

C O N C L U S I O N

The opening of the twentieth century found the Muslims engaged in preparing to face new challenges which were inevitably driving them towards some sort of a political awareness. The Urdu-Hindi controversy (1901), the anti-partition agitation (1905-1910) Sir Bampfylde Fuller's resignation (1906) and British intervention in West Asia (1905-6) compelled the Muslims to found an organisation which might safeguard their rights.

The year 1906 saw the change of Government in England with John Morley as the Secretary of State and Lord Minto as the Viceroy of India. The growth of agitational movement, culminating in the extremist school within the Congress had its impact on Muslims who had a dual challenge to face. Their fear of being relegated to the position of inferiority in the realm of politics and the danger of their youth being drawn to the vortex of agitational politics which had found its expression in the pre-partition agitation of the Muslims of East Bengal. Muslims were resentful and restive. Moreover Lord Morley's speech in the House of Commons on 20 July 1906 to consider the proposals forming the Legislative Councils keenly activated them. Brisk correspondence ensued between the leaders of the Muslims community to adequately and clearly place before Lord

Minto the legitimate demands of the community. Simla Deputation was, thus, the outcome of this fruitful exercise which led to the foundation of the All-India Muslim League in December 1906 at Dacca.

Muslim political consciousness had reached a stage when the formation of the League was indispensable. It was not a negative proposal for propagating estrangement from the Hindu community but an expression of their socio-political consciousness and a positive assertion of their basic rights. The impression sought to be created in Hindu minds by some interested parties and vested interests was most illogical and at times mischievous. {The Muslims League was not primarily intended to be the precursor or harbinger of Hindu-Muslim disunity, but a medium to function as a channel of political communication between the Muslims and the British on one side and the politically oriented organisation of India on the other.} In the course of subsequent three years, when the reform scheme was initiated till it was enacted into Morley-Minto Reform Act of 1909, sometimes the discussion had a pro-Muslim slant and sometimes an anti-Muslim bias. But the Muslims continued to be loyal and consistently adopted non-agitational approach both in England and India and only asked for their adequate representation which the Government ultimately granted.

The British policy to some extent appeared favourable to the Muslims. The emerging circumstances were such that the Home Government was bound to favour one community because of a 'new spirit' which was 'growing and spreading over India.'¹ Morley was aware that he had to deal with the Congress and was afraid that the Mussalmans would join the Congress against the Government.² (Minto also felt the same and held the view that the only way to check the younger generation of the Muslims from falling into the hands of radicals was to have a new programme and a fresh set of ideas to be substituted for old ones.³) The outcome of this thinking was the Morley-Minto Reform of 1909 which provided separate electorates for the Muslims.

The Muslims were satisfied. In fact in the succeeding years, the leaders of the Congress and the League participated in the annual sessions of each other and expressed their harmonious views in a spirit of cordiality. They appeared to be two battalions of the same army working for the common cause and struggling to achieve the same objective. These cordial relations further culminated in the Lucknow Pact of 1916 which also accepted the separate electorates for the Muslims. Actually

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1. Minto-Papers : Correspondence with the Secretary of State 1905-06, Morley to Minto, 6 June 1906.
 2. Minto Papers : Correspondence with the Secretary of State 1905-06, Morley to Minto 6 June 1906.
 3. Mary-Countess of Minto, op.cit., p. 99.

at that time the demand for separate electorates for the Muslims was considered by all as genuine. The Congress did not oppose it as it did not have any conscientious objection to it. They considered it a rational and legitimate proposition quite valid in the then prevailing circumstances. Thus the Lucknow Pact was a victory for both the Congress and the League as the main bone of contention - Muslim representations on the council received due attention of the Congress.

Side by side with the constitutionalists of the League, there was a section of younger Muslims who were pan-Islamist and did not like British intervention in West Asia. In 1905 British intervention in Tabah (a small place in Arabia) roused their passion. The Aligarh students strike (1907) and the conflict between the Honorary Secretary and the Principal of the M.A.O.College was nothing less than a matter of self-assertion. These factors explain the emergence of a 'Young section' in the League. Resentment among the younger generation of the Muslims was common and they wished to dispense with Sir Syed's policy of constitutionalism. However, their influence over the League or the Muslim masses was insignificant. But the turn of events in the second decade of the twentieth century provided them with an opportunity which brought them in the forefront of Muslim politics in India.

The Tripoli and the Balkan wars had a farreaching impact on the temper of the Indian Muslims. The loss of the Turkish domination over Tripoli and Balkan states was considered as much suicidal to the Muslims of India as it was to the people of Turkey. In the British announcement of neutrality the Muslims discovered a deliberate hostility of England towards Islam. British occupation of Egypt; Italy's success in Tripoli, Anglo-French agreement with regard to Persia and their moral and material assistance to Balkan states was resented by the Muslims of India as a conspiracy of Christendom which intended to bring about the extinction of Islam. Their assumption was not unfounded. Viscount Errington's letter to Hardinge⁴ mentioning, 'Now we are actually face to face with the struggle between⁵ the Moslem and the Christian' is an evidence of this unholy plot. Besides, the annulment of the partition of Bengal administered a severe blow to the Muslims. As a result of all this, the young educated Muslims began to express more vocally their dissatisfaction and this gave birth to Muslim radicals among them under the leadership of All brothers, Zafar Ali, Azad and Hasrat Mohani etc. who launched a campaign against the British. Although their following was not significant yet the unflinching loyalty of the community towards the British was severely

4. Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

5. Hardinge Paper : November 1910-March 1913 Errington to Hardinge, October 11, 1912.

shaken. The Kanpur mosque issue and the First World War attained the object which the Tripoli and the Balkan wars and the annulment of the partition of Bengal had partially achieved. This embittered Anglo-Muslim relations, and the growing alienation of the loyalist leadership of the League is the outstanding feature of this period.

The radicals utilized every issue to oppose the British and in the annual session of the League in 1913, even a loyalist of no less a fervour and eminence than the Raja of Mahmudabad, criticised the policy of the British Government. In this meeting the League reiterated the changed creed of the organisation and passed a resolution, which was adopted by its council meeting held in December 1912, which said that 'the attainment to the system of self-government suitable to India'⁶ was the ideal of the League. This marked a departure from the old policy of the League. Syed Wazir Hasan applauded the above resolution and in view of the unreasonable attitude of the British justified it. That the radicals were gradually gaining momentum is evident from the resignation of Ameer Ali and the Aga Khan from the Presidentship of the League.

The British were aware of the growing decline of the old leadership. It was heartening to the conservative section

6. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, op.cit., p. 279.

in England and the Times, their spokesman, reminded the radicals that 'the foreign policy of the British Empire cannot be dictated by a section of the people of one portion of the Empire.⁷'

The entry of Turkey in the First World War dealt a severe blow to the loyalists who felt that it was difficult to continue in the British saddle. This had led to another phase of Muslim politics and explains as to why the League under the leadership of the radicals were moving towards the Congress. The rapprochement between the League and the Congress culminated a little later in the Lucknow Pact. Moreover, in the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms the Muslims demand for separate representation was conceded by the Government without any objection from the Congress.

(A study of Hindu-Muslim relations shows that both the communities were not on good terms as they should have been since the Mutiny.) Under the Mughals there was no evidence of tension and conflict between the two communities. Even during the Mutiny the combined forces of Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder to oust the British. (But after the Mutiny the British policy of extending patronage to Hindus to the detriment of the Muslims, created ill will and dissensions between these two communities.) The Hindus, in 1867, raised

7. The Times, April 19, 1913.

their voice against Urdu and endeavoured to replace it by Hindi. Then the foundation of the Indian National Congress, the Ganapati festival leading to communal riots in south and its impact in the north further widened the gulf. Though Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, in the nineteenth century, continued his ceaseless efforts to bring about an amicable concord between Hindus and Muslims, and although he succeeded to a certain extent in it, yet their relations appeared to be superficial. This is evident from the fact that just in the first year of the twentieth century Muslims found Hindus engaged in an anti-Urdu propaganda. Then came the Partition of Bengal. Hindus opposed it while the Muslims favoured it as they thought that they had been deprived of opportunities in all walks of life in a United Bengal because of Hindu majority, and that the new province would give them the desired opportunities for their betterment. The annulment of the partition of Bengal certainly worsened their relations, but pressed by international situation the Muslims sought Hindu support. The creation of moderates in the Congress and liberals in the League further brought them closer and both the organisations resolved that self-government be allowed to materialise under the aegis of the British. Since an agreement had reached in the creed of the organisations, their relations were now undoubtedly very cordial. The Lucknow Pact was the result of this cordiality which accepted the

Thus the trend in Muslim politics during the period under study was firstly conservative rather than liberal and radical school emerged in League only after 1911. The radicals influenced it though they did not have an upper hand and the liberals continued to dominate the League. The League was thoroughly a 'middle of the road' organisation. The Congress also, after Surat split in 1907 was mostly led by the extremists, had all sympathies with the radicals in the League and it was because of this sympathy that Mahatma Gandhi (though not an extremist) supported the Khilafat Movement and returned the badges of honour.

Muslim politics influenced the national movement and became a part of it as well. The liberals and radicals among the Muslims desired, like Congress, the emancipation of India from the British. From 1911 upto 1922 both the communities worked unitedly with perfect communal amity. The Moplah revolt in the coastal areas of Malabar, which was directed against the British, and was misconstrued as anti-Hindu, led to communal riots. It once again created cleavage between the Hindus and Muslims and proved to be disastrous. Consequently

separatism on communal lines again sneaked into Indian politics which ultimately led to a widening of the gulf and vivisection of the country, with tragic consequences and untold misery never witnessed in human history. (Innumerable factors crept into this growing mistrust. Religious differences, cultural segregation, communal aloofness, social distinctions, economic disparities, persistent misunderstandings, created by distortions of history, contributed their mite to these developments.) To hold any one section responsible for this catastrophe is to adopt an ostrich like policy. The Britishers fanned the flame and took full advantage of the prevailing disharmony. They played off the one against the other and thus managed to prolong their stay in India. But again, to blame the British totally for all the ills of Indian politics during this period would be fantastic. They undoubtedly added fuel to fire as could be expected from any colonial power. Our leadership fell into the trap and did not realise their own mistake.)