38.
80 FR, January, first half, 1938, Home Political, File No. 18/1/38.
province.\(^81\) CPB was a strong hold of both Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh.

Nagpur was the headquarters of the Hindu volunteer movement. Dr. K.B. Hedgewar at Nagpur formed the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh in 1925. It was a well-organized, anti-Muslim, Hindu volunteer Corps. It aimed at establishing exclusive supremacy of Hindus in the country and opposed the idea of non-violence. Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh enjoyed the full support of Hindu Mahasabha, which gave it formal recognition in the year 1932.\(^82\)

Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh had 60 branches and 3,000 members on its roll in the year 1937 in Berar alone. It gained tremendously in strength & volume and doubled its membership within two years. In 1939, its members rose to 6,000.\(^83\) It laid emphasis on physical culture, drill & training and had its own uniform, flag and dummy guns. 400 volunteers got training at Amrawati in 1939. Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh used Hindu festivals of Dussehra and Ganapati Ashtami for a ceremonial worship of arms and a review of volunteers. RSS leaders asserted rights of Hindus as a majority community to control the affairs of India in highly provocative and aggressive communal speeches.\(^84\) RSS propaganda became so vehement that CPB government had to pass orders forbidding government servants to become members or to participate in any activities of the organization.\(^85\)

Hindu volunteer organizations claimed a special concern for social and religious life of the Hindus. These organizations were antagonistic towards Muslims & the League and asserted that the Congress was turning anti-Hindu to appease Muslims.\(^86\) These

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\(^{81}\) Notes on the Volunteer Movements in India, Home Political, File No. 4/2/39, Pol.; 20 January 1939, p. 3. Hitvada.

\(^{82}\) Notes on the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh & the Khaksar Movement, Home Political, File No. 92/39, Pol.

\(^{83}\) 4 April 1937, p. 3. Hitvada FR, May, second half, 1939, Home Political, File No. 18/5/39.

\(^{84}\) Ibid.

\(^{85}\) Notes on the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh & the Khaksar Movement, Home Political, File No. 92/39, Pol.

\(^{86}\) Many branches of Hindu Maha Sabha and various ‘Akharas’ involved in anti-Congress and anti-Muslim propaganda mushroomed up during this period; FR, October, first half, 1937, November, second half, 1937, December, second half, 1937, March, second half, 1938, May, second half, 1938, December, second half, 1938, February, second half, 1939, July, First half, 1939, August, First half, 1939, September, first & second half, 1939, December, First half, 1939, Home Political, Files No. 18/10/37, 18/11/37, 18/12/37, 18/3/38 II, 18/5/38, 18/12/38, 18/2/39, 18/7/39, 18/8/39, 18/9/39 & 18/12/39.
organizations used an evocative military idiom and glorified various aspects of Hindu tradition & mythology. Muslim League responded to such exhortations by launching counter measures to preserve Muslim identity and interests. In the prevailing communalized atmosphere, Hindu-Muslim counter propaganda aggravated and proved potent ammunition for communal clashes.

In this surcharged communal atmosphere, Congress aggressively criticized the reactionary and communal ideology of Muslim League. However, apart from criticism, Congress could do little to reorganize and build its own support among Muslims. It could not also restrain the growth of Hindu communalism. Specific incidents of discrimination against Muslims by high-headed local Congressmen further alienated Muslims from Congress. At a more popular level, Congress attempts to win Muslim support through Muslim mass contact program proved counterproductive. In comparison, Muslim League successfully implemented techniques of propaganda and politicization through grass root organizations. RSS emerged during this phase as a potent militant organization, which successfully seeped into lower middle urban classes and influenced the service classes as well.

British Authorities, Muslim League and Congress Government

During the election campaign of 1936-37, British authorities tried to arrest the Congress tide that they had underestimated at first. As their old allies had suffered defeats in Congress provinces, the authorities explored an alternative possibility and looked around for a powerful force that could counter the increasing The Congress mobilization and influence. They found a new partner in the Muslim League, which claimed to be the sole representative of the Muslim community.

87 FR, October first half, 1937, November, First half, 1937, January, First half, 1938, May, Second half, 1939, Home Political, Files no. 18/10/37, 18/11/37, 18/1/38 & 18/5/39.
89 “Congress organization at the moment is generally not well organized or centrally controlled, although their numbers have reached considerable proportions. By contrast the Muslim League organization seems to be better and has the advantage of some form of central control. The obvious dangers of two rival bodies such as these vying with each other in strengthening their volunteer organizations cannot be overemphasized. Moreover the present lack of strong discipline, control and leadership could not fail to react seriously at the time of crisis.” Notes on the Volunteer movements in India, Home Political, File No. 4/2/39.
In their experience of provincial autonomy, British authorities became increasingly aware of the weight of Congress Party behind Congress ministries. The resurgence of the ground level activism of Congress added another dimension to this awareness. In this context, British authorities began to take notice of the Muslim League. As the League extended its challenge to its main rival, the authorities discovered a new approach to Congress. Conflict with the Congress functioning of Provincial autonomy provided an important context for the shaping of British Raj’s relationship with the Muslim League. The Congress sincerely attempted to build Muslim support yet the British officials constantly emphasized that Congress was a ‘Hindu Party’ and Muslim League was the sole representative of the entire Muslim population of India.

In practice, there was no dearth of evidence for communal Hindu influence on Congress. Instances could be cited of insensitivity, intolerance and bias towards Muslims among Congressmen and provincial leaders. Ironically, the Governor also recognized the countervailing influences. Such recognition was significantly reflected in Governor’s reactions to Muslim League’s allegations against Congress ministry. The nature of League’s criticism of ministry emerged out of the fear of perpetual Hindu domination concluding in complete elimination of Muslim culture.

The Pirpur report was just one element in the League’s denouncement and constant propaganda against the Hindu character of Congress. In their public speeches, bye-election campaigns press and representations to the British authorities, the League emphasized the same message ad nauseum.

90 Previously the British officers looked for an ally in E.R. Rao and expected the victory of the Independents for a solid opposition to the Congress in the Legislative Assembly. Hyde Gowan to Linlithgow, letter no. 11 & 3, 14 February 1937 and 10 November 1936. Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/112.
91 a. Sir Francis Wylie characterized the education minister R. S. Shukla as a “communalist through the core”. Sir Francis Wylie to Linlithgow, letter nos. 55 & 75, 8 August, 1938 and 20 March 1939. Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/60.
c. “Whenever opportunity offers, the Government funds & agencies are used for Congress propaganda and that too frequently this propaganda has a strongly pro-Hindu flavor.” Ibid.
92 Pirpur Committee Report, CPB, pp. 49-58, Home Political, File No. 31/30/39, Pub.
The British authorities admitted in private that the League’s claims were often without any factual basis. “In this province the Muslims really had no cause for complaint……. It is the galling thought that their political opponents are in political domination over them, that hurts most and it is this feeling which leads them to make sometimes quite baseless accusations”. They confessed that Muslim grievances were not genuine but a reflection of a feeling of dissatisfaction that often presented itself disguised in the pretext of Congress programme like ‘Vidya Mandir Scheme’ to provide a necessary peg for a considerable agitation. In their own circles, British authorities in fact absolved Congress ministry of much of the League’s criticism. “It is untrue that Muslims do not get a fair share of public appointments in CPB. The reality is that Muslims have a share far beyond the percentage to which they would be entitled on a population basis. They have some 22% of public appointments in the province whereas they form only 4% of the population.”

The British authorities held Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha responsible for preaching communalism and creating communal tension in the province. The communal agitation in the province was conceived and generated at the all India level bodies of both Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha with the help of their volunteer bodies. The Governor of CPB clearly stated in his letter to Linlithgow that organized efforts were made to create disturbances in order to turn people against the Congress ministry. He suggested an imposition of a ban on volunteer organizations, which helped to create rather than curb the communal tension and riots. He also proposed ‘Goonda Act ‘to restrain most of the trouble.

Governor of CPB also believed that despite Muslim League’s allegations of injustice towards Muslims, Congress ministry would not dare to be too openly and blatantly communal due to public opinion as well as the presence of British Governor. After

93 Sir Francis Wylie to Linlithgow, letter no. 66 &82, 18 April 1939 & 22 May 1939. Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/60.
94 Sir Francis Wylie to Linlithgow, letter no. 36, 29 December 1938. Ibid.
95 Sir Francis Wylie to Linlithgow, letter no. 66, 18 April 1939, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/60.
96 Sir Francis Wylie to Linlithgow, letter no. 82, 22 May 1939. Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Sir Francis Wylie to Linlithgow, letter no. 66, 18 April 1939, Ibid.
resignation of Congress ministry in 1939, the India Office asked the provinces to examine Congress record on Muslim minorities as comprehensively as possible. The general conclusion that emerged from this exercise was that the ministries had not displayed an anti-Muslim, pro-Hindu bias, though there had been a few lapses. 100 The British officialdom had always counted on strong support of their allies. In CPB, they encouraged E. R. Rao who was hostile to the Congress. 101 Similarly, Muslim League's intense opposition to Congress ministry was a reason strong enough for British authorities to extend a friendly hand towards the former. The conditions and manner in which League worked provided a new focus for the political identity of Muslims. The relationship of Muslim League with British authorities cannot be seen without its connections with Congress in office.

Erupting Volcanoes

The year 1939, witnessed a marked increase in crime rate in CPB due to economic distress, lawlessness and communal riots. After the outbreak of Second World War, law and order deteriorated further with rise in food prices and pre-occupation of police in emergency duties. Out of 73 criminal cases in 1939, 41 occurred in communal disturbances. 102 This crime report is the prelude to the scene that was going to unfold in the following years. Communal tension, clashes, riots and violence had become a bitter reality in the Province by the end of the 1930s.

After the withdrawal of Congress ministry, Provincial Muslim League presented a series of complaints to the provincial government accusing Congress ministry of deliberately following a policy of eliminating Muslims in public services. 103 Muslim League accused CPB Congress ministry of nursing a pro-Hindu bias that resulted in

101 Hyde Gowan to Linlithgow, letter no. 3 & 11, 10 November 1936 & 14 February 1937. Ibid. MSS Eur F. 125/112.
103 Muslims formed only 4.4% of the total population in the province and their representation vastly exceeded their numerical proportion. The Muslim percentage in the public service was 23.05% in 1936-37 and it rose to 23.26% in 1937-38. In April 1937, the Muslims held 8.8% posts in the provincial services where as on 1 October 1939 it was 9.34%. In police services, the Muslim percentage was 35%. In subordinate services excluding constables & head constables, Muslims held 19.88% of posts in April 1937, in April 1938 it rose to 19.4%. In the veterinary division 35 % posts belonged to Muslims in forest it was, 29.9%, in police it 26.7 respectively. 29.37 percent of posts of constables and head constable were held Muslims in December 1937. It increased to 30 percent in December 1937. In land records, it was 30, in government printing it was 29.7 respectively. In ministerial services, Muslims held 14.2 posts in April 1937 and 14.3 in April 1938. Press Note, Nagpur, by government of CPB, 21 January, 1940. GAD Papers MPSRRP, Confidential File no. 24-112/1941.
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Muslim intimidation and marginalization at the ground level.\textsuperscript{104} It believed that local bodies and municipal schools had succumbed to Congress influence in promoting the Gandhian cult and compelled Muslim students to wear Gandhi caps and celebrate Gandhi Jayanti. Vidhya Mandir scheme was criticized for Hinduising Muslim students by forced worship of Saraswati and Hanuman and celebration of Shivaji’s and Tilak’s birthday.

Muslim League demanded nomination of Muslim representatives for the exercise of governor’s special safeguarding powers by introducing separate electorates. Strict enforcement of stopping music before mosques, abolishing punitive police tax, enhanced representation in services, permission to slaughter cows in Mekher municipality were some of the other demands. Muslim League strongly recommended association of Muslim League workers in census operation as it feared that Congress could distort and misrepresent the Muslim figures. Enforcement of ‘Nawabzada-Shukla Agreement’, restoration of Lonar mosque in Buldanan district and Muslim primary education in Muslim hands were also demanded. All prominent members of Provincial Muslim League signed this memorandum.\textsuperscript{105}

A press communiqué by the CPB government testified after thorough investigations the charge of inadequate representation in public services as incorrect.\textsuperscript{106} However, most accusations of majority domination and intimidation were partially correct though at some places, commercial clash of interest had been guised in communal attire. At Dhamtari in Raipur, Biri trade interest between Hindus and Muslims resulted in a boycott of Muslim shops. As a counter reaction Anjuman high school

\textsuperscript{104} "Throughout the Province Hindus carried on unfettered propaganda through the Press and the platform for the complete boycott of the Muslims. Muslims trade and business was thus hit hard. Hindus were openly asked not to make purchases from Muslims not to pay their due to Muslims and Muslim shops were picketed in many places. Muslim fakirs living in villages were turned out, Muslim ‘Idgaha’ were desecrated. At Biswa cow dung and human excreta were thrown on the “Tazia” during Muharram and also in the mosque and in the Muslim library. Responsible officers of local bodies for employing Muslim labourers took Muslim contractors to task. Muslim ‘Tongawallas’ and taxi drivers were boycotted and Muslim employees of factories and in private services were gradually dispensed with”. Chief secretary to government of CPB to commissioners of Berar, Nagpur, Jubulpore and Chhattisgrah divisions, D.O. no. 17/30/II, 2 January, 1939. Political and Military Department Papers, MPSRRP, confidential file no. 174/40.

\textsuperscript{105} Muslim League Deputation to the Governor CPB, 13 January 1941. GAD Confidential Papers, MPSRRP, File no. 24-112/1941.

\textsuperscript{106} Press Note, Nagpur, by government of CPB, 21 January, 1940, MPSRRP, GAD Papers, Confidential File no. 24-112/1941.
teachers distributed leaflets urging boycott of Hindu shops among Muslims.\textsuperscript{107} Chandur Biswa Idgah was desecrated as revenge for the murder of Jagdeo Rao; however, no fakirs were turned out of the villages.\textsuperscript{108} As a result of this memorandum, the CPB government restored the option to attend religious practices to the students and school staff.\textsuperscript{109}

News of the Congress CDM added further insecurity and apprehension among Muslim League leadership. In their perception, the Congress was primarily a Hindu party overplaying the nationalist agenda. It exhibited enormous Hindu influence and power fulminating the Muslim community. Ensuing The Congress movement was seen as an attempt by the Hindu majority to threaten British government to concede to the Congress demands. The Muslim League perceived the Congress demands as fundamentally opposed and detrimental to the vital interest of Muslims.\textsuperscript{110} For protecting and safe guarding Muslim minority rights, Muslim League, as the sole representative of Muslims, resorted to stamping its aggressive and intimidating presence through huge meetings, large volunteer processions and powerful propaganda.\textsuperscript{111}

Anti-Hindu rhetoric, grievances and insecurities formed the core of Muslim League propaganda. Perpetual propaganda directed against the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha gained steady momentum through a systematically structured programme. In well-attended meetings, Muslims were exhorted to join Muslim League and Muslim National Guards, for their safety. Hindu Kafirs and those supporting them were

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{107} In Berar, newspapers Samaj Sevak and Maratha propagated boycott of Muslims. In Buldana similar propaganda continued in several meetings throughout the district. As a result, in Khangaon bazaars Hindus moved about discouraging intending purchasers for Muslim shops. In some villages, Muslims were disallowed to set up stalls. In Malkapur & Khamgaon in Buldana fruit trade rivalry and Dhamtari in Raipur, Biri trade interest between Hindus and Muslims encouraged this kind of boycott. DC Buldana to commissioner Berar division, D.O. no. 11, 8 January 1939, Political and Military Department Papers, MPSRRP, Confidential File no. 174/40.
\item \textsuperscript{108} DC Nagpur to commissioner Nagpur division, D.O. no. 15, 11 January 1939. Ibid. File no. 174/40.
\item \textsuperscript{109} G.S. Bhalja Secretary to Government CPB to all Commissioners of Division, Memo no. 1840-463-D-XIII, 20 March 1939 GAD Confidential Papers, MPSRRP, File no. 24-112/1941; Director of Public Instruction to all District Inspectors of School CPB, Memo no. 7967, 3 July 1940 GAD Confidential Papers, MPSRRP, File no. 24-112/1941.
\item \textsuperscript{110} Telegram from Governor General to the Secretary of State, No. 362-G, 24 February 1941, Home Political, File no. 3/31/1940.
\item \textsuperscript{111} FR, March, Second half, 1940, Home Political, File no. 18/3/40.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
criticized. The Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha were compared to dogs with the only difference between the two being that the Congress did not bark and the Hindu Mahasabha did. Muslim League opposed the concept of constituent assembly and expressed satisfaction at the acquittal of Chandur-Biswa case. Every year Muslim League vehemently celebrated Partition day on 19 April causing heartburn to Congress and Hindu Mahasabha. Muslim League demanded a Royal Commission for enquiry into communal tension and riots at Jubbulpore. All India Muslim League demanded protection of Muslim life and honor in CPB from the majority community that was making the day-to-day existence of the minority appalling and difficult for Muslims to live with dignity on the basis of Nagpur Muslim League resolutions. All these incidents caused hurt, insult and afflicted injury to their religious sentiments. In the backdrop of intensified Hindu militancy it was a manifestation of Muslim fear that Hindus after the experience of the Congress government had assumed a bold, high-handed disposition and were bent upon teasing, harassing, boycotting and turning out Muslims from the Hindu dominated localities.

Until 1939, Hindu communalism, manifested in Hindu Mahasabha and RSS propaganda, was confined only to urban areas. From 1940 onwards, Hindu Mahasabha was actively engaged in mobilizing Hindu masses throughout the province by holding weekly meetings especially in rural areas. The creation of Hindu National militia, ‘Ram Sena’ and ‘Shakti Dal’ by recruiting 400 new members to

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112 No-Confidence motion passed against Maulana Abul Kalam Azad FR, First half, March 1940. Home Political, File No.18/3/40.
113 Fazlul Haq in a Muslim League meeting at Nagpur. Chief Secretary to all District Collectors CPB. Secret D.O. No. C-852/627-Con. Pachmarhi, Political and Military Department Papers, MPSRRP, Spare Copies file, CPB Civil Secretariat 1941.
114 Home Political, Files no. 18/3/40 & 18/5/40.
115 Secretary to government of CPB to the secretary in charge office, Provincial Muslim League, no. C-862/Con. 7/9 June 1941. Political and Military Department Papers MPSRRP, Spare Copies file. FR, January, Second half, 1940, Home Political, File No.18/1/40.
116 Various instances were referred like volunteers of Hindu Lathi Sangh attacked the houses of three Muslims and subjected great humiliations, highly provocative anti-Muslim speeches caused attack on Muslim houses and desecration of graves, Ganpati idol procession passed a mosque with music & anti-Muslim slogans, biased pro-Hindu police, desecration of Shatranjipura mosque and lathi charge on peaceful Muslims offering prayers, arrest of Siddique Ali Khan Muslim League a central member AIML, Lihuwa Ahir of Mouza Sarwahi had ploughed and sown seeds in the graveyard of the Muslims. Secretary AIML to government of CPB, no. 2465-2494-II, 6 November 1940, GAD Papers, MPSRRP, Confidential file no. 4-2/1941.
counteract Muslim volunteer bodies was the prime agenda of Hindu Mahasabha. Hindu Mahasabha and RSS joint propaganda targeted the Pakistan scheme and Individual Satyagraha of Gandhi. Hindu militant leadership used the language of force and aggression. "If Muslims did not give up the Pakistan idea, Hindu youth would drive them out of India", and eulogized Hindu icons Tantya Topi, and Shivaji. Gandhi, was declared a traitor for following a meek and timid policy to appease Muslims. Hindu Mahasabha demonstrated Hindu solidarity by taking out Shivaji anniversary procession of 2,500 people and commemorated 1857 day at massive scale. Hindu Mahasabha rhetoric altered the commercial matrix with wide publicity in rural areas for each community to deal with their own community in Jubbulpore and Berar division. RSS, the kernel of Hindu Mahasabha, was deeply involved in expanding its organizational network along with Hindu mass mobilization in rural areas of the province. It was conducting training programme on a massive scale, 1,500 trainers attended annual summer classes of RSS. The birthday of Savarkar and Goorupuja were celebrated at several places and British government was accused of inciting Muslims for the Pakistan scheme.

The year of 1940, witnessed intensified widespread voluntary communal activity precipitating communal frenzy. Hindu-Muslim militancy manifested in multiple volunteer organizations like Medusa’s head and had taken deep roots in the interior most areas of the province. Unfettered, acrimonious Hindu-Muslim communal propaganda, in spite of constant warnings to speakers and newspapers by the Government resulted in mounting communal tension. The environment was

117 FR, February, First half, March, First & Second half, 1940, Home Political, Files no. 18/2/40 & 18/3/40.
118 FR, April, First & Second half, 1940. Home Political, File No. 18/4/40.
119 FR, May, First & Second half, 1940, Home Political, File No. 18/5/40.
120 Chief Secretary to all District Collectors CPB, Secret D.O. No. C-852/627-Con. Pachmarhi, Political and Military Department Papers, MPSRRP, Spare Copies file, CPB Civil Secretariat 1941; FR, January, First half, 1940, Home Political, File No. 18/1/40.
121 FR, May, Second half, 1940, Home Political, File No. 18/5/40.
122 FR, June, First half & August, Second half, 1940, Home Political, Files No. 18/6/40 &8/8/40.
123 Chief secretary to government of CPB to all DCs, letter Con. no. 496-377/Con., 8 September 1939, Political and Military Department Papers, MPSRRP, Confidential File no. 289/1939.
124 Chief secretary to government of CPB to the additional secretary to government of India, 20 February 1941, Political and Military Department Confidential, MPSRRP, File no. 174/40.
surcharged with hatred and distrust. The slightest stimulus of a provocation, rumour, disagreement or even a prank was enough to explode in a communal riot in every precarious locality.\textsuperscript{125} Both communities were on edge and it needed merely a small spark to inflame a wild fire.

In CPB whenever nationalist feelings reached the highest ebb, communal frenzy went into oblivion but never died down. In the absence of an immediate national agenda, engaging people's attention, the monster of communalism often struck back, always with more vengeance. With the news of the Congress CDM, communal frenzy started subsiding. Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League held peaceful meetings without any apparent communal tension.\textsuperscript{126} In the beginning of the IS in October, communal tension was resolved amicably in Pandhurna by an agreement between Hindus and Muslims.\textsuperscript{127}

The DC was mystified by the sudden volte-face of the Muslims and was not prepared to enforce this agreement. He found it ridiculous to allow all Hindu religious music outside the mosque even at prayer hours. Muslims agreed not to take out cow processions before cow sacrifice. Important members of Muslim and Hindu

\textsuperscript{125} Immediate cause of the riot Burhanpur riot was obstruction the Hindu procession with music passing through kotwali mosque during prayer hours by defiant Muslim crowd. Express telegram from Chief Secretary to Government of CPB to secretary to the Government of India, New Delhi, 19 March 1940, GAD, \textit{MPSRRP}, Confidential File no. 4-12/1940.; The CPB Gazette Extraordinary Published by the order of Chief Secretary to Government to government of CPB, 4 April 1940. \textit{Ibid.} File no. 4-35/1940; \textit{MPSRRP}, GAD Files no.4 [a]-12/42, DC Chhindwara to Commissioner Nagpur, 11/12October 1940; Muslim slaughtered cows instantly in two mosques after RSS marched past mosque with music during prayer hours resulting in communal fracas between RSS and Muslim boys. FR, February, Second half, 1940, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/2/40; At Saugor, rumors of conversion of low cast Muslims into Hinduism resulted in communal Friction. In Berar, immediately after Hindu Mahasabha Prabhat Pheri, bones and flesh was found fastened to idols in temples. FR, March, First half, 1940, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/3/40; At Jubulpore after Arya Samaj conference and procession with objectionable songs marching past at Kotwali mosque as soon as Kuffara was performed. FR, April, First half, 1940, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/4/40; Jain marriage procession with music passed through the mosque and was attacked by a number of Muslims and a minor riot took place in Jubbulpore. FR, May, First half, 1940, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/5/40; In Chhattisgarh division, communal tension revived due to conversion of a Raut girl. FR, May, Second half, 1940, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/5/40; Shatranjipura mosque riots took place at Nagpur when Hindus installed a Ganpati near a mosque and Muslims reacted by sacrificing cows. FR, September Second half, 1940, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/9/40; Under the imposition of IPC 144 in Jubbulpore, Hindus resolved not to burn the Holi fires as a protest until the expiry of DM's order and left the woods in the thoroughfares. Due to IPC 144 in Jubbulpore, Kali procession, Bharatmilaap and Ramleela were not performed and Hindu shopkeepers observed hartals. FR, February, First half, March, Second half, October, First & Second half, 1940, \textit{Home Political}, Files no. 18/2/40, 18/3/40 & 18/10/40.

\textsuperscript{126} FR, July, First & Second half, 1940, August, First half, 1940 & September, First half, 1940. \textit{Home Political}, File No. 18/7/40, 18/8/40 &18/9/40.

\textsuperscript{127} Express telegram Chief Secretary CPB to secretary to the Government of India. New Delhi, 19 March 1940, GAD, \textit{MPSRRP}, Confidential file no. 4-12/1940. DC Chhindwara to Commissioner Nagpur, 11/12October 1940, \textit{Ibid.} Files no. 4 [a]-12/42.
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communities of Pandhurna signed this agreement. Similarly, at the peak of the Individual Satyagrah there was nothing to report in the communal columns of the Fortnightly Reports.

Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League remained indifferent to Individual Satyagrah movement and continued with their involvement in volunteer mobilization and vituperative propaganda against each other. Hindu activism gained a sinister form and dominated political activity in the province. Muslim League under British patronage gained strength, pestering the British government with complaints. This period witnessed building up of Hindu communalism brick by brick. Hindu militia took roots in rural areas and poisonous propaganda constructed the altar for the future assassination of secular forces. Militant Hindu communalism left a lasting impression on young impressionable minds, as the bulk of RSS followers were mostly young people. Thousands of Godses were in the making in RSS training camps of trainers. RSS and Hindu Mahasabha used the language, metaphor and idiom of Hindu Raj. Communal riots in Dacca, Bombay and Ahmedabad created restlessness in the province resulting in minor incidents.

During the entire period of IS, 'Communal position did not remain exceptionally quiet in the province as reported ironically in the FRs'. Few exceptions of mutual communal settlements took place that created an illusion of extinguished fire though underneath the lava was boiling.

In the beginning of 1941, a communal riot occurred in Jubbulpore on conclusion of Muharram, when Hindus attacked a Muslim procession armed with lathis and

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128 Ibid.
129 FR, October, Second half, 1940, November, First & Second half, 1940, December, First & Second half, 1940, January, First & Second half, 1941, Home Political, File No. 18/10/40, 18/11/40, 18/12/40 & 18/1/41.
130 FR, January, First half, 1941, Home Political, File No. 18/1/41.
131 FR, April, Second half, 1941, Home Political, File No. 18/4/41.
132 Warnings and Speeches. Commissioner Hoshangabad to Chief Secretary of CPB, D.O. no. C/825, 21 December 1940, Political and Military Department, MPSRRP, Confidential Papers, File no. 224/1941; FR, First & Second half, July 1941 Home Political, File no. 18/7/41.
accompanied by police force. Police fired 29 rounds and four Muslims were killed.\textsuperscript{133} Jubbulpore newspapers and Hindus militia were blamed for this riot.\textsuperscript{134}

Hindu Mahasabha and RSS combine gained further strength by launching an intensive 'join army' campaign to counter Muslims and other enemies. It distributed "Hindu Civil Resistance" leaflets received from Bombay office of All India Hindu Mahasabha.\textsuperscript{135} For Hindu Mahasabha, Muslims were the first enemy and British were second in the line. Hindu Mahasabha supported recruitment in army with an objective, according to Moonje, "not so much to help war as to train the Hindus in the use of arms against future emergencies".\textsuperscript{136} In an intercepted letter of Dr. Moonje, the policy of Hindu Mahasabha is revealed clearly, "I fully believe in militarizing the Hindus and therefore an intensive programme should be organized for calling upon the Hindus to join the British army in all its branches, the reason being that our chief enemy and enemy number one are the Muslims of the League and I believe all our energy and attention should be directed towards preparing the Hindus to meet their menace."\textsuperscript{137}

The annual report of Berar Hindu Mahasabha in 1939-40, substantiates Hindu Mahasabha intolerance and their definition of Hindu strength: "Music before the mosque is generally the cause of riots but this Sabha has obtained orders and is proud to say that in Akola, the biggest Ganpati procession passes along the main mosque in the city with full music. How good it would be if all provincial Sabhas in Hindustan were to act up to the orders of the Privy Council and different high courts use the


\textsuperscript{134} Chief Secretary CBP to DC Jubbulpore, D.O. no. Con/56/XX III, 4 March 1941, Political and Military Department, \textit{MPSRRP}, Confidential Papers, File no. 76/1941.

\textsuperscript{135} FR, January, Second half, February, First half, March, First half, May, First half, 1941. \textit{Home Political}, Files no. 18/1/41, 18/2/41, 18/3/41 & 18/5/41; Chief Secretary to Government of CBP to DC Jubbulpore, D.O. no. 219-368/V 10 April 1941. Political and Military Department, \textit{MPSRRP}, Confidential Papers, File no. 76/1941.

\textsuperscript{136} FR, December, First half, 1941. \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/12/41.

\textsuperscript{137} CPB Governor [quoting letter of Dr. Moonje, 7 June 1941] to the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, letter no. 25, 8 June 1941, \textit{Linlithgow Papers}, MSS Eur F. 125/62.
same orders to play full music. It is really the weakness of Hindus that make them renounce their rights established by law.\textsuperscript{138}

Wickenden's report on Amraoti riots implicated Hindu Mahasabha and its vice president B.G. Khaparde, as the main culprits. Khaparde turned a personal animosity in a murder case into a communal issue that resulted in a riot.\textsuperscript{139} Hemeon's Report on Jubbulpore riot held Hindu aggression responsible and justified police action. Publication of this report was delayed because of apprehension of Muslims' indignation resulting in increased communal bitterness.\textsuperscript{140} One year after the riot, tension still persisted in Jubbulpore where ritual bone fires remained located at the same place since last year.\textsuperscript{141} Even after the publication of these reports the British government hesitated to take action against Hindu Mahasabha leaders as the organization was helping the British war effort in recruitment for combatant ranks.\textsuperscript{142}

Volunteers of both communities were bent upon overpowering each other at the local level. These clashes were sign of a narrow tussle for parochial dominance that combined effectively later and caused a national calamity in 1947 and 48. An explosive communal condition persisted in the province as every locality inhabited by Hindus and Muslims became susceptible to communal tension.\textsuperscript{143}

Communal tension continued and gained further momentum in Amraoti, Khamgaon, Basim, Mangrul, Balapur and Umarkhed, Badnera, Raipur, Hoshangabad, Mahasamud, Bhandara and Buldana.\textsuperscript{144} Provocations and hurt to religious sentiments like coloured water thrown on a boy, removal of a door from an old mosque, damaging of a Muslim tomb, cow slaughter, pig meat thrown inside a mosque,
burning of Holi fires a day before, the forcible exit of Muslims by Hindus from a theatrical performance, imitation of a Muslim funeral procession with a Hindu boy dressed as a Mohammedan lady and water dispute from a water storage tank were enough causes for mounting communal tension and clashes. At some places communal tension came as a shock as Hindu-Muslim relations were never strained earlier.145

The Akhara movement was another facet of Hindu activism which saw a prolific growth in the province from 1939 to 1943. These gymnastic associations were started for self-defense after the communal riots of 1927 and became popular in the province. These Akharas recruited pehlwans and wrestlers, who acted as professional bullies at elections, marriage processions and social gatherings for overpowering opponents. Akharas became a menace all over the province and two Akharas in Nagpur were declared unlawful. Hindu and Muslim activism was manifested in the masculine strength of Akharas.146

Provincial Muslim League continued with Muslim mobilization by holding huge meetings and putting forward demands and grievances.147 In these meetings, resolutions on separate electorates, Pakistan demand and rendition of Berar to Hyderabad were passed. Simultaneously, Khaksar movement also gained strength and was declared an unlawful association.148

In the first quarter of 1942, amidst intensive preparation for the ensuing CDM, the Congress after a long interval again picked up the theme of communal harmony on the national stage. For a free and independent India, Hindu-Muslim co-operation was sought. The Congress workers made sentimental appeals to the rural masses by

145 FR, March, Second half, 1941, June, Second half, 1941, October, First & Second half 1941, December, Second half, 1941 & January, First half, 1942, Home Political, Files no. 18/3/41, 18/6/41, 18/10/41, 18/12/41 & 18/1/42; Letter no. 430/Con. 12 March 1941. Home Political, File no. 3/3/1941.
146 CPB Governor to the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, 9 July 1941, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/62.
147 Muslim League demanded a Muslim education officer equivalent to the rank of deputy director and accused CPB government for pro-Hindu bias for withdrawing a case against Arya Samaj preacher for communal speeches. Linlithgow to the Governor CPB, Sir Henry Twynam, letter no. 31, 14 July 1941, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/62.
148 500 Khaksars were enrolled in Amraoti district. FR, May, Second half, 1941. Home Political, File no. 18/5/41. FR, September, Second half, 1941, Home Political, File no. 18/9/41.
adopting the metaphor of three colours of the Congress flag representing Hindus, Muslims and Congress, finally merging in to the Congress color. Appeals to join the Congress to strengthen the National Movement were made to Hindus and Muslims alike.\textsuperscript{149}

Police sub-inspectors from various rural parts of the province reported a number of The Congress meetings attended by Hindus and Muslims.\textsuperscript{150} In response to AICC circular, DCCs indicated communal solidarity in the rural areas. For instance, at Akola, Muslims accepted the president of VPCC as arbitrator in a Moharrum procession dispute. Saoner Taluqa Congress Committee observed 1st March as the death anniversary of Satyagrahi Majit Khan.\textsuperscript{151} Jamnalal Bajaj Day was observed by both Hindus and Muslims and was marked by spinning sessions.\textsuperscript{152} In Amraoti, Hindu and Muslim communal leaders tried to reach a peaceful agreement regarding processions.\textsuperscript{153} At the same time, sporadic outbursts at few places took place though mostly in urban areas.\textsuperscript{154}

During the course of the Quit India Movement, Muslims participated in the insurgency at the grass root level. They, like everyone else, assaulted the symbols of British government everywhere in the province. In Yaoli, Walegaon, Chanda, Nagpur, Chimur, Ashti, Jubbulpore, Amraoti Nagpur, Deoli, Hoshangabad, Ashti, and many other places, government agencies at local level [sub-inspector, deputy-superintendent of police, sub-divisional officer and district collector] frequently reported Muslim participation and advocated non-exemption of collective fine. For instance, DC Wardha wrote to commissioner Nagpur Division, “No community should be exempted from the liability to pay the collective fine. All communities had participated in this movement. The incidents were no doubt prompted by the

\textsuperscript{149} Report by Sub Inspector of Police [signature illegible] to D.S.P. Sausar, 24 April 1942. Political & Military Department, MPSRRP, File no. 137/42.
\textsuperscript{150} DSP Hoshangabad to DC Hoshangabad, D.O.no.Con/123, 10 May 1942, Political & Military Department papers, MPSRRP, [Confidential Files] File no. 146/42; DC Chhindwara to Commissioner Nagpur, D.O.no.226, 9 May 1942. Ibid. File no. 155/42.
\textsuperscript{151} G.R. Kulkarni, Secretary VPCC, to the General Secretary AICC in reply to circular no. 5, P-1/114, 13 March 1942. AICCP, File no. P22 [Part-I] /1942;Report of NPCC to AICC up to 16 March 1942, 15 March 1942. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} FR, September, First half, 1942. Home Political, File no. 18/9/42.
\textsuperscript{154} G.R. Kulkarni, Secretary VPCC, to the General Secretary AICC in reply to circular no. 5, P-1/114, 13 March 1942. AICCP, File no. P22 [Part-I] /1942.
half-baked ideas of the Congressmen and the Hindu Sabhaitees, Muslim Leaguers and Harijans were not the prime movers but the communities represented by these political parties were certainly associated after the fact that Hindus, Muslims and Harijans were present in the mob, as the investigations showed........

Another illustration is from Ashti, where the movement turned violent and many people were killed. DC Wardha reported, “My opinion is that no community deserves exemption either in Deoli or in Ashti and surrounding villages. The reasons are as follows- the population of Deoli is 6600 the town contains about 1200 houses. The Muslim population is 400 of about 40 houses. The Muslim population is 400 of about 40 houses. The population of adults may therefore be taken to be roughly 70 to 80. The SHO reports that half a dozen of the Muslims are Congress minded and they were seen taking part in the Congress movement prior to 14 August. In the arson and riot cases, four Muslims are being prosecuted.” Muslims took part with others in the assault at Yaoli, Walegaon. Another example, according to DC Wardha, “Ibrahim a boy of 14 and Majid an adolescent of 18 were actually seen cutting telegraph wires and burning post office. The other two viz. Munna and Babbu both 30 are reported seen in the mob, which burnt the police records in the station house. The PSI says that apart from the accused, he had seen a dozen Muslims in the mob. I think the facts above clearly indicate that there is no case for exemption of Muslims from payment of the collective fine at...... Ashti- The investigating officers have come to conclusion that Muslims took active part in the incident of brutal murder of S.I.P. and his staff.” Similar reports are found in various district level Government reports of the province.

155 From Chief Secretary CPB to all DC in the province, secret letter no. 1058-797/ V, 7 September 1942, Political & Military Department, MPSRRP, Confidential File no. 370/42.
156 From Home Dept. to Nagpur and all, D.O. no. 1030-720/Con., 5, September 1942. MPSRRP, Confidential File no. 370/42.
157 From Chief Secretary CPB to all DC in the province, secret letter no. 741 Wardha, 15 September 1942, Political & Military Department, MPSRRP, Confidential File no. 370/42. Ironically the same DC wrote this letter too which very poignantly clarifies the Government stand viz a viz Muslim League position on the exemption issue,” In view of the criterion laid down by Government in their Extraordinary Notification no. 1128-797-V, 14 September 1942, it has not been found possible for me to assess any collective fine on the Muslims at Ashti, Deoli and Salod Hirapur, although as reported in my D.O. 742, 15 September 1942, the investigation at Ashti and Deoli cases clearly showed the complicity of the Muslims in the crime perpetrated at the places. There we no case for assessing any Muslims to collective fine at Salod Hirapur. In effect, therefore no
However, due to insistence of the Muslim League that Muslims did not participate in Quit India movement as a community and the compulsions of British Government, "..........We shall have to bring out that it is essentially a Hindu movement from which Muslims have kept aloof", no fine was imposed on the Muslim community.\(^{159}\) This meant rejection of nation and acceptance of a separate identity and Muslim nationhood by the British government.

Muslims as a community were exempted but individuals taking part in disturbances were liable to be fined.\(^{160}\) In Mahakoshal, no collective fine was imposed on the Muslims in Jubbulpore, Nimar and Mandla districts with the exception of Hoshangabad, where ironically only one Muslim was fined one rupee as he continued to participate up to mid October. Total Collective fine on Muslims as follows:

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158 'Muslims did not keep out of the recent disturbances. The arrested persons include three Muslims who have had a direct hand in the incidents. The activities of an influential Muslim Malguzar of a roadside village, Khadsingi, from where the cutting of trees and breaking of culverts started, came to my notice long before I got to Chimur. 22 Muslims were assessed in the Chimur tract to a total fine of Rs. 6175 with the ten-mile radius there re about 100 families of Muslims. Three of the Muslims assesses are very big persons and they have borne the bulk of the assessment of Rs. 6175.' DC Wardha to Commissioner Nagpur division, D.O. no.847, 5 October 1942. Political & Military Department, MPSRR, Confidential File no.370/42.

159 "In the original assessment lists, 29 Muslims were assessed to a total fine of Rs. 6,950. In view of the latest orders of the Government, the fines on 24 persons have been cancelled, and the amount recovered from them refunded. Five3 Muslims who are known to have been taken part in the disturbances have been fined a total sum of Rs. 3375. The assesses include two rich persons, and hence the comparatively large sum Government officials have not been assessed." DC Chanda to Commissioner Nagpur Division, D.O. no. 768, 9 September 1942. IBid.; DC Amraoti to Commissioner Berar Division, D.O. no. 1061, 23 September 1942. IBid.; Commissioner Berar Division to Chief Secretary, D.O. no. C704, 6 October 1942. IBid; DC Wardha to Commissioner Nagpur Division D.O. no. 847, 5 October 1942. IBid.

Nagpur-Rs. 3,386, from seven cases, Chhattisgarh division Rs. 20, from three cases, Jubbulpore division Rs.1 from one case and Berar, nil. 161

In Chimur and Ashti out of the nine officers murdered, eight were Hindus. It would not be incorrect to say that mob fury was directed towards the government or any supporter of the government, irrespective of his community caste or creed. However, there is no evidence of communal violence in the Quit India Movement. 162

With the CDM going downhill, there was again a steady increase in the communal activity. Hindu Mahasabha and RSS propagated “unity amongst Hindus” and ‘atrocity campaign’ against the Chimur incidents. 163 Many district level RSS camps were held in Wardha, Sausar, Khandwa, Raipur and Akola attended by 2,000 people. 164 RSS was active during CDM in some parts of the province and made active preparations fearing the outbreak of a civil war due to communal disorder. At many places it joined hands with the Congress and was implicated in the riots and murder of Government officials. The primary difficulty with RSS and Hindu Mahasabha was that quite a number of its members were associated with war committees. An important provincial front organizer was Hindu Mahasabhaite interested in RSS activity. 165 At some places, The Congressmen also took interest in RSS activity complicating the situation. RSS gained strength by opening new branches in all districts of Mahakoshal, Berar and Nagpur. 166

With the onslaught of RSS volunteers backed by Hindu Mahasabha and an emerging Congress network of multiple volunteer organizations, Muslim League stressed the

161 Commissioner Jubbulpore Division to Chief Secretary C.P.&B., D.O. no.704, 6 October 1942. Political & Military Department MPSRR, Confidential File no. 370/42; Commissioner Nagpur Division to Chief Secretary Government of CPB, 15 October 1942, D.O. no. 4350-F/1, Political &Military Department MPSRR, Confidential File no. 377/42.
163 FR, October, First half, 1942. Home Political, File no. 18/10/42.
164 FR, June, First half, 1942, December, First & Second half, 1942, Home Political, File no. 18/6/42 & 18/12/42.
165 Chief Secretary CPB to Chief Secretary to the government of Sind, D.O. no. 1615-992/Con, 19 November 1942, Political & Military Department MPSRR, Confidential File no. 391/1942.
166 FR, September, First half, 1942, November, First half, 1942, Home Political, File no. 18/9/42 & 18/11/42.
need for “Muslim National Guards” in every mohalla.\textsuperscript{167} While earlier, Muslim alienation was more ideological, in the early years of 1940s, it began to manifest itself in more obvious ways as well. Muslim League leaders advised Muslims living in predominantly Hindu areas to arm themselves and enroll in Muslim Akharas. It also exhorted Muslims living in Hindu mohallas to migrate to Muslim localities.\textsuperscript{168} Underground Khaksar activity continued in Nagpur.\textsuperscript{169} Muslim League urged Muslims not to participate in Gandhi’s mass movement, as it would destroy all hopes of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{170}

The Muslim League leaders advised students in the name of Quran to abstain from the Congress CDM.\textsuperscript{171} Muslim League expressed satisfaction at the exemption order. As in the preceding years, preceding years Muslim League continued to organize thousands of extremely well attended meetings where the Pakistan Scheme was defended, Congress ministry and Gandhi were criticized, Sapru scheme was opposed and unfailingly on every 23 March, Pakistan Day and Jinnah’s birthday was celebrated without fail.\textsuperscript{172}

Keeping pace with the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha celebrated Savarkar and Shivaji Jayanti, and observed anti-Pakistan Day on 10 May without burning the effigy of Jinnah as decided. All these occasions were celebrated with great enthusiasm, along with Prabhat pheris, Bhagwa Flag, and communal slogans including the most offensive one like ‘Hindustan Hinduon ka nahi kise ke bap ka’.\textsuperscript{173} Ganpati utsav and Savarkar’s birthday. These celebrations remained a source of increasing communal tension Section 144 IPC was extended for another year in

\textsuperscript{167} FRs, April, first & Second half, July First half, 1942. \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/4/42 & 18/7/42.
\textsuperscript{168} FR, April, Second half, 1942, May, First half, 1942. August, First & Second half, 1942, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/4/41, 18/5/42 & 18/8/42.
\textsuperscript{169} FR, July, Second half, 1942. \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/7/42.
\textsuperscript{170} FR, June, First half, 1942 August, first & Second half, 1942, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/6/42 & 18/8/42.
\textsuperscript{171} FR, September, First half, 1942. \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/9/42.
\textsuperscript{172} FR, March, First & Second half, 1942, December, First & Second half, 1942, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/3/42 & 18/12/42.
\textsuperscript{173} FR, for the Second half, April 1942, June, First half, 1942. \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/4/42 & 18/6/42.
Jubbulpore on 23 May.\textsuperscript{174} The CDM had left behind a feeling of resentment among influential Hindus as negotiations for establishment of a National government had flopped. The resulting resentment was directed against the Muslim community.\textsuperscript{175} Provincial Hindu Mahasabha nominated V.D. Savarkar, for the presidency of the Cawnpur session.\textsuperscript{176}

On the one hand, the Muslim League refused to entertain any proposal or resolution that presupposed that Muslims were a minority. It believed in Muslim nationhood and claimed equality with Hindu nationhood. An extract from M.A. Jinnah’s letter is relevant in this regard: ”While Muslim India yields to none in desire to achieve freedom for all people of India, it cannot accept machination of those who speak of freedom for Hindu India only. We want our Hindu brethren to be free but do not want to be ruled by them........ Any attempt militating against Pakistan demand will lead to grave disaster in India at this critical moment.”\textsuperscript{177} On the other hand, Hindu communal organizations in hugely attended meetings referred to Muslims and foreigners as a disease that India had suffered from for a long time and were not willing to consider them a part of India, leave alone granting them nationhood.

The year of the Quit India movement remained free from any overt communal riots. However, at the ground level, both parties continued with communal propaganda and mobilization. Intensified Congress preparation and increasing volunteer mobilization, created insecurity in the Muslim mind about the Congress emerging as the dominant party and the British government conceding to its demands. As the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS were readying a militant volunteer front on a massive scale. As a reaction, Muslim League accelerated its volunteer activity and communal propaganda.\textsuperscript{178} During Quit India movement, government agencies reported, ‘Holi passed off

\textsuperscript{174} The CPB Gazette Extraordinary Nagpur, w no. 533-343-Con, T.C.S. Jayaratnam Secretary to Government of CPB, 19 May 1942.\textsuperscript{175} Political & Military Department, MFSRR, Confidential File no. 138/1942; FR, April, Second half, 1942; May, First & Second half, 1942, \textit{Home Political}, File no.18/4/42 & 18/5/42; FR, November, Second half, 1942. \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/11/42.

\textsuperscript{176} FR, October, First half, 1942, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/10/42.

\textsuperscript{177} FR, November, Second half, 1942. \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/11/42.

peacefully’, ‘Small Dussahera procession with no music’, ‘No communal incident’, ‘Remarkably quiet situation’,\textsuperscript{179} and ‘Nothing to report in the communal column’, However, in reality, there was much to report between the lines.

Schedule Caste leaders demanding exemption from collective fines in Nagpur and other places in the province added another strand to sectarian politics.\textsuperscript{180} All India Depressed Class Conference took place on 18 and 19 July and was attended by Dr. Ambedkar. In highly communal speeches a separate status for the depressed classes was demanded in Indian national life, on the basis of their separate identity from caste Hindus, politically and socially.\textsuperscript{181}

By 1943, Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha and RSS had emerged as strong opponents to the Congress. RSS had assumed a belligerent character. Two storerooms full of daggers, swords and spears discovered in Raipur bore testimony to this effect.\textsuperscript{182} It had access to the government, armed forces and security installation services. The organization was extremely anti-British, anti-Muslim and its membership was larger than estimated.\textsuperscript{183}

In hugely attended annual training camps of RSS all over the province, along with self-defence techniques, the spirit of patriotism as exhibited in Germany and Japan was emphasized as a role model. M.S. Golwalker and other Hindu Mahasabha leaders propagated the legitimate right of Hindus alone to live in India although others could do so with their permission. Golwarker recommended secret enrolment of honest and reliable young government servants, teachers and clerks to spread the influence of RSS. The idea of ‘Pakistan’ was ridiculed and strongly rejected. “India for Hindus only” was reinforced in public meetings by exhorting Hindus to join armed forces with the ultimate objective to dominate non-Hindus and establish “Ram-Rajya”.\textsuperscript{184} 175 RSS trainers imbued with Hindutva ideology were sent to various districts to organize and activate new RSS branches all over India.

\textsuperscript{179} FR, October, Second half, 1942, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/10/42.
\textsuperscript{180} FR, September, Second half, 1942, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/9/42.
\textsuperscript{181} FR, July, Second half, 1942, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/7/42.
\textsuperscript{182} FR, Second half, September 1943, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 18/9/43.
\textsuperscript{183} Intelligence Bureau H.O. Secret Activities of the RSS, \textit{Home Political}, File no. 28/3/43, Pol.
\textsuperscript{184} Hindu Mahasabha Conference in Damoh, A.I.H.M.S. \textit{Papers}, File No. 42/1943-44.
The Sangh grew at a rapid rate in the entire country with a massive propaganda and enrollment campaign. By April 1943, RSS had around 32,000 members in CP and 21,000 in Berar and Rs. 33,000 as annual fund collection. It had a total number of 2,500 branches with 3,00,000 memberships all over India. RSS propaganda intensified with an emphasis on unity of all Hindu youth organizations like Hanuman Akhada, and several other youth leagues. RSS opened women’s branches and tried to increase its popularity in the villages by enlisting depressed classes and inviting them to Holi celebrations.

RSS leader, V.D. Savarkar propounded his “Two Nation but one state theory” in the Berar and Nagpur region. He was awarded the D. Lit degree at Nagpur University and ‘Veer Savarkar Sanman Mandal’ launched a campaign to collect ten lakh rupees to be presented to Savarkar on his birthday. Sant Tukdoji Maharaja, whose affiliation with RSS made him dubious, observed prayer week in Nagpur, Jubbulpore, Betul, Raipur, Balaghat, Buldana and Yeotmal districts. At all places these kirtanas were very well attended though he was restricted from entering Chanda and Wardha districts due to Ashti and Chemur events. Yeotmal district council issued orders to its school teachers to attend these kirtans. Hindu Mahasabha continued ad nauseam its campaign criticizing government policy of suppressing the CDM related to Bhansali’s fast.

Hindutva propaganda by Hindu Mahasabha steadily consolidated and gained popularity. This led the All India Hindu Mahasabha to decide to hold its 26th session at Bilaspur in 1944. To muster support of the masses in Nagpur and Berar region, Hindu Mahasabha leaders projected Tilak as their ideal. On Tilak Jayanti, Aney and

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185 Governor CPB to the Viceroy, letter no. 3, 3 January 1943, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/64.
186 FR, December, Second half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/12/43.
187 FR, September, Second half, 1943, File No. 1. Home Political, File no. 18/9/43.
188 FR, August, First half, 1943. Home Political, File no. 18/8/43.
190 Sir H. Twynam to Linlithgow, letter no. 8, [Secret], 20 January, 1943. Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/64.
191 All India Hindu Mahasabha resolutions of 26th session, A.I.H.M.S. Papers, File no. C- 23/1939.
other Hindu Mahasabha leaders criticized Congress policy and boasted that the Hindu Mahasabha was following the policy laid down by Tilak.\(^{192}\)

The policy of Hindu Maha Sabha is best illustrated by an extract from Dr. B.S. Moonje's conversation with a correspondent in Delhi. "As for the policy of the Hindu Mashasabha, I say as follows:

(1) That we have no faith in and are opposed to Non-Co-operation and Non-violence, which forms the creed of the Congress. We believe in what is known as Responsive Co-operation, that is, actual contact and struggle with our opponents. Similarly, we believe in violence, organized scientifically on modern European methods, and we also believe that Swaraj will not be attained without violent struggles when the time comes. In short we believe in Responsive Co-operation which includes all this and also Non-Co-operation when it will suit to achieve our ends.

(2) That thus we are prepared to co-operate with actually the Devil, what to say of Britishers or the Muslims; our only condition is that such co-operation should suit to achieve our ends.

(3) That our co-operation with the Muslims is not of the same kind as that of the Congress, Congress believes that Swaraj cannot be attained without the co-operation of the Muslims. We believe that, when time will come, we can win Swaraj even in spite of the Muslim opposition. The Congress therefore surrenders to the Muslims and its co-operation with the Muslims is merely another word for surrender. Our co-operation is manly and fruitful, though it assumes different colours according to different circumstances in different Moslem-majority provinces. I hope I have made my position clear.

Responsive Co-operation = Struggle with opponents; Non-co-operation; Violence."\(^{193}\)

To counter the Hindu volunteer onslaught, Muslim League organized a defence committee in every town and reorganized the district Muslim League and National

\(^{192}\) FR, August, First half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/8/43.

\(^{193}\) Extract of Dr. B. S. Moonje, submitted by Mr. Pilditch for information on 27 July 1943. The Transfer of Power Vol. IV, 15 June 1943 to 31 August, 1944, MSS Eur. F. 125/156.

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Guards. The total number of Muslim League primary branches rose to 76 with around 15,167 members. All India States Muslim League meeting was held in Nagpur on 7 and 8 April 1943. Muslim League propaganda cast its shadow on all sections of Muslims in the province resulting in the alienation of Muslims within the The Congress. M.Y. Shareef an ex- Congress minister announced his resignation from the The Congress on the ground that The Congress did not provide him a field for service to the motherland. However, Muslim League could not lure Momins with a population of roughly 4.5 crores into its fold as they did not accept in the leadership of Jinnah.

Muslim League called Momins the ‘hirelings of the Congress’ denounced Congress as treacherous and rebellious and stated that Gandhi was pampered by the government. Muslim communal propaganda continued in the province unabated keeping pace with the Hindu Mahasabha. Khaksar leader in Nagpur, Allana Mashriqui, expressed gratitude to British government for lifting the ban on the Khaksar organization and called for a united Hindu-Muslims front against Japanese aggression. In Raipur, some leaders of the Khaksars were contemplating enlisting the Hindus and joining them with a uniform distinguished by the mark “OM”. Khaksars worked hard with continued propaganda to increase their strength to 50,000.

According to government reports, throughout 1943, no major communal riots and clashes took place in the province. In communal columns of the fortnightly reports, there was nothing to report. Raksha Bandhana, Holi and Id, Janmaashtami, Ganapati Utsav, Shab-i-Barat and Dussehra passed off peacefully as in the religious processions, lathis and other weapons were not allowed. Commissioner of

\[194\] FR, November, First - half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/11/43.
\[195\] FR, March, Second half & April, First half, 1943, I. Home Political, File no. 18/3/43 & 18/4/43.
\[196\] FR July, First half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/7/43.
\[197\] FR, first half, January, 1943, March, First & Second half, 1943, April, First half, 1943, May, First & second half, 1943, June, First & second half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/1/43, 18/3/43, 18/4/43, 18/5/43 & 18/6/43.
\[199\] FR, May, second half, 1943, June, First half 1943, August, First & Second half, 1943, September, First half, 1943, October, First half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/5/43, 18/6/43, 18/8/43, 8/9/43 & 18/10 /43.

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Jubbulpore expressed his surprise at the communal harmony in Jubbulpore something he had never witnessed before, ever since he had known the city. However, due to communal propaganda CPB was highly surcharged with communal venom. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League propaganda were stealthily fueling communalism. Actually, it was the chicken and egg story, no one knows who appeared first. However, a number of minor fracas averted by the police were reported everywhere. Trivial incidents that could have sparked communal riots in the province were averted. 

Government Response

After withdrawal of The Congress ministry, the administration came under British government again. With the Congress ministry gone, communal reporting changed the blame game, ‘Moharrum passed off peacefully with minor incidents at ten places in the province’. ‘Muslim League meetings, Aryasamaj, Hindu Mahasabha and RSS active, no communal tension.’ Though communal weather chart showed high turbulence, the local administration did not acknowledge it publicly.

Though the British government had accepted Congress as the dominant party representing the entire country, the Muslim League & Hindu Mahasabha eagerly provided the ploys needed by the British for power balancing. It was necessary for British survival to prolong the path to Independence by creating a communal impasse and the communal forces provided that ground. British government treated Hindu Mahasabha & Muslim League as two recalcitrant children permanently at

\[200\] FR, March, Second half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/3/43.

\[201\] FR, July, First half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/7/43; In Nagpur, a Muslim boy was slapped for running into a Hindu on a bicycle. This incident developed into a minor communal riot when Muslims of the locality gathered together with lathis in an aggressive manner. Bigger clash was averted when city superintendent of Police reached the spot. Governor CPB to the Viceroy, No. 3, 3 January 1943, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F 125/64; In Khandwa, two Muslim boys touched a pot of water belonging to a Hindu woman. Three members of the RSS rushed to the scene with their lathi but were warned and sent away by the police. In Balaghat, some miscreants desecrated two copies of the Koran in a mosque. This created considerable communal excitement, which died down after Muslims performed “Kuffara” by sacrificing a cow in the mosque compound. FR, July, Second half, 1943, Home Political, File no.18/7/43; Cutting of Peepal tree obstructed Tazia during Moharrum procession, minor trouble averted at Akola. FR, December, Second half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/12/43; At Katni, Muslim slaughtered a cow in spite of the protests of the Hindus. Intervention by the local authorities and factory authorities brought the situation under control. FR, December, First half, 1943, Home Political, File no. 18/12/43.

\[202\] FR, February, First & Second half 1940, September, First half, 1940, Home Political, File no. 18/2/40 & 18/9/40.
loggerheads. The British authorities patronized these divisive communal forces. “Our real trouble is that political parties other than Congress, the Muslim League and to some extent the Hindu Mahasabha by themselves are in so weak a position. We have nothing to gain and everything to lose by backing people who cannot stand without support from us against major organized political parties.” British support is best illustrated in CPB government’s unwillingness to declare RSS and Hindu Mahasabha as unlawful associations as members of both organizations were associated with war committees.

The political impasse due to communal implications was a blessing in disguise for the British government as it provided them an excuse to stay on. British Government perceived that Jinnah would end up getting far better terms than anyone could have hoped for from the ongoing communal impasse. The communal deadlock appeared as Gandhi would not move towards Jinnah as a representative of Hindus only and would not accept Jinnah representing Muslims on basis of Pakistan. “I cannot see the two major political parties coming together to solve the communal deadlock with which, the constitutional deadlock is inextricably involved. Inter communal differences are not of our making and to counseil patience until the end of war when the whole problem constitutional and communal must necessarily be reconsidered.”

Jinnah and Gandhi both appeared domineering to British, “I am under no illusion as to Jinnah is quite tiresome as Gandhi and Muslim League as capable of endeavoring to black mail us as the Congress.” Neither of the parties was ready to come forward and clear the constitutional and communal deadlock. British government also realized

203 CPB Governor to the Viceroy, Letter no. 4, 10 January 1941, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/65.
204 The provincial National War front for Berar was organized by a staunch Hindu Mahasabhaite FR, August, First half, 1943, Home Political, File no.18/8/43.
205 Linlithgow to Governor CPB, Sir Henry Twynam, letter no. 9, 6 March 1941, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/65.
206 CPB Governor Sir Henry Twynam to Linlithgow, letter no. 12, 14 March 1941. Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/62.
that the attitude of Muslim League was more illogical towards war than the Congress as it was not ready to commit help unless its political demands were met.\textsuperscript{208}

British government found their own creations, the Muslim League and Jinnah as representing the Muslim community for post war constitutional discussions, too difficult to deal with. It also realized that, Jinnah had emerged as a moderate winner in the Pakistan idea. He played the power politics to an audience susceptible to the attraction of a bigger idea simplified to the highest degree. The concept of Pakistan proved highly attractive to Muslim masses. It appeared to them a utopian state with Muslim majority, sans Hindu domination and an ideal place to live in. Though originally it was an abstract concept of poet Iqbal politically designed as “cover” for two main ideas, [i] preservation of Muslim position in Muslim majority provinces of Bengal, Punjab, NWFP and Sindh and [ii] securing better terms for Muslims in seven provinces, where The Congress and Hindus were a majority.

The harping of Pakistan idea was highly ludicrous for maintaining fundamental communal demand of separate electorate. The rhetoric of Pakistan had a hardening impact on Muslim mentality. The longer the British government allowed the political impasse of Cripps’s failure to continue, the more difficult it was for Muslims to give up the idea of separate sovereign nation state. The British deliberately followed this policy and let the million seeds of communalism germinate in India during these years. The Muslim League formed the view in these years that Pakistan had been ceded in principle. The popularity of the Pakistan idea manifested in Muslim League rhetoric further fueled Hindu communalism.\textsuperscript{209}

With the announcement of Quit India Movement, government of CPB grew apprehensive of Hindu Mahasabha and RSS militancy. The British authorities expected trouble from the Congress as well as Hindu Mahasabha and RSS. Some

\textsuperscript{208} FR, March, First half, 1941, April, First half, 1941& May, First half, 1941. Home Political, Files no. 18/3/41, 18/4/41 & 18/5/41; Linlithgow to the Governor CPB, Sir Henry Twynam, letter no. 10, 7 March 1941. \textit{Linlithgow Papers}, MSS Eur F. 125/65; Linlithgow to the Governor CPB, Sir Henry Twynam, letter no.50, 25/27 November 1941. \textit{Ibid.}; MPSRRP, Political And Military Department, Confidential Papers, File no. 76/1941, D.O. no. 219-368/V Chief Secretary to Government of CPB to DC Jubbulpore, 10 April 1941.

\textsuperscript{209} “I think I can claim myself to have suffered in no mild degree in the interest as you say, of humoring Jinnah and the league.” Linlithgow to the Governor CPB, Sir Henry Twynam, letter no. 43, 25 September 1941. \textit{Linlithgow Papers}, MSS Eur F. 125/65.
sections of RSS had shown sympathy with the Congress movement and therefore the government had issued instructions to DCs to keep a closer watch on the activities of the Sangh in different parts of the province.\footnote{210} The governor emphasized the need to takeover Hindu Mahasabha and RSS Headquarters in each district as well as leading personalities keeping in mind their past involvement in communal riots.\footnote{211} By this time, RSS had emerged as a highly structured and well-organized party comparable only to The Congress in the province. On the other hand, Hindu Mahasabha was loosely knit and did not have well-defined district and tehsil structures. Since the inception of August, revolution RSS was making active preparations fearing communal disorder and civil war due to anticipated anarchy.\footnote{212} In ARP, communal organizations were making claims to certain paid posts. In view of the strong communal prejudices in the town, the British authorities found it extremely difficult to fight against this narrow outlook.\footnote{213}

In June 1943, British government, under Section 93, tried to form an interim ministry with the help of The Congress rebels and Muslim League leaders: “I have little doubt myself that so far as the prosecution of the war and the keeping down of the general temperature of the Province goes, the Section 93 governments, abnormal as they may be, have performed a very real service and made a definite contribution, and I am by no means certain that a ministry dominated by careerists and living in constant dread of the reappearance of the major Hindu Political Party would really be too solid a foundation to work on.”\footnote{214} However, this interim ministry could not be formed due to the unreasonable demands of the Muslim League and the invincibility of Congress.\footnote{215} Dr. Khare was selected as non-official advisor in the Viceroy’s Council. The Governor hailed his selection, as he was the only one in the Congress. He was selected as a non-official advisor with the Governor’s recommendation as he hated

\footnote{210}{Chief Secretary to Government of CPB to Chief Secretary to the government of Sind, D.O. no. 1615-993/Con, 19 November 1942. Political & Military Department, Confidential Files, Strictly Secret MPSRR, File no. 391/1942.}
\footnote{211}{Governor CPB to the Viceroy, no. 3, 3 January 1943, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/64. CPB Governor to Linlithgow, letter no. 3, 13 February 1942. Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/63.}
\footnote{212}{Chief Secretary Jayaratnam to all DCs, DCPs and SDOs of Independent sub division, D.O. no 1465. *90/Con, 19 Oct. 1942. Political &Military Department, MPSRR, Confidential Files, [Strictly secret] no. 391/1942.}
\footnote{213}{FR, June, Second half, 1942. Home Political, File no. 18/6/42.}
\footnote{214}{Viceroy to Governor CPB, letter no. 36, 30 June 1943, Linlithgow Papers, MSS Eur F. 125/64.}
Communalism in CPB

Patel and had no illusions about Gandhi. He had criticized Gandhi in the language, which no other politicians had dared to use.\(^{216}\) He promised absolute support to the Government and indicated that his support for the war was consistent. He condemned Gandhi’s fast as he had been humiliated by the Congress high command in July 1938.\(^{217}\)

Conclusion

The emergence, formation, consolidation and expansion of Muslim League in CPB took place during the twenty-eight months of the Congress rule. Emergence of Muslim League as a sole political party claiming to represent Muslim interests is significant. One major reason for its rapid development was its confrontations with the Congress party. The Congress, being a majority party consisted of a majority of Hindus. Muslim League treated acceptance of office by the Congress as tantamount to establishment of Hindu Raj over Muslims. The apprehension of being a minority community under the tyranny of a Hindu Raj led to abandonment of all rationality. The imaginary fears and suspicions about the Congress ministry led to their confrontation with the Congress. The Muslim League saw every move of the Congress, however logical and rational through a communal lens and exacerbated communal tension. Muslim League fully exploited every opportunity to malign Congress as a Hindu party.

Hindu and Muslim grass root activism gained strength during the ministry period in the backdrop of communal competition manifested in ‘night pheris’ and ‘Muslim Akharas’ vis-à-vis ‘Prabhat Pheris’ and Hindu ‘Akharas’. Slight provocations of volunteer organizations generated violent eruptions. The attitude of the Congress overall was secular but some aberrations existed and these affected the Congress image in the eyes of Muslims.\(^{218}\)

\(^{216}\) Chief Secretary of CBP to DC Jubbulpore D.O. no.-Con/56/XX III, 4 March 1941, Political & Military Department MPSRR, Confidential File no. 76/1941.

\(^{217}\) FR, January, First half, February, First half & March Second half, 1941, Home Political, File no. 18/1/41, 18/3/41 & 18/3/41.

\(^{218}\) “Muslims complaint of local Congressmen’s Hindu bias and accused them of favouring Hindu Candidates while distributing election tickets for municipal committees” - Complaint of a Muslim candidate of Jalagao Taluqua to Kripiani, 17 August, 1938. Appeal of Muslim Congress member of Digras Taluqua, 17 August, 1938. AICCP, File no. P-22 [part -II]/1938.
The British policy towards the Muslim League and its confrontations with the Congress ministry was peculiar in its duality. In public, they blamed the Congress leaders and ministers for adopting a communal bias against Muslims. In private, however, they admitted the baselessness and exaggeration of Muslim fears and imaginary tyranny of the Hindu-raj. Their imperial interests influenced their judgment of Congress and Muslim League relationship. Thus by 1939, Muslim League had emerged as a powerful Muslim political party and the alienation of a large section of Muslims from the Congress party was complete. On the other hand, Hindu communalism manifested in multiple volunteer organizations was gaining strength steadily. In the context of CPB it became visibly clear that the Communalism of majority is always more dangerous and intimidating than the minority communalism as it generates thousands of malignant wide spread sectarian growths in the body politic of the nation.

Why the Congress acted as an indolent supine parent when two siblings were fighting destructively, remains a problematic aspect of this phase. The Congress ignored the bullying of the bigger brother, overlooked the offence of the younger one and mutely watched the fight. The two years of the Congress rule witnessed highly surcharged communal atmosphere in CPB due to communal rhetoric of Muslim fears and ghost of majority dominance and malignant Hindu propaganda. The Congress did not launch any programme to solve the communal tangle and did not seek an alternative to quell Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League. It declared no desire to launch a united Hindu-Muslim front to counteract the communal menace.\(^{219}\) It addressed communal concerns when need for mass support became imminent for direct confrontation against the British. The Congress failed to create an alternate ideology to defuse the communal problem.

Communalism is anti thesis of nationalism. In fact, the entire structure of Pakistan emerged during this period under the joint authorship of Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League in the backdrop of colonial arena.

\(^{219}\) Forward Block propounded to build a united Hindu-Muslim front. FR, May, first half & June, Second half, 1940, *Home Political*, File no. 18/5/40 & 18/6/40; NPCC and VPCC indicated the necessity of declaring RSS a communal organization to AICC working committee. RSS was defined as a Hindu secret organization for the establishment of Hindu Raj, against Congress. RSS men were generally found to create disturbances in Congress meetings. D.M. Damle, Secretary NPCC to Babu Rajendra Prasad, President INC, 9 August, AICCP, File no. P22/1939-40; Secretary VPCC, to the General Secretary AICC, 28 September 1942. *Ibid.*