CHAPTER - I

BIRTH OF MUSLIM LEAGUE AND LEADERSHIP IN U.P.

UPTO 1916
During the revolt of 1857, the Muslims, "for historical and ideological reasons," were more violently anti-British than the Hindus. They took the rebellion as a jehad against the British. The proclamations issued in Oudh under the seal of Birjees Quadir and at Allahabad by Maulavi Liaqat Ali testify to the fact that the Muslims looked upon the revolt as a holy war against the enemies of Islam. The proclamation issued at Oudh was addressed to all the musalmans residing in Oudh, Kuthair, Rampur and Moradabad. It said "All the Muslims should unite and be firm in their faith and they will surely obtain victory over English as God has said in the holy Quaran 'it is for me to give success to the Musalmans.' The proclamation issued at Allahabad by Maulavi Liaqat Ali said, 'you all should act according to the following precept quoted from Quaran':

The real paradise lies beneath the strokes of swords. You will then obtain salvation and the honour of martyrdom, which is eternal life... consider jehad as your duty and engage in it under a leader whither he be good or bad."

The Maulvi of Faizabad also preached jehad against the British. "It had become generally known that the king was with the mutineers and thought that to fight against the
English was to fight for the religion of the prophet. Some British officials, directly connected with the movement like James Outram, therefore, declared that the revolt of 1857 was due to Muslim conspiracy which made capital out of the Hindu grievances.

The revolt was suppressed by 1859. The British punished all those who had taken part in the revolt but their heavy hand fell more particularly on the Muslims. The Mohammedans were sewn up in pig-skin, smeared with park fat and were burnt alive. Hindus were defiled by cow's meat being forced down throats. The repression of the Muslims was both ruthless and callous. They were reduced to the position of illiterate masses with their spirit broken and their pride humbled to the dust.

They were not given government employment. During 1852 and 1868 out of 240 natives admitted as pleaders of the high court, there was only one Musalman. The Muslims were not admitted to the police services, they could not enter the Army. The pathetic condition of the Muslims has been described by W.W. Hunter in the following words:

"If ever a people stood in need of a career, it is the Musalman aristocracy of lower Bengal. Their old sources of wealth have run dry. They can no longer sack the stronghold of a neighbouring Hindu nobleman; send out a score of troopers to pilage the peasantry, levy tolls upon travelling merchants, purchase exemption through a friend at court from their land
tax, raise a revenue by local cases on marriages, birth, harvest homes, and every other incident of rural life, collect the excise on their behalf, with further gratifications for winking at the sale of forbidden liquors during the sacred month of Ramzan." He further said, "A hundred and seventy years ago it was almost impossible for a well-born musalman in Bengal to become poor, at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich." 9

Wahabis, who had involved the British rulers of India in several costly wars on the frontier, were strictly punished. There was network of conspiracies in provinces by these Wahabies. Between 1864 and 1871, there were five great state trials, as a result of which dozens of muslims were awarded capital punishment, transportation for life, and heavy sentences of imprisonment. 10

During and after these all calamities explained above, we see many muslim leaders who came forward with their ideas and ideologies, to preserve and promote the Islam in India. They tried their best to modernize the thoughts of muslims. The 'soul-less, dry and rigidly puritanic Wahabi discipline' lost much of its impact on the Indian muslims after 1857. But the Dar-al-ulum, founded at Deoband in U.P. in 1866, though officially adhering to the Hanafi School, followed the Wahabis in most matters of ritual and ceremony. It attracted students
not only from different parts of India but from the neighbouring Muslim countries as well. Maulana Shibli Nomani founded the Nadwat-ul-Ulama in Lucknow. It adopted a more realistic and progressive outlook than the Deoband academy.

Abdul Latif, in 1863, founded the Muhammadan Literary Society. It sponsored discussion on religious, social and political questions in the light of modern ideas and encouraged the Muslims to take to western education. It was primarily interested in matters related to Muslim education but it was consulted by the government on political and administrative matters affecting the interests of Muslims. Abdul Latif was also anxious to remove the anti-British feeling in his community.

Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928) lawyer, politician and historian interpreted Islam from the Shia point of view in his book 'The Spirit of Islam', 'The ethics of Islam' and 'A short history of the Saracens'. National Muhammadan Association was founded by him in 1877, it followed the principle of strict and loyal adherence to the British crown. Its principal object was the promotion by all legitimate and constitutional means of the well-being of the Muslims of India. Their reorganization was to be sought by moral revival and by constant endeavours to obtain from the government a recognition of their just and reasonable claims. He (Ameer Ali) regarded Islam as a superior religion of mankind and Muhammad as 'the great reformer the world has ever produced.' He made a
halting attempt to reconcile the Shia theory of the Imamate with the Sunni theory of caliphate.\textsuperscript{16}

Sir Muhammad Iqubal (1873-1938)- scholar, university teacher, lawyer, politician was primarily a philosopher and a poet. In the religious and cultural spheres he was a revivelist, anxious to recover what his community had lost. But his programme of reconstruction of Islam centred round its emancipation from the narrow interpretations of the medieval theologians.\textsuperscript{17} He was a believer in pan-Islamism. He said, "Islam was non-territorial in character, and its aim was to furnish a model for the final combination of humanity by drawing its adherents from many races."\textsuperscript{18} This ideal was a prominent feature of muslim religious thought in India from the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

But inspite of the efforts of these all muslim leaders, majority of the community was unhappy and bitter with the British government.

Muslim government servants and landlords felt the pressures of change in the late nineteenth century rather more than any other group. Their power was reduced, their culture was most openly held of small account, and their religion was most strongly attacked. In the nineteenth century, those who wished to improve their position or to protect it against the effects of change, were rarely rich or powerful enough to do so by their own efforts.
To cope with problems of above mentioned changes, societies were formed all over U.P. In 1861 the Benares institute was founded. In 1864 Ghazipur scientific society, in 1867 the Allahabad institute, in 1868 the British Indian Association of Moradabad, and in the same year, the Lucknow Jalsa-i-Tahzib were established. By 1870, over twenty associations existed which were devoted in various ways to discussing and dealing with the problems thrust on U.P. society by British rule. These societies usually met in the house of a leading member. Attitudes and activities of these societies were inspired by one of those, the Aligarh scientific society. This society was dominated by one man, and he was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

It was at this time that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan emerged among the muslims, who completely transformed the attitude of the muslims towards the British from one of hostility to hospitality. Syed Ahmad received traditional Urdu education and in 1837 to the great surprise of his friends and relatives, he joined the British service. Twenty years later in 1857, he was Sadar Amin of Bijnor, Rohilkhand.

Syed Ahmad was an admirer of the British government and the British people. He admired the western system of education also. He loved his community and was unhappy to see the miserable condition of the muslims after the revolt of 1857. For days, weeks and months together he was contemplating new planning how to lift his community from such a degradation. Syed Ahmad thought that this situation could be tackled by weaning the rulers from their policy of suppression to support
of the muslims and by changing the attitude of the muslim community from resistance to co-operation with the British government. With this purpose in view, he wrote 'Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind.' (1858) and the 'Loyal Mohammendans of India' in two parts (1860).

In his "Loyal Mohammendans of India" he strove to prove that the muslims were not responsible for the mutiny, but these were the Hindus who were disloyal to the government, nor were the muslims responsible for any cruelty against the Europeans during the crisis of 1857. He said, "Now the season of dire extremity to which I allude is that which befell the mohammedans in 1857-58. There was no atrocity commited then of which the blame was not imputed to mohammedans, although the parties really guilty may have been Ramdeen and Matadeen."

Syed Ahmad's philosophy can be summed up in three phrases: "Loyalty to the British, devotion to education and aloofness from politics." He preached and practised loyalty to the British rulers. He wanted the muslims to be loyal to the British on account of reasons. Firstly it was the only way out to wipe off the stigma of muslim instigation of the mutiny and thus, to disabuse the British mind that the musalmans were their old and traditional enemies. Secondly he knew that Hindus were numerically larger to the musalmans. Thus every advance towards democracy would mean the depression of the musalmans to the rule of the Hindu majority. It was because of this reason that he opposed the introduction of parliamentary institutions as well as the increase in the recruitment of Indians to the
public services by open competition. His loyalty to the British government surpassed the natural urge of a musalman towards pan-Islam movement. Sir Syed did not sympathise with the Pan-Islam movement and advised his co-religionists to keep aloof from it because the movement was anti-British. He did not want the musalmans to lose the sympathy of their British rulers though through his writing he had tried to shift the blame of the mutiny on the shoulders of the Hindus.

His second slogan was "devote yourself to education. This is your only salvation." Here Sir Syed was right in advising the musalmans to acquire western education if they were to complete with other Indians for jobs and preferments.

He liberalised his views on Islam in the light of western education. He was cautiously rational in respect of abstract theology. He tried to reconcile Darwin's theory of evolution with the Quarinic tenets of creation and fall of Adam. He was prepared to reject that part of the muslim tradition (Hadis) which he considered fictitious. But he was a conservative in respect of ritual and his views on jehad (Holy War), slavery and polygamy indicated his orthodoxy.

Syed Ahmad rendered the greatest service to his community in the field of education. Though his own education was initially confined to Arabic and persian, he realised as early as 1863 that 'English is the language to which we should devote our attention. He boldly stated (1872):- "The old Muhamadan
books and the tone of their writings do not teach the followers of Islam— independence of thought, perspicuity and simplicity.

Undeterred by the opposition of the orthodox muslims he pursued a gradually developing programme for popularisation of English education in his community.

Syed Ahmad established a scientific society at Ghazipur in 1864 and two years later founded the Aligarh Institute, associated with the society. The main task of the society was to translate important English works into Urdu. Aligarh Institute published a weekly paper, the 'Aligarh Institute Gazette', which contained news and views likely to popularise English education among the muslims. Schools were established at Moradabad and Ghazipur.

Thirdly, Syed Ahmad advised his co-religionists to keep aloof from politics. He was against the Indian National Congress and he did not want the muslims to join it. He opposed to the congress because he considered it to be anti-British and co-operation with the congress would have meant alienating the British. Thus, he opposed the congress and its policies tooth and nail and advised his people to keep away from the congress. "The congress agitation," Said Sir Syed, "if it is unchecked, will end in a mutiny followed by horrors and massacres in comparison to which the mutiny of 1857 was mere child's play... and may finally end in a disastrous catastrophe."
Though Syed Ahmad supported the British government and opposed the Indian national congress, yet he was for Hindu-Muslim unity. He did not like tense relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. "I have frequently said," wrote Syed Ahmad Khan in one of his articles on 'Hindu-Muslim Relations,' "That India is a beautiful and Hindus and Muslims are her two eyes. The beauty lies in the proper safety of these two eyes. If one of them is lost, this beautiful bride will become ugly and one-eyed.\textsuperscript{33}

Opinions are divided as to the effect of Syed Ahmad on muslim politics in the country. There are some who look upon him as a separatist and a 'communalist',\textsuperscript{34} Who worked for his community only. On the other hand, his recent biographer describes him as a nationalist and a patriot.\textsuperscript{35} There is no doubt that Syed Ahmad wanted to uplift his community from the degradation into which he had found it after 1857, to achieve this object, he tried to bring the muslims nearer to the British government by advising them to remain loyal to the government. Through his writings, particularly the 'Loyal Mohammedans of India,' he tried to convince the British government to prove that the Hindus were responsible for the mutiny and not the muslims. Syed Ahmad firmly believed that India is not inhabited by one nation.\textsuperscript{36} He preached Hindu-Muslim unity but he did not work for the good of both the Hindus and the Muslims or of the country as a whole. The overall effect of his
teachings was that the muslims did not join the congress, and became loyal to the British government. They also began to think that they had separate political interest from those of the Hindus. This was a very unhappy development in the body-politic of this country and the credit or discredit for this goes to Syed Ahmad.

Syed Ahmad succeeded in keeping the bulk of the muslims away from the Indian national congress. The musalmans by and large were poor, illiterate and deeply religious people. They badly needed economic and cultural regeneration and that was not possible by opposing the government or by not acquiring western education. Syed Ahmad uplifted them. He was in the good books of the British government and due to his influence as well as due to imperial considerations the British government dropped its anti-muslim policy. This was beneficial to the muslims.

Syed Ahmad played an increasingly important role in promoting the separatist tendency (among the muslims) along communal lines, during the last years of his life (1885-98). In 1885 he founded the 'Mohammedan Educational Congress', the Word Congress was changed to 'conference' in 1890. In 1888 he founded the 'united Indian patriotic association mainly' with a view to oppose the congress. This was followed by the foundation of the Muhammadan Anglo-oriental defence association in 1894.
These developments naturally pleased the British rulers. As early as 1883 the government of the north-western provinces hoped that Aligarh would be of the greatest importance from a political as well as an educational point of view. In 1887 the secretary of state wrote to lord Dufferin that 'the division of religious feeling is to our advantage.'

Syed Ahmad's death in 1898 temporarily weakened, but did not cripple, the political movement of which Aligarh had been the centre during the last twenty years of his life. It was indirectly strengthened by the slow penetration of Pan-Islamic ideas introduced by Jamaluddin Afghani and the emissaries of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II. During curzon's vicereignty Aligarh College established contact with Persia under official auspices, and some Persian noble families actually sent their boys to Aligarh for education.

The Indian Muslims' sympathy for Pan-Islamism alarmed the British government. It was felt that this Pan-Islamic trend should be counteracted. Another -- and more important -- factor was the fear that the Muslims might be won over by the congress. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, secretary of Aligarh College, who had started in 1901 an ineffective body called the Mohammedan political organisation, realized that the inactivity of the elder Muslim leaders was driving the younger Muslims 'to throw in their lot with advanced agitators of the congress.'
Moreover, Morley was thinking of constitutional reforms, if elections were introduced on a large scale the muslims would be swamped by the Hindus under the influence of the congress.

After the death of Syed Ahmad there were three alternatives open to the muslims. They could, if they desired, still keep aloof from politics. Secondly they could join the Indian National Congress. Thirdly they could form a political party of their own. The first alternative was no longer possible because the Indian National Congress had become slowly but surely a very big political party and had been able to build up pressure on the government. The government also appeared to be in a mood to concede some of the demands of the congress. There was a possibility of the extension of the elective principle in the forthcoming reforms. If the muslims still continued to keep away from politics, there would be no body to safeguard their interests because the muslims looked upon the congress as a Hindu body. Moreover there was a possibility that if the muslim leadership still adhered to the old policy of aloofness from politics, some of the politically conscious muslim might join the Indian National Congress. It was therefore not possible under the circumstances to remain away from politics.

The second alternative that the muslims should join the National Congress was not only unacceptable but also repugnant
to the muslims. The Congress leaders and the national organs of public opinion were invited the muslim youths to join the congress and the national mainstreams.

The Mohammedans on the other hand stood firm in their opposition to the congress. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Nawab Vikar-ul-Mulk who succeeded Sir Syed to the Muslim leadership at Aligarh, continued his policy of opposition to the congress. The muslim press also supported the same ideology. The 'Al Bashir' of Etawah of 23rd April, 1900 said that Syed Ahmad Khan understood all the tricks of the Hindus and, therefore, he apprised the muslimans of the same, and the result was that he was always abused by the Hindus. The Nizam-ul-Mulk of Moradabad, dated 31st March, 1901 said that the late Syed Ahmad Khan acted very wisely in preventing the muslimans from joining the congress in a body. However, some nationalist muslim papers like the 'Urdu-i-Mualla' of Hasarat Mohani had been asking for Hindu-Muslim co-operation against the government. The paper in its issue of May, 1906 criticised the shortsighted views of the muslim communal paper and advocated muslim co-operation with the hindus, and the congress. But the nationalist muslim leaders and papers did not have much effect on the muslim community, and muslim opposition to the congress continued. Thus the third alternative i.e. the muslims should form a political party of their own remained and that was adopted.
The initiative was taken by Nawab Habibulla of Dacca who, favoured by Curzon with a generous loan, had taken up leadership of the pro-partition (Bengal) movement and provoked Muslim resistance to the swadeshi movement. He could not join the Simla deputation, but he issued a circular letter to some prominent Muslims in different provinces containing a scheme for a 'Muslim All-India confederacy.' A meeting was held at Dacca on 30th December, 1906. It was decided to form a political association, called the All-India Muslim League, with three objects:

(a) To promote among the Muslims of India feelings of loyalty to the British government and to remove any misconceptions that may arise as to the intentions of government with regard to any of its measures.

(b) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of Muslims of India and respectfully to represent their needs and aspirations to government.

(c) To prevent the rise among Muslims of India of any feelings of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the other objects of the League.\textsuperscript{42}

The Aga Khan was elected the permanent president of the League. Its headquarters were established at Aligarh but its central office was shifted to Lucknow in 1910.\textsuperscript{43}
During the years 1907-9 the main programme of the Muslim League was to fight for consolidation and extension of separate electorates. Its political activities were directed not against the foreign rulers but against the congress and the Hindus. Its leaders, belonging to the upper class, had little in common with the muslim masses, and they did not fight for the removal of their grievances particularly those in the economic field.

The secretary of state for India, Lord Morley, informed the house of commons in 1906 that the Viceroy, Lord Minto, was about to appoint a small committee to consider the question of extending the representative element in the Legislative council. This stirred the muslim leaders who were unwilling to make common course with the congress. They had anticipated that the forthcoming constitutional advance was likely to confirm and extend the elective principle. To meet that situation, a deputation of muslim leaders headed by the Aga Khan presented an address to lord Minto on October 1, 1906, 90 days before the foundation of the All India Muslim League. The deputation emphasised that in "all elections, whether for the Legislative councils or for Local Bodies, the muslims must be separately represented and their representatives separately elected by purely muslim electors." It was also pointed out that the extent of the muslim community's representation must be
"commensurate not merely with their numerical strength, but also with their political importance and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the empire."

The deputation pointed out that the muslims have a separate entity from the rest of their countrymen. It is true that we have many and important interests in common with our Hindu fellow-country-men, and it will always be a matter of the utmost satisfaction to us to see these interests safeguarded, by the presence in our Legislative chambers of able supporters of these interests, irrespective of their nationality. Still it cannot be denied that we Mahommedans are a distinct community, with additional interests of our own which are not shared by other communities, and these have hitherto suffered from the fact that they have not been adequately represented even in the provinces in which the Mahommedans constitute a distinct majority of the population.46

The muslim deputation had a favourable response from the viceroy who gave the following reply: "The pith of your address, as I understand it, is a claim that in any system of representation whether it affects a municipality, a District Board or Legislative council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organisation, the mohammedan community should be represented as community. You point out that in many cases electoral bodies, as now constituted, cannot be expected to return a mohammedan, and that if
by chance they did so it could only be at the sacrifice of such a candidate's views to those of a majority opposed to his own community whom he would in no way represent, and you justly claim that your numerical strength both in respect to the political importance and the service it has rendered to the empire entitle you to consideration. I am entirely in accord with you; please do not misunderstand me. I make no attempt to indicate by what means the representation of communities can be obtained, but I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be, that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischivious failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent."

Thus the principle of communal representation was accepted by the representatives of the British Crown in India. The secretary of state for India lord Morley was not in agreement with the plan of separate electorate submitted by the government of India in the beginning. But the muslim league persued it with vigour. During the first two years of its existance viz. 1906-7, the resolutions passed at the control and Branch Muslim Leagues Continously harped on one point - and that was the subject of communal representation. It even threatened the government with withdrawal of loyalty if its demands were not conceded. The muslim league opposed the scheme of the secretary of state for India for joint electoral colleges and insisted on representation on a purely denominational basis.
The Muslim League started an agitation "in the press and on platform in England and in India to extract communal representation." Mr. Amir Ali and Syed Hasan Bilgrami pursued it with the secretary of state at London through letters published in the 'Times', London, but when they did not prove sufficient, the Muslim League approached the viceroy Lord Minto with a memorial and it had the desired effect. The government of India supported the Muslim demand and the secretary of state accepted them. The act of 1909 "embodied in substance the concessions virtually promised by Lord Minto to the Muslims. This set the seal of the government's approval on the theory of two nations or two races or two separate communities with distinct interests and outlook.

The Indian National Congress and the nationalist press felt unhappy over this development. The 25th Indian National Congress held at Allahabad in 1910 strongly deprecated "the expansion or application of the principle of separate communal electorates to municipalities, District Boards or other local bodies."

An Indian Muslim writing to the "Hindustan Review" of April, 1909 said, "the attempt on the part of my coreligionists to create an irreconcilable ulcer in India is not very laudable ... this will veritably be the opening of Pandora's Box and India will then be confronted with a grave situation of the first-rate magnitude." The 'Dudh Akhbar', Lucknow 31st Jan. 1911, observed that separate electorates granted to the Muslims
would accentuate rather than lessen Hindu-Muslim differences. The 'Leader' of Allahabad, 8th February, 1911 said that separate electorates would be productive of far greater harm than good to the country. The Tohfa-i-Hind, Bijnor, 18th July, 1911 remarked that the interests of the Hindus and the Muslims did not differ so widely as to justify the grant of separate electorates to the Muslims.

But the muslims on the whole, particularly the muslim league, were happy at this development. They had planned and worked for separate electorates and they were happy that their efforts had been crowned with success. The Editor of the 'Aligarh Institute Gazette,' 21st June, 1911, welcomed the grant of the separate electorates to the muhammedans and urged that "the principle of separate election which the government has accepted and introduced for the legislative councils should be extended to local Bodies also." The 'Al-Bashir' of Btawah, 4th July, 1911 supported the grant of the separate electorates and opined that it would reduce the chances of friction between the Hindus and the musalmans. The muslim league also felt satisfied and happy over the acceptance of its demand for separate electorates. It thanked the government and demanded "that the principle of communal representation be extended to all self-governing public bodies."

It has often been said that the British were responsible for creating Hindu-Muslin differences and for engineering the
Simla deputation of the muslims to demand separate electorate. It is difficult to accept the view that the British government of the Anglo-Indian officials were alone responsible for creating Hindu-Muslim differences. The differences between these two major communities of India had existed in the past, the British government accentuated them and profited by such differences. This is abundantly clear from the evolution of muslim political consciousness in the country. The Wahabi movement was a sort of muslim reaction to the disappearance of their political power from the country. The muslims had always looked upon themselves as belonging to the one 'ruling race'. They had therefore, not liked the establishment of British power in India at their cost. The Wahabi movement was not only anti-British, it was also anti-Hindu. The founder of the movement Sayid Ahmad actually declared jehad against the Sikhs and died fighting against them. Again during 1857 though Hindus and Muslims co-operated with each other but at times they would lay aside there unity and renew their old feuds. After the suppression of the revolt of 1857, muslim regeneration took place under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who stood for muslim separatism from the Hindus. Sir Syed opposed the national congress and the idea that India was inhabited by a single nation. Thus we find that Hindu-Muslim differences were there; they were not created by the British government.
The demand for separate electorate also originated from the muslims on account of their differences with the Hindus. The muslims were in a minority and any advance towards representative institutions would have meant Hindu domination, which was unacceptable to the descendants of the 'once ruling race.' Long before the Simla deputation, Mohammad Yussf of Bihar had talked to separate electorates in 1883; Sir Syed also had emphasised these facts that representative institutions of the British type would mean muslim subordination to Hindu-majority rule. Thus the muslims wanted to protect their interest and with this end in view they demanded separate electorate and formed a political party of their own. The formation of the Muslim League and the demand for separate electorate were not inspired by the British government, though the British government as an imperial power felt happy over the Hindu-Muslim differences and profitted by them.

The separate electorate were not gifted to the muslims by the British government. The muslims had demanded and worked hard for separate electorate both in India and England. Muslims being in minority wanted separate electorates to protect their interest from Hindu domination, and therefore, they demanded, planned and worked for them. The whole responsibility for separate electorates and the Simla Deputation rested on the muslim leaders of the time and the British government, as an imperial power, took full advantage of Hindu-Muslim
dissensions and used the muslims as its tools to further their imperial interests. The Morley-Minto reform was an attempt to extend and improve the existing system of control by a new method. They (Britishers) endeavored to put power not into the hands of those who demanded reform but into the hands of those on whose co-operation the Raj had long relied. They did this chiefly by making local self-government bodies the electorates for council seats. In the united provinces twelve seats were created along these lines.

Additional constraints were imposed on muslim political activity by introduction of separate electorates. Although separate electorate had never been generally demanded before, and they had only been introduced in one or two municipalities in the Punjab. Why then were they introduced at this time? Hitherto the debate on this question has been about whether the muslims really wanted them. Most Pakistani historians have said that they did. Many Indian historians have accused the government of pulling strings behind the scenes to arrange for them to be demanded. This scenario is too simple. It does not make sense to suppose that the Simla deputation demanded concessions its members did not want. Nor that the government introduced a new system of election without being sure that it would be worked positively by those it was designed to assist. On both sides of the debate, the weakness
is the assumption that 'the muslim community' can be treated as a coherent unit at this time.

The power of separate electorate for muslims in the Morley-Minto reforms stimulated the further development of Muslim politics. Muslims turned their minds to communal organisation as never before. Many associations were founded to improve aspects of muslim life and society. Many new members joined the muslim league. Muslim demands for the extension of separate representation to municipal and district boards gained new force. A great campaign for the economic and political regeneration of the muslims was contemplated. A campaign for a muslim university at Aligarh was actually launched. The new energy displayed by muslims drew a strong response from Hindus who deeply resented the concessions which had been made to the rival community. Local manifestations of communal antogonism multiplied, Hindus agitated against the suggestions that separate representation should be extended to municipal and district board, an All-India Hindu Sabha was founded; Hindu University Campaign was prosecuted with even greater vigour than its rival. The result was that muslims redoubled their efforts to organise themselves. \[59\] The most important effect of the new position of the muslims, however, was that government began to treat them less circusspectly. The muslims have had a large slice of cake, the feeling went, now it is the turn of others. This change in the government's attitude divided the U.P. muslims into two main groups. Those who were prepared to defend muslim interests at all costs, and those who were not.
After the death of Sir Syed Ahmad, two main groups among muslim politicians in the U.P. had begun to emerge. First was the 'young gentlemen of progressive tendencies' and second 'the men of property and influence.' After 1909, government frequently employed these categories in surveying the political scene, and the muslims used them too, often describing them as the 'young party' and the 'old party.' The policy of Syed Ahmad Khan - to remain loyal to the British Raj and not to join congress was faithfully carried on until 1914 by his disciples in both Aligarh college and the muslim league, respectively the centre and organ of muslim politics in India. The Aga Khan who spent most of his time on the French Riviera, in his brief visits to India preached loyalty to the Raj. Vizar-ul-Mulk, who in 1907 succeeded Mohsin-ul-Mulk as secretary of Aligarh College, would not advise his co-religionists to join congress even when, as in 1911 when the partition of Bengal was revoked, he realised it was futile to rely any longer on the British government.

A series of factors, however, led to a change in muslim attitude from a pro-British to anti-British cast. In 1910 the muslim league removed its headquarter from Aligarh to Lucknow-away from the anti-congress and pro-British influence of both the British principal and the orthodox secretary of Aligarh College. In the annual session of the same year held at Nagpur the League was inclined to confer freely with congress on the solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. The possibility of holding a conference of Hindu and muslim leaders had earlier in
the year been discussed in London between Aga Khan and Wedderburn, the congress president for the 1910 session which was held at Allahabad. The conference of forty Muslims and sixty Hindu leaders was held in January 1911 at Allahabad. It yielded no practical results but it did show that the Muslim leaders were willing to confer with Congress on matters affecting the common life of both communities.

In 1911, and shortly afterwards Muslim League came to be dominated by a group of politicians, chiefly of the Shia sect, who lived and worked in Lucknow. The group's patron was the Raja of Mahmudabad, one of the largest taluqdar of Oudh, and one of the few members of his class with an interest in nationalist politics. In 1914, he became the League's permanent president. Apart from the Raja, most members of the group were lawyers and professional men. Most prominent among them was Wazir Hussain, a man of exceptional intellectual and organisational abilities, who became the League Secretary in 1912. To him belongs the credit for changing the League's Creed in 1913, and according to the Raja he was also one of the chief authors of the scheme of reforms which the Congress and League submitted to the government. Another important member was Samiuallah Beg, an advocate of the Lucknow Bar and the group's link-man with the U.P. Congress. The oldest statesman of the group was, Syed Nabiullah, the Chairman of the Lucknow Municipal Board, who had been called to the bar in England in 1880s. Within the
U.P., the group's political ambition were focused on the provincial council, and from 1912 to 1914, it was engaged in building up its influence within the province. But after the outbreak of the world war, in co-operation with a number of other politicians, it came to assume all India importance. Prominent among the politicians with whom the Lucknow group co-operated at the time were Mahommed Ali Jinnah, Hassan Imam, Ali Imam and Muzharulhaq all sat on the viceroy's council in the years before the war, and their association with other Indian political leaders in that body provided a basis for subsequent Congress-League co-operation.

But congress league co-operation was not achieved easily. Indeed in many parts of the U.P. the policies adopted by the Lucknow group only met with qualified approval. This was because of the different levels of development of the muslim community in different parts of the province. The province of Oudh, of which Lucknow was the capital, was in two ways an exception: Firstly, in that the landed leadership of the community was in a fairly thriving condition, and secondly, in that Lucknow, both as a traditional muslim centre and as a service centre for the colonial regime, was naturally a focus for the more educated andintelligent muslims. In the province of Agra, on the other hand, both in the more populous western divisions of Meerut and Rohilkhand, and in the divisions further east, the landed position of the community was under severe attack, and educational advancement was very limited. It is of course, difficult to claim overwhelming reliability for such generalizations. The evidence for degrees of educational
advancement is by no means exhaustive. Nor is it true to say that all Muslims were losing land in the province of Agra. The Sheiks appear to have been genuinely in many districts, demonstrating in all probability that those Muslims who were increasing their holdings were also changing their titles to register their claims to higher social status. But the questions asked in the U.P. legislative council by Muslim members from the different constituencies, it is noticeable that those representing the more economically and educationally backward divisions tend to demand more and special treatment for their community.

However, almost at this stage almost all the Muslim leaders were pro-British and some of them blamed the Hindus for the general economic backwardness of the Muslim community.64

Before the year was out the Muslim attitude began to change. In October - November 1911 Italy went to war with Turkey in Tripoli. The Sultan of Turkey was also held to be the spiritual head, caliph, of the Muslim world. His empire included a part of south-eastern Europe and almost the whole of the near east. There was, of course, no love lost between the Christians of south-eastern Europe and their overlord the Sultan. Even the Arabs cared little about this outdated religious bond between them and the Sultan. But those who most resented the temporal and spiritual authority of the Sultan were the young Turks, the movement which in due course was to depose him and abolish the caliphate.
But the Indian muslims had been living as a minority in a predominantly Hindu country, and for the last hundred years or more under a Christian government. The Muslims in India were on the whole poorer than the members of the majority community. Usually the filthiest part of the town or a city would be inhabited by muslims or untouchables. The Hindu community was self-contained. No non-Hindu could embrace Hinduism. For these reasons, and in order to maintain their separate identity, the muslims in India had become more fanatically observant of their religious rituals and bonds than muslims anywhere else in the world. For an Indian Muslim the offering of prayers to Allah was not only a solemn duty but also an assertion and declaration of his rights against the Hindus.

The news that a christian power was at war with the caliph that aroused first among the few middle-class muslims sympathy and concern for the safety of turkey. Then followed in November-December 1911 the announcement at the Delhi Durbar of the revo of Bengal. For the first time the ruling monarch of the partition of Bengal was visiting India. This occasion was chosen to placate the Hindus, especially of Bengal, who had been agitating against the partition ever since it was effected in 1905. This 'Master stroke' of policy, as Gokhale termed it, gave to the Hindus not only a 'sense of relief' but a new note of hope and gladness in their hearts. But the muslim leaders took it as a betrayal of trust on the part of the British government. They were shocked, Sullen and
aggravated. The revocation of partition meant to them the loss of a Muslim majority province and the reinstatement of Hindu supremacy in the political and economic life of Bengal and Assam. The ground was thus paved for the growth of anti-British feeling among the Muslim middle class.

In 1912 Turkey became involved in the First World War. In the same year Russia, then an ally of Britain, perpetrated massacres in Persia. To the Indian Muslims it seemed as if the whole of the Christian world was against the crescent, which was struggling for survival. Britain was identified as the leader of the Christian powers. Anti-British feeling was increasing among the expanding Muslim middle class, whose members were equally opposed to the upper-class Muslims who had hitherto followed a pro-British policy. The leaders of the middle-class Muslims at this stage were Shibli Nomani and Muhammad Ali from Uttar Pradesh, and A.K. Azad from Bengal. All three were orthodox Muslims who believed that religion should be the basis of politics, and they were advocates of Pan-Islamism. They were at the same time anti-Aligarh and anti-Muslim league. In his journal 'Al-Hilal' in July 1912, Azad attacked Aligarh college as a citadel of reactionaries and in one of his speeches called the men of Aligarh 'heretics and hypocrites' who had in the last forty years co-operated with the 'Satans of Europe to weaken the influence of the Islamic Caliphate and Pan-Islam.' Shibli Nomani attacked Aligarh College as an institute for
training in slavery. They attacked the muslim league because it had no goal and did not represent the aspirations of the muslim middle class. These men were more in sympathy with Congress, perhaps not so much for its nationalism as for the fight it had so far waged against the British Raj.

The complacency of the muslim league was broken. To try to prevent these angry men from joining congress the League in 1913 defined for the first time its goal, which was to achieve for India a 'suitable' form of self-government within the British empire. The term 'suitable' smacked of meekness and Shibli Nomani commented that it was simply a cloak for the old pro-government policy.

Of the three, Muhammad Ali (U.P.) played the leading role in arousing among educated muslims sympathy and concern for Turkey. He was deeply religious, aggressive and unscrupulous. His anti-British feeling was further intensified when the government disapproved of the proposal to name the projected Aligarh University a Muslim University. Any act of the government having the remotest effect on muslim institutions and rituals was now construed as a deliberate aggression against Islam. The demolition of a portion of a Mosque at Kanpur by the public works department was used by Ali to arouse anti-British feeling among the ordinary muslims of the city.

On 30 May, 1913 the first Balkan war was concluded by the Treaty of London. According to this Treaty Turkey ceded all her
dominions in Europe west of the Enos-Media line and also the
Island of Crete. The Indian Muslims regretted that their
Caliph should be forced to lose territory but they hoped that
Turkey would not be involved in any future war, for the divi­sion of their loyalty between Turkey and Britain was painful
for the average educated Muslim. Ali knew that in the event
of a war between Britain and Turkey, he and his followers would
certainly support Turkey no matter how just or unjust her
reasons for entering into war against Britain.

On 4 August 1914, Great Britain declared war on Germany.
Ali's fears came true. On 31st August he set a wire to the
Sultan of Turkey.

"Pacing our faith and confidence which we the Indian
muslims have in the Khalafat, we respectfully urge upon your
majesty either to support Britain or to keep neutral in this
war."

On 4 November 1914, Turkey joined Germany against Britain.
The decision of the Caliph could not be questioned. Ali and
his followers ranged themselves with Turkey against the Raj.
Anti-British feeling mounted but the Muslims had no strong
political organisation either to express their feelings or to
launch a movement against the British government. The Muslim
league was meek and loyal to the British. The Muslims thus
gathered round individual leaders but none of them had the
vision, strength or resources to canalise emotions into a move­
ment. In December 1914 Muhammad Ali and his Brother Saukat Ali
sent a team of muslims to tribal areas on the north west fron­
tier to secure arms from the gun factories which could be used
against the British, but the team returned without success.
Then letters were sent to the king of Afganistan entreating
him either to attack India or to persuade Germany to attack
India. In May 1915, the Ali brothers were arrested for
openly justifying Turkey's entry into the war against British.
The muslims were left helpless. A leader with courage and
vision was needed, but a proper leadership among muslims was
in the making.

Younger section of rising muslim leader, who disliked the
loyalist politics of the Aligarh group and the leadership of
big nawabs and zamindars, adopted many new policies. The
militantly nationalist Ahrar movement was founded at this time
under the leadership of Maulana Muhammad Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan,
Hassan Imam, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, and Mazhar-ul-Haq. Some
young scholars influenced by the Deoband school of Muslims
studies in U.P. were affected by nationalist sentiments. Among
them the most prominent was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

In 1913 there was a significant change in the programme of
the muslim league. The three objectives adopted in 1906 were
replaced by the following (1) The promotion among Indians of
loyalty to the British Crown. (2) The protection of the rights of Muslims. (3) Without detriment to the foregoing objects, the attainment of the system of self government suitable to India. For the first time the Muslim League spoke of self government for India. It was a clear reputation of Sir Syed Ahmad's political ideal of unqualified hostility towards co-operation with the Hindus as also of the leadership of the Aligarh aristocracy. The young generation of the Muslims was moved by the winds of change: pursuit of a common political objective along with Hindus became possible.

But the task was not easy. There was indeed, among middle class Muslims a general feeling of hostility towards the British government. But in the Congress there were different groups while different shades of opinions and it was doubtful whether the nationalists of Congress would support the Pan-Islamism of the Muslims. Besides, Gandhi had so far worked on his own, outside the Congress and the Muslim League. Beneath the surface unity of Congress there was a silent struggle among its leaders for all-India leadership. If Gandhi wanted to capture the leadership of Congress and write the Muslims and Hindus into a national movement he needed a national cause. This is what he was looking for, and at the end of 1918 he found one.
Here it would be worth while to look briefly over league and congress politics since 1915. After the Surat split in 1907 the moderates secured a firm grip over congress and held it under tight control until 1915. This they did by drafting a new constitution for congress in April 1908. Article one of the constitution defined the objects of congress which were to secure, through constitutional means, self-government for India within the empire. All who wanted to be or remain members of congress were to accept article one of the constitution. The extremists, as expected, did not accept and therefore they remain excluded from congress until December 1915. Another reason for moderate supremacy in congress was the extremist leader Tilak's imprisonment for sedition in 1908 for six years. When Tilak was released in June 1914, his health was bad and he was far less extremist in his political views. Negotiations with Gokhale for the re-entry of Tilak's party into congress were started in 1914 by the English theosophist Mrs. Annie Besant, who had by then shifted her activities from the spiritual and social to the political life of India. But Gokhale partly due to his own fears and partly due to pressure from Sir Pheroz Shah Mehta, was reluctant to let the extremists into the congress. Gokhale died in February and Mehta in November 1915. In December of the same year, therefore, the congress at its Bombay session modified its constitution to enable the extremists to rejoin the congress. Tilak and his followers joined congress in 1916, after eight years of
exclusion, and it was the united congress which held its significant session in Lucknow in December of the same year.

The outbreak of the first world war in August 1914, and the entry of Turkey against British further signified Muslim hostility towards British rule. There was a growing desire among Muslims to join hands with Congress against the British. The Muslim League was willing to modify its separatism and come to an agreement with Congress. The future creator of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), was in 1915 an ardent Congressman, a nationalist, an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim-Unity, aspired to be, in his own words, "The Muslim Gokhale". When in 1913 the Muslim League defined its objectives and expanded its vision for the first time, Jinnah joined it but on condition that he would not be induced to be disloyal to the larger national cause.

With a view to bringing the League nearer to Congress he managed to hold the League's annual session of 1915 at the same time and place as that of Congress. Thus, the separate sessions of the League and Congress, were held in December at Bombay, and they continued to be so held, in the same month and same place, until 1919, the Congress and League, succeeded in starting negotiations for an agreement, which was concluded in 1916 at their Lucknow sessions, and hence commonly called the Lucknow Pact. The scheme was a full constitution for India demanding, among other things, self-government at an
The important feature of the scheme was the agreement on the mode and percentage of Muslim representation in the provincial and central legislatures. Congress agreed that the Muslims should continue to be elected by their separate electorates, a system which was introduced in 1909 and soon after vehemently criticised by the congress. Tilak and Jinnah, however, hoped that the scheme of separate electorates would have but a short life and a time would come when the Muslims needed this no more and there would be no distinction in political life between Hindu and Muslims.

Thus in December 1916, while the war was still continuing, the Congress-League scheme presented a united India to the British Raj. This of course, among other factors, was responsible for galvanising British Government into formulating the next set of reforms for India.

NOTES

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