CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL REFLECTION
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The conquest of India by the Turks ushered in a new era in the chequered history of India. The cultural amalgamation took place. This cultural synthesis led to introduction of new traditions in society and polity of the country. After the fall of the Mughals, the Muslims ceased to be a dynamic force in India. The Muslims lost political power, with this they even lost their hope for living. Farquhar rightly said, "the whole community sank with the empire"¹. The Muslims in India, remained frustrated and under subjugation. From time to time they made futile attempt to overthrow the British rule to regain their lost regime as it would give them all the offices in a country where office is everything², Sleeman explained.

It is now a well-established fact that from the beginning of their supremacy in India, the British did not trust the Muslims. They always regarded Muslims as potential threat to their rule in India. This fear and suspicion against the Muslims continued, even Heber, who had an admiration for the culture and characteristic of the Muslims, apprehended such a danger against the Muslims³. For the Muslims, therefore, the rebellion of 1857 was not just a revolt against the British, it was their last desperate bid for the recovery of their privileges. To quote Sir S.H Cunningham: "the Musalman had a personal grievance. He was

feeling the dual pain of humiliated authority and tarnished prestige⁴. But the fact is that the Muslims share in the revolt itself was no greater than that of the others. The Muslims had to suffer more because the British suspected them the most. George Campbell admitted that the most obvious, popular and pressing theory is that Mohammadans have rebelled⁵. The prevalent opinion among the Englishmen was that the Muslims in India are great danger to their rule. It became almost a habit with British officials to put the blame for every thing that went wrong, on the Muslims. Towards the Hindus, on the contrary, their attitude was generous and they were accommodated in administration while Muslims were deprived. "The Muslims forfeited the confidence of their foreign rulers" said Alfred Lyall, and consequently "lost their numerical majority in the higher subordinate ranks of the civil and military services"⁶.

At this occasion Sir Syed emerged as saviour of the Muslims and wrote a pamphlet titled 'The loyal Mohammadans of India'. In this paper Sir Syed Ahmad tried to convince the British that in no way Muslims are anti-British. He further explained in detail about the services rendered by the Muslims during the mutiny. At one place referring to the prevalent belief that the Muslims were the chief instigator of the rebellion, he said: "Some of the acts of that horrible drama have already been exposed but as day by day all the particulars are

⁴ Cunningham: Earl Canning, p. 65.
⁵ Campbell, Sir George, Memoirs of My Indian Career, II, p.p. 391-402
gradually brought to light, then the naked truth stands revealed, with this glorious fact stand out in prominent relief to the world that if in India there was one class of people above every other, who from the principles of their religion, from habits and associations, and from kindred disposition were bound with Christians, in their dread hours of trial and danger, in the bonds of amity and friendship, then those people were the Muslims, and they alone and then will be effectually silenced the tongue of slanders, now so loud in the condemnation of the Muslims". That tongue was no doubt, silenced but it took a long time and consumed much of the energies of Sir Syed Ahmad and his companions. Against such a bleak background the Muslims began their struggle for survival under the British.

The Muslims now firmly believed in cyclical theory of civilization where a civilization is born to die. This attitude of the Muslims gradually assumed alarming proportions. It was not only proving fatal to the Muslims but dangerous to the proper working of administration itself especially because one section of the Indian people was advancing and the other was decaying. Earl of Mayo was the first British ruler who paid a due attention towards educating the Muslims. Later on Sir William Hunter, who wrote *Indian Mussalmans*, brought for the first time, a touch of urgency to the whole situation. This work had some influence on subsequent government policy towards the Muslims. Though the

British realized that something ought to be done, but what should be the way out, it was yet to be decided.

The Muslims who till recently enjoyed the fruit of higher services, now they are ousted and deprived of all post, and positions. Syed Ameer Ali explained by means of facts and figures, how the Muslims had been driven away from the public services and the independent professions, and he suggested the British government to remove the disproportionate ratio of Hindus and Muslims in the services of the state. Gradually as the situation deteriorated, the Muslims leaders began to clamour more and more for special treatment. The British government also became a little more attentive to their grievances as the nationalist movement started gaining strength. Now the turn was of Hindus who were looked down with suspicion and the British started wooing the Muslims showering all sort of blessing towards them. So the Muslims were advised to take full advantage of modern system of education to ameliorate their backwardness.

The Muslims however could not remain completely unaffected by the political situation. As English education spread among them, their interest in politics also increased. Nawab Abdul Latif, who founded the Mohammedan Literary Society in 1865, made the first attempt in this direction. The society anyhow managed to attract the attention of the British authorities towards the

current problem of the Muslims. Politically, the society was loyalist one. No criticism of the government was allowed. Though the society did not played any significant role in creating political consciousness among the Muslims, it rendered valuable service by popularizing among the Muslims to take up the study of English language and literature.

The next move in this direction was made by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He founded Scientific Society on January 9, 1864 at Ghazipur. In his inaugural address, G.F.I. Graham, the first biographer of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan said, "for the first time in the annals of Hindustan, has commenced a society, in order to bring the knowledge and literature of the nations, of the western world within the reach of the immense masses of the people of the east."\(^9\)

Explaining the object of the society and reason for the formation, Sir Syed lamented the colossal ignorance of the native about the manners and customs of the European nations and he laid special stress on political education. "Political economy, he said," formerly known to us but none of the works for all ancient authors on it are now extent - from a want of knowledge of political economy. The native of India utterly in the dark as to the principles on which the government of their country is carried on"\(^10\). The Society translated into Urdu and published many important European works on politics,

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10. Graham, op, cit., pp. 52-54
economy, and science. Influence of these works in moulding public opinion among the educated Muslims was commendable.

In 1866, he established another political organization namely the British Indian Association. The purpose of the Association was to bring into notice to the British Parliament about the problems and grievances of the people of India. Later on Syed Ameer Ali decided to form a political organization for the Muslims called the Central National Mohammedan Association. This was the first an organized effort at bringing the Muslims together on a political platform. These organizations became a link between the government and the masses. The leaders of these organizations were consulted by the British authorities in matters of legislation and governance of the country. Similar organizations were started by Hindu leaders for example Landholder's Association, which had very little to do with the Muslims Landholders, so was the case with the British Indian Association. The same was true of Sir Syed's Scientific Society, which cared mostly for the Muslims. But all the Organizations were free from any sectarian influence. Later on the change in the working of these organizations was noticed. With the passage of time a communal colour began to influence and the difference between the two communities widened with political awakening and constitutional changes in India.

After the revolt we notice a phenomenal increase in the vernacular press. It was during this period that Indian society underwent a rapid transformation,
for which a number of factors were responsible. The rise and growth of Indian nationalism has been traditionally explained in terms of Indian response to the stimulus generated by the British Raj through creation of new institution, new opportunities, resources etc. In other words, Indian nationalism grew partly as a result of colonial policies and partly as a reaction to colonial policies. Indian nationalism was the product of a mix of various factors for instance worldwide upsurge of the concepts of nationalism and right of self determination initiated by the French Revolution. The dawn of the 19th century witnessed the birth of a new vision – a modern vision among some enlightened sections of the Indian society. This enlightened vision was to shape the course of events for decades to come and beyond. This process of reawakening is defined as the "Renaissance".

Factors like offshoots of the process of modernization initiated by the British in India, (strong reaction to British imperialist policies in India, political, administrative and economic unification of the country, western thought and education, role of Indian press etc.) contributed a lot in the growth of Indian nationalism. During the last quarter of the 19th century press made a stupendous growth. It is interesting to note that in 1877 there were about 169 newspapers published in vernacular languages and their circulation reached up to one lakh. Progressive character of socio-religious reform movements also helped in intellectual awakening. Indian society in the 19th century was caught in vicious
web created by religious superstitions and social obscurantism. Social conditions were equally deplorable. Casteism was another curse upon the society. The colonial rule in India was followed by a systematic attempt to disseminate colonial culture and ideology as the dominant cultural current. Faced with the challenge of the intrusion of colonial culture and ideology an attempt to reinvigorate traditional institutions to realize the potential of traditional culture developed during the 19th century. The impact of modern western culture and consciousness of defeat by a foreign power gave birth to a new awakening. There was awareness that a vast country like India had been colonized by a handful of foreigners because of internal weaknesses within Indian socio-political and cultural structure.

During the last decade of 19th century, the rising tide of nationalism and democracy also found expression in movements to reform and democratise the social institutions and religious outlook of the Indian people. Factors such as growth of nationalist sentiments, emergence of new economic forces, spread of education, impact of modern western ideas and culture and increased awareness of the world, strengthened the resolve to reform. The important intellectual criteria, which gave these reform movements an ideological unity, were rationalism, religious universalism and humanism. Social relevance was judged by rationalist critique. The social reform movements were also an embodiment of a new humanitarian morality, which induced the notion that humanity can
progress and has progressed and that moral values are ultimately those which favour human progress.

Modern education, administrative unification and economic policies of the British, gave rise to a new middle class intelligentsia. Percival Spear says, "the new middle class was a well-integrated all-India class with varied background but a common foreground of knowledge, ideas and values... it was a minority of Indian society but a dynamic minority... it had a sense of unity of purpose and hope". This middle class proved to be a new soul of modern India and in due course, infused the whole of India with its spirit. This class provided strength to the Indian National Congress in all its stages of growth.

Different socio-religious reform movements generated a hope and aspiration, Rippon's liberalism further kindled a new ray of hope. The foundation of Indian National Congress was a manifestation of the general unrest and the founding of an all India organization attracted the attention of the people. It provided a political platform. The Indian National Congress, since then remained a central theme in the vernacular press and it continued to be a political force in India. It created a sense of commonness. The Times reporting on the inaugural session of the Congress said: "for the first time, perhaps since the world began, India as a nation met together". That alone marked an epoch in modern India.

With the foundation of Congress, political opinion in the country began to assume a new dimension. A new vision was set before the nation. The first session of the Congress was held at Bombay. From every part of the country people assembled there and discussed new vistas for the country. During the first phase of its existence, the Congress retained the character of a "loyal opposition" accepting moderate aims and expressing faith in constitutional methods of activity. W.C. Banerjee was elected the president. The Indian Mirror reported that, "people of different races from different parts of India gathered together, met on a common platform, exchanged view, and ideas with each other, cultivated brotherly feelings among themselves and discussed the most important questions effecting the political welfare and progress their common country", None of the vernacular press could afford to neglect it especially when a good number of journalists participated as delegates.

The Indian Spectator characterized these deliberations of three days as record of the most brilliant achievement of British rule in the east, the dawn of a new India from the point of view of the politicians, the harbinger of indirect if not of direct representation. The Amrit Bazar Patrika was delighted at these leaders of the society who had come from different and distant part of the

14. W.C. Banergee (1844-1906) Brahmin from Bengal; President, Indian National Congress, 1885; Member, Bengal Legislative Council.
15. January 6, 1886 (quoted in Voice of India, January 1886 a Bombay monthly giving the views of important newspapers of the country on burning questions of the time.
country to deplore their fallen condition. There was mixed reaction in the press on the establishment of the Congress, a few expressed satisfactions over its foundation while others reacted sharply. Liberals in England, however, displayed satisfaction at the Indian attempt to articulate itself. Though the Anglo-Indian press and the British civilians quickly perceived the danger that lay ahead if a section of Englishmen themselves allied with the Congress to end their privileges. When the Congress was established in 1885, much high-ranking British officials supported the Congress. In fact Lord Reading, the governor of Bombay was to have inaugurated its first session. But as it grew its strength and became increasingly critical of British administration, the officials became alarmed and suspicious of its activities. They even publicly condemned it.

The liberals at home were warned to beware of Dadabhai Naoroji whose demand of representative government if accepted would lead to abdication of Englishman's authority in favour of nationalists like Dadabhai, S. N. Banerjee and their followers. According to the Anglo-Indian press, western education had imparted the lesson of public speaking and the cry for legislative reform to the Indians, who were motivated by the desire to get fresh opportunities for oratorical display.

The hostility of the Anglo-Indian press and its incitement to Muslims, prompted the Congress leaders to direct their energies towards registering the

18. Ibid., December 29, 1886.
support of all section of the society. Because just after the first session of the Congress held at Bombay. The Englishman, one of the fore-most Anglo-Indian newspapers, denounced its formation by calling it a "Hindu Organization". Since the next session was to be held in Calcutta, S.N. Banerjee initiated talks to solicit the support of the Muslims with their leaders like Syed Ameer Ali and Nawab Abdul Lateef.

The Central Mohammedan Association set before it the objective of the political regeneration of Indian Muslims and put forward before the British government their just and reasonable claims. Central Mohammedan Association also presented their grievances to the government for effective measures.

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19. Quoted by the Indian Mirror, Dec. 1887, Commenting on this Condemnation of the Congress as a "Hindu Congress" A.C. Mazumdar wrote "...as if the Hindus were altogether a negligible factor in the country and that such a disqualification was sufficient for its disparagement in the elimination of the public and to discredit its weight and importance with the authorities". See his Indian National Evolution, p. 141.

20. Syed Amir Ali, founded Central National Mohammedan Association in 1872 which initiated the first organized effort at bringing the Muslims together on a political platform, with its headquarters at No. 2 Royal Street Calcutta. The Central National Mohammedan Association was founded to obviate the difficulties under which the Mohammedan laboured. Prince Mohd Farrukh Shah, a great grandson of Tipu Sultan was elected as President and Ameer Ali its Secretary and Treasurer.

21. Syed Abdul lateef founded the Mohammedan Literary Society in April 1865, with its headquarter at No. 16 Tolatollah Lane in Calcutta. The object of the society was "to impart useful information to the higher and educated classes of the Mohammedan.

22. K.K. Aziz says that the importance of the National Mohammedan Association in the 19th Century was second only to the Aligarh Movement, see Ameer Ali, His Life and Work, p. 74.

23. The Association presented Memorials to Lord Ripon in 1882 and to Sir Stewart Colvin Bayley in 1888 pointing out the discriminated in the Civil Services between the Hindus and Muslims.
Unlike Sir Syed, Ameer Ali strongly favoured political activity on the part of the Muslims\(^\text{24}\). This explains why Ameer Ali laid great emphasis on political grounding. Ameer Ali's contribution to Muslims politics is more significant and more powerful than Sir Syed, Ram Gopal rightly observe that "while Sir Syed was himself an institution, Ameer Ali created an institution which extended its activities as far West as Karachi and as far south as Bangalore\(^\text{25}\).

In response to the Congress invitation, the Central Mohammedan Association decided to abstain from participation in the proposed congress\(^\text{26}\). The Association fully agreed with the Congress objective but differed only in respect of the timing. As a result a large number of Muslims decided not to participate in its deliberation. Following the example of Mohammedan Association, Nawab Abdul Lateef and his Mohammedan Literary Society also decided not to participate in the deliberations of the Congress. The conservative Anglo-Indian press publicized the refusal of the Muslims to associate themselves with the Congress. In England, the large section of the press began to apprehend danger on account of the rise of nationalism. The press asked the government to adopt the policy of ruling India by setting two major communities against each other, and to turn the more backward condition of the


\(^{25}\) Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims – A political History*, p. 44.

\(^{26}\) The Central National Mohammedan Association had also declined to participate in the Congress Session, on the ground that it was useless to raise a hue and cry against the government which was doing its best to carryout reforms. See Administrative Report of NWP and Oudh for the year ending 31st March 1888, p. 168.
Mohammedan community to advantage by using their loyalty as a claim to preferential employment in the service of the state, and opening to them the career of army, high pay, high position and honours. It is significant that it was not the Muslims but the official Anglo-Indian Press that began to raise their voice for the loss which the Muslims might suffer in future. In this atmosphere of suspicion the second Congress was convened at Calcutta in 1886. Thirty three out of the 436 delegates who attended the Congress were Muslims. However to attract a better Muslims representation Congress invited Badruddin Tyabji to preside over the deliberation in the third Congress. Badruddin Tyabji regarded the formation of Congress as the mark of a new epoch in the history of the nation, and a signal that the distinction of the different races had disappeared and they had began to work together. However, his views were not shared by other Muslims leaders and sympathisers – notably Sir Syed and Ameer Ali whom he attempted to persuade to co-operate with the Congress. This was the triumph for the Congress organizers who

27. Husain, B. Tyabji, Badruddin Tyabji – A Biography, p. 175.
30. The following table shows the strength of the Muslims delegates in the annual Congress 1885-94.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>1886</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>436</td>
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<td>1887</td>
<td>497</td>
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<td>965</td>
<td>221</td>
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<td>1248</td>
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<td>1502</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1889</td>
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<td>1894</td>
<td>1118</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1163</td>
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through him provided the first effective reply to the anti-Congress agitation which was being worked out with much intensity and vigour\textsuperscript{31}.

Till this time Sir Syed concentrated on education and social reform of the Muslims. But the latest Congress effort to induce Muslims to come with in its fold infuriated him. And the outcome was his famous speech what is called "Lucknow outburst"\textsuperscript{32} against the Congress. Sir Syed, in his speech, came out bitterly against the Congress. He advised his co-religionist to remain loyal to the Queen. But nothing stopped Sir Syed's anti-Congress enthusiasm. As days passed he was more than convinced of the wisdom of his stand which was praised by British officials both in India and England.

Sir Syed believed that the moment, Muslims were dragged into political agitation they would be completely ruined. The only hope for their future lay in the stability and continuance of British rule in India. To his co-religionists, he talked bluntly, warning them that if they joined the Congress, nothing but national disaster lay in store for them. Under a system of representative government, their future was dark; that system would only lead to the perpetual subjugation of the Muslims by the Hindus. Sir Syed developed his fears on three main grounds: (1) that the Hindus and Muslims were two different

\textsuperscript{31} See an editorial, The National Congress and its critics in the \textit{Tribune}, Nov. 9, 1887.

\textsuperscript{32} Sir Syed delivered the speech, on Dec. 28, 1887. \textit{The Pioneer} quoted on Jan. 11 and 12, 1888. The Times referred to the speech as "one of the most remarkable political discourse ever delivered by a native of India (January 16, 1888).
nations\textsuperscript{33}, inspite of the fact that they drink from the same well, breath the air from the same city and depend on each other for his life; (2) that representative institutions, were unsuited to the conditions in India. Sir Syed said that if universal suffrage as granted in America, granted to the people of the India, the situation would be precarious. In this condition the Muslims voters would vote for the Muslims candidates and the Hindu voters would vote for the Hindu candidates. In this game of number politics, Hindu would certainly have an upper hand. Then what could be the surety of safeguard of Muslims interest; (3) that the Muslims must depend on the British for the safeguarding of their interests and for their effective representation.

Sir Syed's speech created a great furore throughout the country. The Hindu press bitterly criticized his approach. The \textit{Indian Mirror} called him a tool in the hand of our enemies – who has covered himself with shame and disgrace\textsuperscript{34}. \textit{Young Bengal} described his speech as "queer foolish, childish, sycophantic"\textsuperscript{35}. The papers like The Bengali, The Indian Spectator, The Hindu Patriot and The Hindu, were equally critical but their tone was much more restrained and dignified. The \textit{Muslims Herald} on the other hand was with all praise for him. The Congress leaders were equally bitter against Sir Syed. He was accused of creating ill-feeling and hatred between the two communities.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{The Pioneer}, January 11, 1888, Sir Syed always referred to the Muslims in political controversy as a "nation". The Hindu newspapers as often challenged this contention of Sir Syed.

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{The Indian Mirror}, January 25, 1888.

\textsuperscript{35} Quoted in \textit{Pioneer}, February 2, 1888.
For a long span of time Sir Syed maintained silence, but then he broke his silence and said he was no harbinger of ill-will between the Hindus and Muslims. He said: "there is no person, who desires more than I do, that friendship and union should exist between the two people of India, and that one should help the other. I have often said that India is like a bride whose two eyes are the Hindus and Muslims. Her beauty consists in this that her two eyes be of equal luster".36

Theoder Beck, the principal of MAO College had a great influence upon Sir Syed and convinced him that; parliamentary system of government was suited to a country containing two or more nations tending to oppress the numerically weaker. The Anglo-Indian press was delighted at Sir Syed's public speech and praised him for his wisdom. The Englishman described Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as true leader of the Muslims. Whereas Badruddin Tyabji as having no influence on the Muslims masses. The vernacular press warned the Muslims not to be a tool in the hands of English, who were true enemy of the country and who had adopted the policy of "Divide and Rule".

On August 12, 1888 Sir Syed appealed both Hindu and Muslims who were opposed to the Congress to join together to counteract the false impression created in England by the supporters of the Congress that the entire people of India were with the Congress and to show to the British public that not only Muslims but also many influential and powerful Hindus were opposed to this

movement. For this purpose he formed the Indian Patriotic Association which was actively supported by Raja Sheo Prasad of Banaras. Raja of Bhinga, Munshi Naval Kishore etc.

The Congress leaders on the other hand continued their efforts to win over the Muslims. The presence of small number of the Muslims delegates was attributed to the present lack of higher education among the Muslims. The Muslims from every part of India participated in the Congress session and showed keen interest in its proceedings. The popular Muslims paper of Madras termed it as an assembly for the public weal. Badruddin Tyabji gave an assurance that the Congress would not discuss any matter to which the Muslims as a body were opposed. Sir Syed was of the view that the moment the Muslims resort to agitative politics their interest would be severely damaged. Thus the only hope for their bright future lay under the existing British rule in India.

The alliance of the officials with a section of a native gentry and journalists produced a reaction in favour of the Congress. The most widely circulated Urdu journals of the country, Paisa Akhbar, Lahore, edited by Maulvi Mahboob Alam openly expressed its sympathy with the Congress cause.

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38. Shams-ul-Akhbar, January 9, 1888.
39. For Tyabji letter see The Pioneer, April 2, 1888.
40. Dost-i-Hind, Dec. 20, 1888 announced the decision of the editor of Paisa Akhbar approving the Congress programme.
In the midst of such hostility and opposition, the fourth congress met at Allahabad in 1888. A special feature of the Allahabad Congress was the Association of Anglo-Indians and Muslims with it. The delegates, who participated, emphasized that the Congress was thoroughly loyal and law abiding and it had the support of the Muslims. The number of Muslims delegates was around 200 i.e. nearly one sixth of the total number of delegates. Syed Sharifuddin, a delegate from Bihar asked the delegates not to get disturbed by the criticism carried out against them because this was not a new game. The first Congress was condemned as a "Congress of a few educated native gentlemen"; the second as a "Congress of Bengalees"; and the third as a "Congress of Hindu". Now gentlemen, he said, "here in 1888 we have got before us not only Hindus, Bengalees and Marathas, but I am proud to say – more than 200 Mohammadans". He therefore hoped that their critics would have the decency to accept it "by its right name" i.e. an Indian National Congress. A resolution was adopted that when there will be consensus on any matter then the matter would be submitted to the government, if there will be desertion then the matter will be dropped.

The one immediate result of Allahabad Congress was the change in the attitude of the Central Mohammedan Association of Bengal. Syed Ameer Ali expressed his view in these words that the Muslims had all very sincere

42. Ibid., p.p. 85-86.
sympathy for the Congress movement and would be glad to join it, if assured
that their interest would not be jeopardized. He also stated that the views of Sir
Syed were certainly not the parameter of the feeling of the Muslims Community
at least in that part of Bengal\textsuperscript{43}. The government was perturbed on the quick
change of attitude and hastily without losing anytime in gaining over Syed
Ameer Ali by appointing him Judge in place of Romesh Chandra. This
indication of a new policy exasperated the Hindus. The reaction in the Muslims
press was sharp and it attributed evil motives to the Hindus\textsuperscript{44}.

After the Allahabad Congress, political alignments became fairly
marked. A sizable section of the press supported the Congress while those who
opposed the Congress could roughly be divided into four groups. Firstly, the
ultra-nationalists who thought the 'speech-making England educated Congress
leaders' were labouring under an illusion about the true character of British rule
in India. Bangabhasi, the most popular newspaper of the country, spearheaded
this line of thought. Secondly, Muslims press also opposed the Congress but in
itself it was divided in two groups – one supporting the Aligarh school and the
other opposing it. Thirdly, the Anglo-Indian presses, which really represented a
microscopic minority more than made it up by its resources and by its alliance
with the officials. Lastly, a section of the press that end at pleasing the British
authorities, also set itself against the Congress, of which the Urdu daily \textit{Oudh}

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Bengalee,} January 19, 1889.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Mohammedan Observer,} January 11, 1894.
**Akhbar** was the most conspicuous. In 1888, its owner Munshi Nawal Kishore was awarded the title of C.I.E., which was considered to be a reward for his outright support to the Company's rule.

The Congress leaders were not worried about the charges of sedition and disloyalty against their organization. They were aware that many British officials in India and England including Gladstone had sympathy with the Congress. They had also the backing of England's liberal press. Lord Landsdowne who succeeded Lord Dufferin, regarded the Congress as a progressive movement, with which he found himself in sympathy.

The Congress leaders were full of admiration for British history and culture and spoke of the British connection as 'providential'. It was their carnival faith that British rule in India, was in the interest of the Indians. They looked upon the British government as their ally; in the course of time, they believed British would help them to acquire the capacity to govern themselves in accordance with the highest standards of the west.

In 1886, Dadabhai Nauroji presiding over the Calcutta session of the Congress, described in length the "Blessings of British Rule" and his remarks were cheered by the audience. Anand Mohan Bose as Congress President in 1898 declared, "The educated classes are the friends and not the foes of

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45. *Oudh Akhbar* was the only Urdu daily of importance in U.P. e.g. in 1897 it was among the first five vernacular Journals.

England, her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her". Thus it was generally believed that the chief obstacle in the path of India's progress was not British colonial rule but the social and economic backwardness of the Indian people and reactionary role of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy. Loyalty to the crown was their faith, one important article of their political religion.

Initially the British government maintained neutrality which later on changed to hostility. Lord Curzon was more categorized in his pronouncements when he said that the Congress is "tottering to its fall" and one of his greatest missions in India was "to assist it to a peaceful demise". The officials encouraged the loyalists like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Raja Sheo Prasad of Banaras to organize the United Indian Patriotic Association to counter Congress propaganda. Further Lord Dufferin challenged the very national character of the Congress and dubbed it as representing only a microscopic minority.

The failure of violent method in 1857 convinced the Indians to adopt peaceful way of agitation. The Congress, policy of agitation aimed at arousing the masses and to make government responsive to public opinion. The vernacular press did not approve the Congress attitude to the British government but it considered meetings valuable as the masses may be aroused by them and no government would be able to ignore their voice. The liberals made the Indians to believe that the British nation was not responsive to
agitation until it was carried on constitutional lines. The Congress basically
demanded better administration for India. It was sought by the Congress, which
was the expression of the Indian public opinion that and the British government
should formulate their policies according to the wishes of the people. The
Congress demanded – expansion of councils, greater association of Indians in
administration, separation of executive and judiciary. The early leaders failed to
realize the reform they asked for which would cut at the root of the British rule
in India.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan held the view that representative institutions are
not suitable in a country like India, For the Muslims it was suicidal. He was not
in favour of agitational politics and he put forward that ignorance and illiteracy
are great hurdle in agitational politics. Sir Syed Ahmad and a section of
Muslims press feared that as agitation spread, it might result in bloodshed in
Northern India. The Pioneer and Aligarh Institute Gazette predicted that the
Congress brand of agitation would lead to another catastrophe of 1857\(^{47}\). As far
as vernacular press was concerned it readily employed agitation to preach
sedition vernacular press was realistic in its view about the nature of British
rule.

Vernacular press in India virtually believed in the Irish type of agitation
backed by physical force. Sir Syed in his famous speech at Lucknow observed

\(^{47}\) Aligarh Institute Gazette, November 12, 1888.
that Irish agitation was proving successful because in Ireland there were thousands of men ready to sacrifice their lives willingly for the cause of nation. Sir Syed asked if among the congress leaders there existed even ten men who consented to stand before bayonets. After 1897 political outlook in India began to change. The vernacular press suggested that the Congress should rethink on its methods and should obviously abandoned the politics of begging as the Congress had reduced itself to a begging institution. The New India, being a pro-Congress paper would not deny the fruitfulness of the Congress. Like most of the vernacular press, the New India believed that whatever concessions were given to the people, the government was motivated by the desire to strengthen the stability of the British rule. It was a mistaken belief to attribute reforms to agitation. The partition of Bengal was the climax of agitational politics, which heralded a new era of political extremism. The moderates were now being sidelined. The vernacular press played a significant role and paved the way for anti-partition movement throughout the country. The result was the universal denunciation of the partition. Urdu press also came heavily on this move of Curzon who divided Bengal.

There was great deal of controversy about the inclusion of ‘social reforms in Congress programme. The Congress leaders realized the importance of social reform, as Ranade believed in the value of social reform for the

49. *New India*, July 17, 1902.
political uplift: "you cannot have a good social system, when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights; nor you can be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system and social arrangements are perfect. If your religious ideas are low and groveling, you cannot succeed in social, economic or political spheres. This interdependence is not an accident but a law of our nature." ⁵⁰. Notwithstanding this, leadership failed to include social reform in the programme of Congress.

Legislative reforms occupied for most important place in the resolution of the Congress. The Congress passed resolutions on the necessity of legislative reforms. The vernacular press raised its voice for legislative reform. The Viceroy Lord Dufferin also recognized even the need to reform legislative council. Before the establishment of the Congress, he had advocated for reform proposals⁵¹. The pro-Congress press pointed out the necessity and desirability of conceding political rights to the people in view of the great awakening of the masses, the growth of public opinion and responsible press. On the other hand Anglo-Indian press and the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* were opposed to it. Sir Syed expressed his view that representative institutions are not suitable for India. But considering the popular demand, Indian Council Act 1892 was passed.

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Apart from politically educating the people the press was also was a pro
helpful in governance of the country. Press supplied information to the
government. Even bitter critics of Indian press admitted its importance. The
moral and ethical base of British imperialism lay in its 'rule of law'. This was
simply a proclamation because European judges and juries always worked in
favour so far as European offender was concerned. Whatever corruption cases
existed in courts were often exposed by the press. In this regard Urdu Press was
on the forefront. However, in spite of all the defects in the judicial system, it is
undeniable that the British pattern on which the courts in India worked acted as
a great check on the executive authority.

The vernacular press raised the question on the issue of separation of
executive from judiciary. They favoured the separation whereas the Anglo –
Indian press justified the existing system, firstly on the ground of lack of
finance to implement separation. Secondly, it was doubted if separation would
lead to better results52.

Vernacular press including Urdu Press raised their voice against the
atrocities of the police. The institution of police was widely resented because
this was the most oppressive institution. The press widely resented the Age of
Consent Bill because people apprehended that the police might get the power to
regulate the private life of an individual. Every section of the press launched a

52. Bengalee, November 26, 1896.
furious attack and denounced oppressive measures of police committed against weaker and innocent section of the people.

Discrimination was inherent in the nature of British rule, which was basically alien – socially, politically and economically. In theory they declared that the British rule was based on equality, fair play and benignity. But in reality it was based on racial discrimination and the policy of 'Divide and Rule'. The British bureaucracy developed an attitude of arrogance and contempt towards the Indians. The Indians were dubbed as belonging to an inferior race. Curzon proudly declared that he was by instinct and by conviction an imperialist and regarded the British Empire "not only as a source of hounourable pride to Englishmen but also as a blessing to the world". The press also raised the issue of racialism and bitterly criticized the racist attitude of British towards Indians.

The demand for the Indianization of services initially grew out of the economic necessity that the educated classes were trying to get through government services. This demand caught the attention of the public due to the racial consideration, which the government practiced in appointments. The unrest and opposition to racial discrimination was also manifested in the agitation for the Indianization of the services. Though the Charter Act of 1833 and the Queen's Declaration of 1858 had removed all racial disabilities from India, but in reality this was never put into practice. The agitation for

Indianization of services became synchronous with legislative reforms and the two demands intermingled with each other. The press raised its voice demanding for simultaneous examinations for civil services both in India and England, raising the age limits for it. The Anglo-Indian press vehemently opposed this.

The last quarter of the 18th century, rocked with Hindi-Urdu controversy. Till 1837, Persian was the court language, which was later on replaced by Urdu. Urdu remained popular among both Hindus and Muslims equally. There was no linguistic division between the Hindus and Muslims. The British imposed English in schools, which followed a linguistic renaissance, and people started having pride in their own language.

One of the important manifestations of revivalist movement was the demand for the introduction of the Nagri script in government offices and court in place of Persian. Urdu speaking Hindu elites like Pandit Ajodheanath vigorously opposed their proposal to replace Urdu by Hindi. It is interesting to note that most of the leading newspapers like Oudh-Akhbar, Nasim, Anis-e-Hind, Rahbar to name a few were not only owned but also were very ably conducted by Hindus. Hindus on the one side recognized Persian as symbol of Muslims sovereignty while Muslims considered Hindi as dirty and degrading.

54. Anil Seal, op. cit., p. 320
55. NWP and Oudh, p. 314, evidence of Babu Sheo Prasad before the Educational Commission.
Later Urdu speaking Hindu elites changed their loyalties\textsuperscript{56}. At this time Sir Syed was in Banaras. He realizes that Hindi-Urdu controversy was hostile to Muslims and this would widen the division between Hindu and Muslims. But he continued his effort to unite them\textsuperscript{57}.

The Hindi-Urdu controversy gradually gained ground. This contributed a lot in the growth of communal politics. In 1893 Nagri Pracharni Sabha was founded to garner the support for the cause of Hindi\textsuperscript{58}. Madan Mohan Malviya was one of the leading protagonists of Hindi agitation, which began in 1883. Sir Syed on the other hand was ardent supporter of Urdu, which he considered essential for gaining Muslims ascendancy. In 1900 Sir Antony MacDonaled the Lt. Governor of United provinces of Agra and Ouadh was persuaded to accept Hindi in Nagri script as court language.

On the issue of Hindi-Urdu controversy, Hindus raising a great hue and cry created a doubt in the Muslims mind. Already the educated Muslims had become suspicious of the Hindu leaders and their activities, this controversy made them even more apprehensive\textsuperscript{59}. The Urdu-Hindi controversy was sparked off because of certain basic causes, which were the fundamental reasons for misunderstanding between Hindus and Muslims and could not be

\textsuperscript{56} Robinson, p. 74. The example of Raja Jai Kishan Das, One of the closest friend Sir Syed can be given. He urged the cause of Hindi and Nagri script and wanted a Sanskrit University. He left the Aligarh Scientific society.

\textsuperscript{57} Hali, \textit{Heyat-e-Jawed}, p.p. 192-94. See correspondence between Sir Syed and Hindus in this connection in the Aligarh Institute Gazette, November 27, 1868.

\textsuperscript{58} Eduin Greans, Hindi & Nagri Prakarmi Sabha, \textit{The Modern review} Sep. 1907, p. 265.

treated in isolation. But it definitely contributed to the rise of divisive movements. The government had politicized a purely an academic matter. The official made a dormant language issue a political and communal controversy\textsuperscript{60}, "says Kirti Narain. He further says how "it helped in breaking up the hitherto socio-economic homogenous group which had always symbolized cohesiveness in society"\textsuperscript{61}. Ultimately the language controversy grew not only bitter but assumed a dimension of communal colour inspite of the effort by Pro-Congress papers to keep it strictly a linguistic issue.

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\textsuperscript{60} Kirti Narain, op. cit, p. 141.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.