CHAPTER ONE

THE GROWTH OF MUSLIM POLITICS

The period following the great catastrophe of 1857 was a watershed in modern Indian History and a landmark for the destiny of Indian Muslims as well. The immediate aftermath of the successful suppression of the rebellion was a cathartic reign of terror characterized by atrocities of the victorious British to avenge the 'wrongs' done to them during the Mutiny by the insurgents. The British reconquest was followed in many places by general massacres of elements that were suspected to have participated in the uprising. "Every Hindoo and Mussulman was a rebel, a traitor, a murderer" wrote Trevelyan, "therefore, we were to pray that all the population of India might have one neck and that all the hemp in India might be twisted into one rope."

1. Most of the historians on Modern India believe that the event of 1857 was an effort to obtain freedom for India. But the masses did not take any part in this uprising and it did not take the form of a war of independence. It is for this reason that the present author has used the word 'Mutiny'. See M.R. Jayakar, The Story of My Life, (Bombay 1858) Vol.I, 1873-1922, Preface; See also Surrendra Nath Sen's Eighteen Fifty-Seven, Foreword by A.K. Azad, (Publication Division, Government of India 1957).

2. G.O.Trevelyan, Cawnpore, (London 1865) p.109. John William Kaye describing the atrocities perpetrated on the people of India says: "Arrest followed arrest. A great panic arose among the Mahomedans of Patna. No one knew whose turn would come next, or what form of offensive movements of English authority would take." This was said about Patna but it was true of all mutiny affected areas. See A History of Sepoy war in India (1857-58) Vol.III (1876) p.81.

Influenced by the exaggerated opinions, allegations and claims of contemporary British historians, administrators and journalists regarding Muslim responsibility for, and participation in, the Mutiny, British policy towards Muslims after the Mutiny became harsh and distrustful. The property of leading members of the Muslim community was confiscated; the doors of civil and military services were closed to them, and British distrust and antipathy expressed itself in a number of other ways. The advent of the British in India and the gradual extension of their dominion had already an adverse impact on the position of Muslims, in contrast to their advantageous situation in the Mughal empire and its successor states, and the natural leaders of the community had been reduced to great straits and despondency. British policy towards them after 1857 not only further depressed their position but also brought them a sense


5. W.W. Hunter, *Indian Mussalmans* (London 1872) p. 159. As regards the proportion of Europeans in the Cavalry, Infantry and Artillery, it was opined that the number of Indians should not be greater than that of Europeans. It was two to one for Bengal; three to one for Madras and Bombay. See the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the organisation of the Indian Army-presented to both the Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty (London 1859), p. IX.
of humiliation and decline. In 1867 they held 11.7 per cent of Government jobs in Bengal, two decades later they had been reduced to 7 per cent. In 1871 they had about 12 per cent of the gazetted appointments, ten years later their representation was only 8 per cent. This deterioration was partly due to Government's vindictive policy and partly due to Muslim prejudice. It was amidst these circumstances that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) took upon himself the task of rehabilitating his community in the eyes of the Government and of adjusting it to western ideas in order to achieve the political and cultural revival of Indian Muslims. In this endeavour his efforts were ably complemented and supplemented in the latter


8. Born at Delhi in a noble family; entered the Government service, 1837; rendered great services to the British during the Mutiny; wrote pamphlet on the Causes of the Indian Revolt and Loyal Mahomedans of India; visited England, 1869, and on his return started the Aligarh Movement; founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, 1877; a member of the Legislative Council, N.W.P., and an additional member of the Governor General's Legislative Council, 1878-1882; was made a K.C.S.I., 1888; the Edinburgh University conferred on him the degree of LL.D.; wrote massively on all subjects.

half of the nineteenth century by the work of other Muslim leaders, who made it their life's mission to lift the Muslims from the morass of decay and despair. Prominent among them were Khan Bahadur Nawab Abdul Latif Khan (1828-1893), Moulvi Muhammad Husain (1844-1906) and Justice Syed Ameer Ali (1849-)

10. Son of a leading advocate of Calcutta; entered Government service, 1846; appointed a Deputy Magistrate, 1849; Member of the Bengal Legislative Council; Fellow of the Calcutta University; founder and Secretary of the Muhammadan Literary Society; made a Nawab, 1880; C.I.E., 1883; Nawab Bahadur, 1887; most progressive and enlightened among the Muslims of Bengal.

11. A social and educational reformer of Patna. About his activities Sir Syed in The Aligarh Institute Gazette (July 10, 1886) wrote, "The Mahomedans of Patna, headed by Moulvi Mohamed Hassan Sahib, have been for sometimes making efforts to arouse the community from the lethargy into which, there as elsewhere, Mahomedans have been sinking. They have founded the school on the same lines as the M.A.O. College at Aligarh, combining religious instruction with English Education. This school has made good progress and we are glad to see that the Committee of the school has now started an Anglo-Urdu paper, called The Patna Institute Gazette. The object of the paper is thus described: 'The main effort of the committee is to watch the interests of the Mahomedan community and its progress in the march of life. The Committee is bound to inform its co-religionists of their merits and demerits; dissuade them from their evil, and persuade them to do everything which is good and honourable to which, as a patron, their manners, habits and ideas and to endeavour invariably to bring into play the energy of the people! The programme is a good one and we wish the Committee success. There is nothing that the Mahomedans want more than that their latent energy and ability should be brought into play for the advancement of the community, and, the Patna Committee has itself set example in this respect."
1928) in the north and Justice Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906) in the south. But the work of Sir Syed over-shadows that of other champions of the Muslim cause, and he can be regarded as the pioneer of Muslim resurgence in modern India.

A prescient observer of Muslim misfortunes during and after the Mutiny, Sir Syed had come to the conclusion that Muslims would not be able to retrieve their lost position without the support of their English rulers. A thorough-going realist, he had realised that the Muslim community could not be infused with new life and vigour unless it adjusted itself to

12. Son of Syed Saadat Ali of Unnao, U.P. Of a family originally from Persia; was called to the Bar at Inner Temple, 1873; practised in the Calcutta High Court; Fellow of the Calcutta University, 1874; Magistrate and Chief Magistrate Calcutta 1878-81; Member of the Bengal Legislative Council, 1878-83 and the Governor-General's Council, 1883-5; Tagore Law Professor, 1884; C.I.E.; Puisne Judge Calcutta High Court, 1890-04; founder of the Central National Muhammadan Association and its Secretary 1877-90; strong advocate of education; wrote A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Muhammad; The Spirit of Islam; The Ethics of Islam; A Short History of the Saracens; Personal Law of the Muhammadans; Muhammadan Law.

13. Educated at England and returned to India as a barrister, 1867; started practice and was soon made a judge of the Bombay High Court; elected for the Provincial Council Bombay, 1882; founded Anjuman Islam for educational and social uplift of the Muslims of Bombay; became so well-known for his nationalist ideas that he presided over the deliberation of the Indian National Congress, 1887; also presided over the Muhammad Educational Conference, 1903; well-known for his speeches and public addresses.

modern and progressive ideas. In the manner of the prescription of Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) for the Hindus, Sir Syed believed that the conservatism of Indian Muslims had made them prisoners of outdated ideas, and a change in their thinking and activity, imperative for their social transformation, could be achieved only through a rationalistic reinterpretation of old Islamic values in tune with modern conditions. He viewed the social degeneration of Muslims as a temporary phase which could be overcome by constant endeavour in two distinct directions: the adoption by the community of western learning and education, and a rapprochement between the British and the Muslims.

15. May, Lini Sarah, Muslim Thought and Politics in India After 1857 (Columbia University, Ph.D. Thesis 1963 Unpublished, microfilm available at the Nehru Museum and Library, New Delhi) p. 78. K.A. Nizami in his article Socio-Religious Movements in Indian Islam says that 'Sir Sayyid was the first Indian Muslim who realised the urgency of extricating Muslim mind from the meshes of Medievalism', See S.T. Lokhandwala, ed. op. cit., p. 113.

16. Great social reformer of Bengal; advocated the abolition of Sattee; denounced caste system; studied Bengalee, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, started an institution called the Anglo-Hindu School for imparting English education. See K.K. Datta, Socio-Cultural Background of Modern India (Deerut 1972) p. 19.


Towards fulfilling the first objective, one of Sir Syed's earliest endeavours was the foundation of the Scientific Society on January 9, 1864, at Ghazipur, which was later shifted to Aligarh. The Society published translations of famous English works on History and Political Economy in Urdu to acquaint Muslims with the knowledge and literature of the nations of the west. Later, Sir Syed started two weeklies - The Aligarh Institute Gazette (1863) and the Tahzeeb-ul-Akhlaq (1870) for propagating modern social and educational ideas among Muslims.


21. It was started by Syed Ahmad for the propagation of his educational ideas. It played a very important role in the Aligarh Movement. "Every copy of the Aligarh Institute Gazette bore the line - "Liberty of the Press is a prominent duty of the Government and a natural right of the subject."

22. It is known as the Muhammadan Social Reformer in English and was based on the Tatler and Spectator of Addison and Steele. Colonel Graham, the biographer of Sir Syed, says that Sir Syed 'saw the weakness that had crept over Mohammedans through their estrangement from the thoughts and aspirations of the nineteenth century, and he proposed to himself the great task of making Mohammedans change, not their dogmas, but their policy, so that independence of mind and political liberation should no longer be accounted as symptoms of heterodoxy.' See The Life and Works of Syed Ahmed Khan (London 1885) p.201.


Contd......
With the support and assistance of a galaxy of enlightened Muslims including Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk (1837-1907), Nawab Vigar-ul-Mulk (1841-1917), Moulvi Chiragh Ali (1846-1896), Moulana Shibli Nomani (1857-1914), Moulvi Zakaullah Khan (1832-)

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The percentage of English education among the Hindus was greater than that among Muslims. Muslim students did not like to have the study of English made obligatory upon them. They mostly confined themselves to Arabic and Persian subjects. See Report on the Administration of Bengal 1871-72, pp. 32, 217, 226, 425. See also Government Gazette North Western Provinces, Allahabad, May 1, 1880, p. 407.

24. Born at Etawah; became Tahsildar and Deputy Collector, 1861 and 1867 respectively; joined the Government of Nizam, 1874 and retired from the post of Financial and Political Secretary, 1893; received the title of Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Mohsin-ud-Dowla, Munir Nawaz Jung from the Government of the Nizam; a staunch supporter of Sir Syed; presided over the deliberation of the Muhammadan Educational Conference, 1893 and 1895; regular contributor to the Tahzeeb-ul-Akhlaq; succeeded Sir Syed as the Honorary Secretary of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh; organised the famous Simla deputation, 1906; as regards to his services to Muslims he was second only to Sir Syed.

25. Met Sir Syed at Moradabad, 1860, where Sir Syed was posted during famine; joined the Scientific Society and translated books; wrote articles in the Tahzeeb-ul-Akhlaq; joined the service of the Nizam and worked on very responsible posts; succeeded Mohsin-ul-Mulk as Honorary Secretary of the M.A.O. College; was conferred the title of Nawab Vigar-ud-Dowala Vigar-ul-Mulk Intisar Jung by the Nizam.


27. A man of extra-ordinary calibre, biographer, historian and the founder of literary criticism in Urdu; joined M.A.O. College, 1882, 1881; toured the Islamic countries which considerably influenced his way of thinking and it created a sense of revolt in him against the English; founded Nadwa, a seminary, 1893-94; also founded Dar-ul-Musannifien, at Azamgarh.
1910) and Maulana Altaf Husain Hali (1837-1914), he initiated an educational campaign, popularly known as 'The Aligarh Movement' for establishing an institution which would impart western learning and education to Muslim youths, and would overcome Muslim prejudice against western oriented institutions by simultaneously providing compulsory instructions to pupils in the Arabic language and in Islamic studies. Out of these efforts emerged the 'Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College' in 1877 at Aligarh.

For achieving the second objective, Sir Syed constantly preached to Indian Muslims the necessity of demonstrating and practising loyalty towards the British rulers. The Aligarh

28. Educated at the Delhi College; had been a Professor of Mathematics at the Muir Central College, Allahabad; elected Life Honorary Professor of Mathematics at the A.A.O. College; wrote *Tarikh-e-Hind and Victoria Namah*; a great admirer of Sir Syed and his movement.

29. A poet and prose writer; his impressive poems mostly recited in the Muhammadan Educational Conference revolutionised the slumbering Muslims; wrote the famous *Mussadas*. K.K. Aziz says 'Nothing like this (Mussadas) had been written before. In sweet-melancholy rhythm he portrays the decline and fall of Islam in India and weeps over the misfortunes and miseries of his striking compatriots. It is a dirge which moved the hearts and minds of men and did more than any other literary creation in opening their eyes to their perilous plight.' See *The Making of Pakistan* (London 1967) p.139.

College was thoroughly infused with the spirit of loyalty, and, indeed, the address presented to the Viceroy, Lord Lytton (1876-80), by the College Committee at the inauguration ceremony declared: "The British Rule in India is the most wonderful phenomenon the world has ever seen." Sir Syed continued throughout his life to combat anti-British feelings among the Muslims, and he advised them constantly to keep away from every kind of organised political activity. The college aimed at inculcating the idea of loyalty in its students who were to be the future leaders of the Muslim community.

Not only were the Aligarh Movement and its endeavours significant catalysts for the process of reconciliation of British

31. The Pioneer, January 8, 1877. On the occasion of the Jubilee celebration of Queen Victoria at M.A.O. College Sir Syed said: "In fact all of us have heard the name of our Sovereign Victoria, Empress of India, ever since we first saw the light of this world, and therefore feelings of affection and loyalty to Her Majesty have been infused into us with our mother's milk." See the Aligarh Institution Gazette February 16, 1897; Shah Muhammad, The Muslim Dilemma: Some Misunderstandings, Aligarh Law Society Review, A.A.U. Vol.2, 1971, p.62.

32. For Anglo-Muhammadan Friendship, See Sir Syed's speeches of the following dates in Majma Lectures (Lahore 1900):

(i) 1864, at the inauguration ceremony of a school at Ghazipur.
(ii) 1866 at the formation of the British Indian Association at Aligarh.
(iii) 1873, Azimabad, Patna.
(iv) 1874, Speeches in Lahore and Gurdaspur.
(v) 1877, Address presented to Lord Lytton.
(vi) 1883, Speech at Ludhiana.
(vii) 1887, Speech at Lucknow.
(viii) 1888, Speech at Meerut.
and Muslim viewpoints and interests, they were also the first steps in the crystallization of a distinct sense of identity among Indian Muslims. Although the Aligarh Movement was confined to the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab during the lifetime of its founder, it soon came to symbolize the hopes and aspirations of the entire Muslim community. It is true that the Muslim masses remained outside the stream of this movement which was confined to the upper classes, yet by promoting cultural and political consciousness among the Muslim elite, the movement set the trend that ultimately culminated in a wider social response to the ideas it propagated. "Through him (Sir Syed)" says Professor Sir C.H. Philips, "they regained confidence and developed a more constructive attitude of mind, and henceforth under western influence a new spirit of self-assertiveness among the Muslim community grew side by side with the rising consciousness of Indian middle-class unity." In fact, Sir Syed's period was the 'seed time' of great changes for Indian Muslims. Out of the diffuse, disparate and inchoate stirrings of the Muslims before and after the Mutiny an integrated and well-defined movement began to take root in the community, with Sir Syed Ahmad Khan towering as a colossus over the great adventure.


Actuated by motives similar to those of Sir Syed, Nawab Abdul Latif founded the Muhammadan Literary Society in April 1863 at Calcutta to disseminate English education among the Muslims. By 1877 the Society had succeeded in winning the support of 500 Muslim gentlemen from all parts of India. The Society used to meet once a month, and lectures were delivered in Urdu and Persian on the importance of English education. Informal gatherings of the Society continued to be held for many years at the residence of its founder. Sir Syed himself read a paper dwelling on the utility of English education in this Society on October 6, 1863 at the residence of its founder at Calcutta and pointed out the usefulness of English education. While, on the one hand, exhorting the Muslims to shun conservatism and embrace western liberalism, the Society, on the other hand, always availed itself of opportunities to present welcome and farewell addresses to the Viceroy and Lieutenant Governors, and to lay before them the grievances of the Muslim community of India. It was a loyal body, avoiding politics in the interest of education; asking for Fatwas from the learned Ulama in favour of British domination in India. The Nawab passed away in July 1893 and Sir Syed, in an obituary, eulogised

35. See Mukkama'il da'ijuva Lectures va Speeches (Lahore 1900) pp. 10-16 (Urdu).

36. F.B. Bradley Birt, Twelve men of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century (Calcutta) pp. 115, 125, 126, 127. See also Biman- Behari Majumdar, Indian Political Association and Reform of Legislature (1818-1917) Calcutta 1965, pp. 221, 222.
his services for the cause of Muslim awakening.

Muhammad Husain of Patna closely followed Nawab Abdul Latif in his literary activities and founded a school and the Patna Institute Gazette, modelled after the M.A.O. College and the Aligarh Institute Gazette of Sir Syed. The object of the Patna Institute Gazette as described in the Aligarh Institute Gazette was "to watch the interests of the Mohammadan community and its progress in the march of life."

But the man who rose to greater prominence in Bengal than Nawab Abdul Latif and Muhammad Husain was Syed Ameer Ali. His approach to Muslim problems was different from that of Sir Syed and Nawab Abdul Latif. While Sir Syed devoted himself to promoting western education, Ameer Ali agitated for a share for Muslims in the Government services. He founded the Central National Muhammadan Association in 1877, and though at the outset it concentrated on social affairs, yet it soon changed its course of action and drifted to the objective of 'political regeneration of the Indian Mohammadans by their moral revival and by constant endeavours to obtain from Government a recognition of their just and reasonable claims.' A study of the

37. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, July 14, 1893.
38. Ibid., July 10, 1886.
39. K.K. Aziz says that 'The importance of the National Muhammadan Association in the nineteenth century was second only to the Aligarh Movement.' See Ameer Ali, His Life and Work (Lahore 1968) p. 74.
40. See Rules and Objects of the National Muhammadan Association with a list of its members, pp. 3, 5, 10, 11, 23. (Microfilm available in National Library Calcutta).
memorials submitted to the Governors-General from time to time by the Association leads one to conclude that Queer Ali believed that Muslim endeavour by itself could achieve but very little and that Government help was essential to elevate the Muslims. He also held that a political organisation which could present their grievances was the crying need of the time, and that the Central National Muhammadan Association could discharge this duty effectively. He declined to participate in the Indian Association of Sir Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925) because its demand for simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service in England and India could benefit only the Bengalis who were educationally more advanced than the Muslims.

41. The Association presented memorials to Lord Ripon in 1882 and to Sir Stewart Colvin Bayley, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1888 pointing out the discrimination in the civil services between the Muslims and the Hindus.

42. Educated at the Doveton College, Calcutta; joined the Indian Civil Service, 1871, but soon resigned; joined the Metropolitan Institution, the Free Church College and the Duff College as a Professor of English; 1878 and 1881; proprietor of the Bengalee; founded the Indian Association, 1876; member of the Bengal Legislative Council, 1893; presided the Eleventh Session of the Indian National Congress at Poona, 1896; Fellow of the Calcutta University 1904.

43. The Central National Muhammadan Association had also declined as we shall see in the subsequent lines, to participate in the Congress sessions, on the ground that it was no use raising a hue and cry against the Government which was doing its best to carry out reforms. See Administrative Report NWP & Oudh for the year ending 31st March 1888 (Allahabad 1889) p. 168.

44. In Bengal (24 Parganas) the total number of Hindu students in 1856-57, 1860-61, 1870-71 was 3803;3633;15,275 and
The Association gradually and steadily began acquiring the character of an All-India organisation with its headquarters at Calcutta. In 1884 it proposed an annual conference of Muslims from all over the country. It is interesting to note that this proposal preceded the foundation of the Indian National Congress, and it can be inferred that the growth of the consciousness of their identity among the English-educated Muslims was simultaneous to the political awakening of the Hindus.

Ameer Ali devoted himself exclusively to the promotion of Muslim interests and he travelled far and wide, propagating the aims of his association, opening its branches and impressing upon Muslims the necessity of establishing colleges where the

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45. It will be interesting to mention that much earlier to the formation of the Central National Muhammadan Association the Muslim pleaders of Calcutta founded the Anjuman-e-Islam which was hailed 'as evidence of the growth of public spirit amongst Muslims.' See S.R.Mehrotra, *The Emergence of Indian National Congress* (Delhi 1971) p.213.

46. The association had branches at Karachi, Shahzadpur, Shikarpur, Larkana, Sukkur, Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi, Hardoi, Nisar, Gujarat, Ambala, Ludhiana, Bareilly, Badaun, Allahabad, Ajmer, Lucknow, Ghazipur, Surat, Dindigal, Bangalore, Tumbkoor, Vizagapatam, Sassasram, Arrah, Dinapur, Gaya, Patna, Chhapra, Muzaffarnagar, Bhagalpur, Shaikpura, Burdwan, Hoogli, Jahanabad, Rangpur, Midnapur, Bogra, Rajshahi, Noakhally, Mymensing, Cooillah, Shillong, Chittagong, Orissa etc.
Muhammadan youths could get 'religious and moral training equally with secular education.' In its general meeting held on June 24, 1888, the Central National Muhammadan Association requested Ameer Ali to lay before, and urge upon, the authorities in England the claims of the Muslims of India.

Unlike Sir Syed, Ameer Ali strongly favoured political activity on the part of the Muslims. In his own words: "Both in England and in India, I had frequent opportunities of discussing with Sir Syed Ahmad the position of the Muslims in the political economy of British India and of their prospects in the future. Syed Ahmad Khan pinned his faith on English education and academical training. I admitted their importance but urged that unless as a community, their political training ran on parallel lines with that of their Hindu compatriots they were certain to be submerged in the rising tide of the new nationalism. He would at first not admit the correctness of my forecast, but I believe the birth of the National Congress opened his eyes." This explains why Ameer Ali laid greater emphasis on political

47. Report of the Committee of the Central National Muhammadan Association for the past three years (1885-88) pp.16,19,20.

48. See Proceedings of the Central meeting of the Central National Muhammadan Association held on June 24, 1888 at 9 Harrington Street, p.75.

grounding. Ameer Ali's contribution to Muslim politics is more significant and more powerful than Sir Syed's but the fame of Sir Syed has outstripped that of Ameer Ali. Assessing their role in the growth of Muslim politics, Ram Gopal rightly observes 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."

While these leaders were dedicating themselves to the cause of Muslim revival in the north, Badruddin Tyabji in the south was not oblivious of the problems of Muslims. Like Sir Syed he also devoted himself heart and soul to promoting western education among the Muslims of the south, and like Mr. Justice Ameer Ali he demanded the reservation of jobs in the Government services for Muslims. But while the scope of Ameer Ali's activities extended throughout the sub-continent, the activities of Tyabji were confined to the presidency of Bombay. Tyabji founded the Anjuman-e-Islam in Bombay (1876) for the amelioration of the condition of Mussalmans and he continued to hold its secretaryship for a long time. The Anjuman was not a political

50. Ram Gopal, Indian Muslims - A Political History (Bombay 1969) p.44.
51. Tyabji Papers, Tyabji's letters to the Governor of Bombay dated December 24, 1884 and March 9, 1886 in connection with the representation of Muslims in the services (Microfilm available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi).
52. W.W.Hunter, Bombay (1885-1890) - a Study in Indian Administration, p.179. See also Anil Seal, The Emergence of Indian Nationalism, (Cambridge 1968) p.229.
body like the Central National Muhammadan Association. In the words of Tyabji it "abstained from discussing political questions because the majority of such questions affect not merely the Muhammadans but the whole population of India in general, and therefore it is better that they should be discussed by the general political bodies composed of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, and not merely by a body of Muhammadans as the Anjuman is." This suggests why Tyabji had joined the Indian National Congress and was not in favour of forming a separate political organisation like Sir Syed and Ameer Ali.

Tyabji's efforts for securing Government jobs for Muslims through nomination and reservation were not motivated by any feeling of narrow communalism. He felt that, as a community, the Muslims were backward and that for the healthy growth of nationalism which had already started taking roots it was eminently desirable that the two communities - Hindu and Muslim - be at par educationally and economically. This, he believed, when achieved, would enable Indians to meet the challenges of western imperialism more effectively. Thus, though Sir Syed, Ameer Ali and Tyabji differed fundamentally on the question of the political strategy best suited to Muslims, they were in

agreement on the necessity of the educational and economic uplift of the community.

(II)

The establishment of the British empire in India initiated an economic transition and a consequential social transformation, most conspicuously manifested by the rise of an Indian Middle Class. In pre-British times, "although there existed potential elements for a middle-class growth in society, a unitary middle-class social order did not exist." The rise of the new middle-class took place during the rule of the East India Company as a direct consequence of the economic changes accompanying the advent of British politico-economic domination. The spread of English education and the vastly expanded scope for professional employment consolidated the position of this class after the revolt of 1857, especially after 1870, and gave it the status and strength to challenge the pre-eminent political and social influence of the indigenous educated aristocracy. The growth of the middle-class was most rapid and powerful in the presidency towns of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, since they had, from the

54. B.B. Misra provides a very perceptive study of this phenomenon in his 'The Indian Middle Classes-Their Growth in Modern Times' (London 1961). For judgments relating to the social, economic and political factors, this section closely follows Misra's analysis.

beginning, been the nuclei of commerce and industry in British India. As a result it was in these areas, and generally in southern India, that the overwhelming predominance of the aristocracy and landed magnates was being increasingly supplanted by the new middle-class. However, in northern India, generally, the traditional leaders of society were still powerful.

The middle-class was, from the first stages of its development, gradually acquiring self-consciousness, and the pace of this process was accelerated by the spread of English education, and the steady growth of an indigenous press, English and vernacular, from the middle of the nineteenth century. Whereas in the first half of the nineteenth century organised public life was the preserve of the upper sections of society (as evidenced by the establishment of the Bengal Zamindary Association, later known as Bengal Landholders society in 1837), from mid-century onwards the rising middle-class began actively participating through organised bodies in public life. In course of time, these factors cumulatively imbued the middle-class with political and national consciousness. The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was the culmination of the political and nationalist identification of the middle-class.

The emergent middle-class was, however, mainly Hindu in composition. During the Mughal era, Hindus had dominated finance, commerce and industry, while Muslims held a major share in the feudal aristocracy, the army, the bureaucracy and the learned professions. Under the new dispensation, the fiscal, commercial and industrial pre-eminence of the Hindus had remained, but the feudal nobility had decayed, and Indians were excluded from higher army and bureaucratic positions, while the introduction of English institutions and ideas in administration and other fields had made proficiency in English and a grounding in western education necessary for positions in the bureaucracy and the learned professions. Muslims had not, in general, taken to western learning and education, mainly on account of traditional prejudice, while Hindus, demonstrating once again the resilience characterising them throughout Indian History, had accepted and adopted English education, thus edging out Muslims from predominence in the bureaucracy and the professions. Consequently, though Muslims were sporadically represented in it, the Indian middle-class was Hindu dominated.

Muslim leaders in general and Sir Syed and Ameer Ali in particular, had become aware of the steep decline of the Muslims,

relative to their position in pre-British times and of the growing economic and educational hiatus between them and the Hindus. They felt that the Muslims were suffering because of an attitude of self-denial, in the sense that their deliberate abstinence from the opportunities for progress availed of by the Hindus had retarded their growth, and they would have to make an effort to extricate themselves from the situation before the deterioration became irrevocable. Sir Syed and Ameer Ali were conscious of the urgent need of Muslims keeping pace with Hindus and emulating their adaptability to the changed conditions. The Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh and the Central National Muhammadan Association at Calcutta were symbols of this consciousness, educational in function but political in objective, striving for the uplift of the Muslims in India.

The Indian National Congress had not been conceived originally as a political party, but early in its career it started drifting more and more to political activity. This


59. See speech of Sir Syed delivered at the first session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference held at Aligarh on December 27, 1886 - Majma Lectures va Speeches Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (Lahore 1900) p. 281. He also regretted that Mussalmans wanted to start an English daily but could not get a man from their own community in India who could take its editorship - See Majma Lectures, p. 286.
change is high-lighted by the fact that in the first three years of its existence, it received qualified support and sympathy from the Government, but thereafter had to encounter official hostility. However, in the first phase of its existence it retained the character of a 'loyal opposition', professing non-revolutionary and extremely moderate aims, and expressing faith in 'Constitutional' methods of activity. From its inception, Muslim delegates had attended its annual meetings, their strength increasing with each succeeding session. The third annual session held at Madras in 1887 was, in fact, presided over by Badruddin Tyabji, Muslim leader from the Bombay Presidency. Prior to the foundation of the Congress he had proposed the establishment of the Bombay Presidency Association, a political organisation of all communities in that Presidency.


62. The following table shows the strength of Muslim delegates in the annual Congress between 1885-1894.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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See *Reports of the Indian National Congress Papers*. 
He regarded the formation of the Congress as 'the mark of a new epoch in the history of the nation, and a sign that the distinction of the different races had disappeared and they had begun to work together.' However, his views were not shared by other Muslim leaders and sympathisers - notably Sir Syed, Ameer Ali and Mohsin-ul-Mulk whom he attempted to persuade to co-operate with the Congress.

Conservative circles in Britain, which exercised perhaps the greatest influence on the official policy of the Indian Government, had viewed the formation of the Indian National Congress with great suspicion and misgiving. Though the Times, their mouth piece, while reporting on the first session of the Congress, remarked that for the first time, perhaps, since the world began, India as a nation had met together; it looked upon Muslim participation in the Congress with great hostility, asserting that the entire Muslim population had refused to participate in the Congress, and declared that 'we must (now) look to our Muslim subjects for the most sensible and moderate estimate of

63. Husain B. Tyabji, op. cit., p. 175.
64. Tyabji Papers, Tyabji's letter to Sir Syed February 18, 1888; Tyabji's letter to Ameer Ali December 3, 1887; Tyabji's letter to Mohsin-ul-Mulk, January 14, 1888.
65. The Times, February 1, 1886.
our policy.' It considered the Congress as a Hindu body and warned the 'Hindu agitators' that it was by force that India was won and 'it is by force that India must be governed.' It reiterated Sir Syed's stand that under open competition for Government services (a demand raised by the Congress) the Muslims would be swept off by their more advanced and educated (Hindu) countrymen and would be deprived of the share in the services to which their position and influence entitled them.

Sir Syed, in keeping with his conviction that the salvation of the Muslim community lay in education, loyalty and abstention from politics, kept away from the Congress and advised the Muslims to remain aloof. To safeguard the interests of the Muslims and to divert their attention from the Congress, he founded the Muhammadan Educational Congress (later known as the Muhammadan Educational Conference) in 1886, to work for the development of education among Muslims. It met periodically

66. The Times, December 28, 1886.
67. Ibid., February 1, 1886.
68. Ibid., January 16, 1888.
and avoided all semblance of political activity. In 1888 he established the United Indian Patriotic Association, to bring together Hindu and Muslim loyalists opposed to the Congress. The body mainly attracted aristocrats and other upper classes of all communities. It held public meetings and passed resolutions against the Congress, which were given great prominence by Anglo-Indian Journals. In 1883 Sir Syed gave his full support to Theodore Beck, Principal M.A.O. College, in establishing the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India and declared in his inaugural speech to the new body, "I think the circumstances of the time demand that the English and the Mahomedan should become united in a firm alliance, so that if India should be plunged into disorder ... by the spread of ... disloyal agitations, they may find themselves on the same side." Sir Syed, who had hitherto kept aloof from the Congress, the Central National Muhammadan Association, and indeed from every kind of political activity, underwent a change in his attitude towards Muslim political associations.

70. The Pioneer, November 28, 1883. See also Pamphlet issued by the United Indian Patriotic Association, No. 2, showing the seditious character of the Indian National Congress and the opinion held by eminent natives of India, who are opposed to the Movement (Allahabad, Printed at the Pioneer Press, 1888) Appendix pp. L-III.

71. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, January 30, 1894.

In the initial years of the functioning of the Indian National Congress, Sir Syed had refrained from public criticism of the organisation, but on the occasion of the annual session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference at Lucknow on December 28, 1887, he mounted a direct attack on the Congress. In his speech he made three main points: that the Hindus and Muslims were two distinct communities in spite of having many things in common; that representative institutions were unsuited to Indian conditions as they would lead to a permanent subjugation of the Muslims by the Hindus because of their numerical strength; and that Indian Muslims must depend on the British to safeguard their interests and secure their effective representation in administration. In short the aims of the Congress were not suitable to Indian conditions, and Muslim alignment with such an organisation would lead them nowhere. Sir Syed, thereafter, utilized all media—the press and the platform—available to drive home to his co-religionists the danger the Congress posed to their interests. Badruddin Tyabji, as referred to above, in a letter to Sir Syed attempted to persuade him to co-operate with the Congress, which was "an Assembly of educated people from all parts of India and representing all races and creeds met together for the discussion of only such questions as may be

generally admitted to concern the whole of India at large."

Though India had numerous communities or nations, each beset by peculiar problems of its own, Tyabji emphasised, "there were some questions which touched all these communities and that it was for the discussion of these latter questions only that the Congress was assembled", and Muslims could co-operate with Hindus on all matters of common interests, while opposing them strongly on propositions prejudicial to their community. In a detailed letter Sir Syed, convinced as he was about the dangers the Hindu-dominated Congress posed to Muslims, replied that though it was not his intention to prevent people from enjoying rights for which they were qualified, he, nevertheless, regarded the Congress as injurious not only to his own community but also to the interests of India at large.

As referred to above Ameer Ali had a different programme from that of Sir Syed and other Muslim leaders. Before Tyabji occupied the Presidential chair in Madras Ameer Ali wrote to him that he proposed to convene a conference of Muslim delegates in 1888 'to discuss questions of importance vitally affecting

74. Tyabji Papers - Tyabji to Sir Syed, February 18, 1888.
75. Ibid.
the general interests of the Mahomedan community.' He tried to convince the great leader that as long as Mussalmans had 'no unanimity of views and unity of action' in furtherance of their 'legitimate and constitutional interests', they would be a community of 'secondary importance' and would not attend any substantial success in the work of political advancement.'

Tyabji did not appreciate this and reiterated his former contention that 'in regard to political questions at large the Mussalmans should make common cause with their fellow-countrymen of other creeds and persuasions ...' Ameer Ali again wrote to Tyabji pointing out to him the state of utter disintegration in which the Mussalman society had fallen after 1857 and clarified that the conference did not propose to discuss 'high politics' but had an 'extremely moderate' programme. "Our main object is to bring about some degree of solidarity among the disintegrated masses of Mahomedan society; to reconcile in some measure the conflicting aims and objects of different sections and parties, to introduce some amount of harmony among the discordant and jarring elements of which the Mussalman educated classes are composed; to devise some means of self-help for Mahomedan advancement and to lean less upon Government

77. Tyabji Papers, Ameer Ali to Tyabji, Calcutta, November 28, 1887.

78. Ibid.

79. Tyabji Papers, Tyabji to Ameer Ali, Bombay, December 3, 1887.
patronage; to give a real impetus to the process of self-development perceptibly going on among our community; (and) ..... to become the exponent of the views and aspirations of educated Mahomaedan India; and to serve as the means of reconciliation between our Hindoo fellow subject and our own community."

Tyabji endorsed the lofty aspirations of Ameer Ali but failed to win over his co-operation for the National Congress.

81

Theodore Beck (1859-1899), the principal of the M.A.O. College, had achieved a unique position in Muslim circles by virtue of his labour for the development of education among the Muslims. A brilliant graduate of the Trinity College, he had come to India at a time when Indian nationalism had made its appearance. Politically he was a conservative and believed in the consolidation of the British empire in India. The new nationalism frightened him. Therefore his opposition to the National Congress was inevitable. Like Sir Syed and Ameer Ali, Tyabji wrote to Beck also, asking him to join the Congress. But Beck, by then, a firm opponent of the Congress, replied to Tyabji that he did not believe in 'agitation', and that if the whole


81. Educated at a Quaker School, London University, Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge; appointed Principal of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh at the age of 24; improved the College and assisted Sir Syed in his educational movement.

Muslim community of northern India was led to believe that its distressing poverty was the result of British rule; it would revolt and would suffer again as it did during 1857. "We have to direct the thoughts of these people," he continued, "into a good and harmless channel, and English education is the pursuit which seems to us most beneficial for (their) material prosperity, and most likely to root out fanaticism and disloyalty."

Mouli Syed Mehdi Ali Khan, popularly known as Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, was in the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad when the Congress embarked on its career. The Congress presidential address of Tyabji appears to have impressed him most. But he did not know the aims and objects of the Congress and it was in the Madras mail that he read its proceedings with 'very considerable interest' and offered to Tyabji his 'warmest and most sincere congratulations on the admirable speech', he made as the President of the 1887 Congress. To Mohsin-ul-Mulk it was 'indeed a speech of which all Mahommedans, wherever they may be, should be proud of as having been made by one of their

83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Tyabji Papers, Mohsin-ul-Mulk to Tyabji, Hyderabad, January 10, 1888.
community.' Tyabji in reply expressed his 'great satisfaction' that his conduct as President of the Congress had secured the approval of such an eminent man. Explaining the object of the Congress he wrote that it was to promote the interests of the people of India by bringing into a focus the concerted opinion of all the educated people of India irrespective of their cast, colour and creed. But he regretted the misapprehension of the Muslims about the Congress that had arisen 'partly from ignorance, partly from prejudices, and partly from direct hostility to the advancement of the natives of this country.' Thereafter Tyabji did not receive any communication from Mohsin-ul-Mulk. It appears that his ideas and attitude towards the Congress gradually underwent a change. The speeches and articles of Sir Syed in opposition to the National Congress and the attitude of the officials guided him in the formation of his political ideas towards the Congress and he kept silence.

Despite the cool reception of these leaders to Badruddin Tyabji's invitation to associate themselves with the Congress, one finds in Tyabji's Private Papers, scores of letters from the Presidents and Secretaries of many Muslim organisations inquiring about the National Congress and expressing their

86. Ibid.

87. Tyabji Papers, Tyabji to Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Bombay, January 14, 1888.

willingness to join it. These letters indicate that a considerable number of Muslim associations were ignorant of, and not hostile to, the Congress movement. The hostilities came from a minor section of upper class Hindus and Muslims of the north, who regarded their interests as coincident with the British empire, and were consequently great loyalists. As referred to above, northern India in general, because of its backward economic condition and the extremely limited opportunities of higher education there, did not emerge, even in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a middle class, powerful enough to supplant the socio-political leadership of the upper classes. It was in these areas that Muslims were more receptive to the anti-Congress views of Sir Syed and his followers. However, notwithstanding this strident anti-Congress publicity Muslim delegates continued to participate in the Congress sessions in increasing numbers.

The first Congress was attended by two Muslims, the second by thirty-three, and the third Congress at Madras was

89. For example the letters of Shaikh Raza Husain, President of the Anjuman-i-Rafa-e-Am; Muhammad Sikandar Khan, Secretary Muhammad Association Ajmer, Hakim Fakhrul Husain, on behalf of the Anjuman-e-Tahzeeb of Kanpur; Muhammad Ishaq, Secretary Ellore Branch of Central Muhammadan Association; Moulvi Muhammad Saheb and Moulvi Abdul Bari Saheb from Madrassa-e-Islam Arabi of Ludhiana etc.

actually presided over by a Mussalman. In the fourth Congress held at Allahabad 221 Muslim delegates participated and thus beating all the previous records. But as compared to their total population it was too small a figure. From the standpoint of creed and religion the fourth Congress was represented by the following delegates - 965 Hindus, 221 Mussalmans, 22 natives and 16 European Christians, 11 Jains, 7 Parsis and 6 Sikhs. From the point of view of status they can be classified as follows: Princes 6, Rajas 4, Nawabs 17, Sardars 3, members of the noble families 54, members of the council 3, Honorary Magistrates 73, Chairman 12, Vice Chairman 19, Commissioners of Municipalities 127, members of Local and District Boards 69, Fellows of Universities 27, Public Prosecutors 3 etc. If one takes them from their occupation, one finds 445 belonging to legal profession, 42 in the medical profession, 5 engineers, 127 merchants, 85 bankers, 73 editors and journalists, 297 landed proprietors, 102 inferior land holders, 17 ryots and cultivators, 2 artisans, 7 shop-keepers, 31 clergymen and religious teachers, 59 educationists (principals, professors and lecturers) 6 printers, 18 contractors etc. Among the provinces Bengal, Bombay and Madras which were educationally more advanced, took a more active part. The masses, partly due to lack of

91. Ibid.
education and partly due to the absence of any organised mass contact movement did not take any part. It may also be owing to the unsympathetic attitude of the officials. Be it as it may, the Congress was entirely a middle-class movement. The allegation of Sir Syed and his colleagues for its being a non-representative body appears to be far from the truth. Of course there is no doubt as Professor Hira Lal Singh says, "The aristocracy and the masses practically held aloof. Nevertheless the movement was national because it generally transcended all local and exclusive interests." Even the second session of the Congress held at Calcutta (1886) had attracted considerable attention. The papers which had criticised the Congress in 1885, now considered it a thoroughly representative assembly composed of members drawn from all classes throughout India. The third session of the Congress held at Madras (1887) drew all the more applause from the papers. All the resolutions presented in the session were highly praised by them save the eighth regarding the admission of Indians to volunteer corps.

In the sixth annual session of the Congress held at Calcutta in 1890, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., (1833-1891), who had attended the fifth Congress session at Bombay and whose name was 'a synonym for independence' introduced a Bill for the Reform of the Legislative Councils. Naturally the substitution of the principle of election for that of nomination and the safeguarding of the rights of minorities were the subjects of heated discussion in the session. Hon'ble Justice Syed Sharfuddin, a Muslim barrister from Patna, opposed the clause for minority protection. Arguing his case he pointed out that neither in the Municipal Act nor in the Local Self-Government Act was there any clause for the protection of minorities nor did the absence of such a clause cause the 'slightest inconvenience', to either of the two major communities. Presenting an instance from his home town, which happened to be much affected by the ideology of the Aligarh School he said that in the general elections to the Municipality, out of 20 elective members, 13 Muslims were elected, not by the Muslims but by the

96. A radical and championed the cause of individual liberty; entered Parliament, 1880; attended the fifth session of the Congress and on his return to England he introduced a Bill in Parliament, proposing that the Members of the Legislative Councils should be elected and that the number of members on the Provincial Councils as well as on the Imperial Council be increased.

97. Presidential Address of Sir William Wedderburn, the President of the fifth Congress held at Bombay 1889.

98. Presidential Address of Hon'ble Pherozeshah Mehta, President of the Sixth Congress held at Calcutta, 1890.
Hindus. It was a sufficient proof of the goodwill of the Muhammadans towards Hindus and of Hindus towards Muhammadans. 'You will find, therefore, that my position in opposing the Protection-of-Minorities clause is not without the warrant.'

The total strength of Muslim delegates was rising every year. In the sixth session, of the 677 registered delegates, 506 were Hindus, 116 (or rather over 17%, against 18% at Allahabad and 13.5% at Bombay the previous year) were Mussalmans, 3 Jains, 7 Parsees, 3 Sikhs, 18 Brahmans, 15 Native, 1 Armenian and 7 European Christians.

The seventh session of the Congress held at Nagpur and attended by 800 delegates was considered a great success. Its proceedings were translated and reported in almost all the papers and the delegates were exhorted to keep up their agitation until Government should listen to the popular voice and redress their grievances. The demands of the Congress were becoming popular with the middle-class Muslims. Even at Aligarh, the headquarters of Sir Syed, Muslims realised the truth of Congress demands. In the tenth session of the Congress held at Madras (1894) Mr. Hafiz Abdul Rahim (1854-1926) a Muslim delegate

100. Ibid., p. 1.
102. A leading vakil of Aligarh; elected President of the fourth Provincial Conference of Indian National Congress, 1910,
from Aligarh, spoke in favour of the Civil Service Examination simultaneously to be held in London and India. Regretting the state of Muslim poverty in comparison to other communities of India he said: "It is not the richer and wealthier class that takes to the service all over the world; it is generally the middle-class that desires to join the public service of the land. But it is beyond the means and powers unfortunately of the Indian middle classes to send their youth to England. If the Civil Service Examinations were held in India it is my sincere conviction that Mahomedan youths would derive greater benefits than they can ever derive if the examination continues to be held in London only."

In Congress circles, the rising Muhammadan participation in the National Congress was felt. Mr. Rao Bahadur V.M.Bhide, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his welcome address of the eleventh session held at Poona in 1895 said that the Mussalmans of other places had more or less "cordially co-operated with their Hindoo brethren in this national work." Mr. Hafiz Abdul Rahim of Aligarh supporting the resolution of Mr. Kalicharan Banerji advocated the holding of all competitive examinations for the Indian Civil Service simultaneously in India and England.

103. Report of the Tenth Indian National Congress held at Madras 1894, p.xxiii (Introductory).
and reiterated his former stand. "The strongest argument", he said, "put forward by some of my co-religionists and apparently accepted by Government is that the Mahomedans and some of the Hindoo martial races will not have an equal chance with other Hindoos if the resolution is carried with effect. I do not admit this theory to be correct, but in supposing it correct, gentlemen, does it stand to reason that if one member of a family be sick and the doctors order him to have a restricted diet, that the other members of the same family should be asked to be content with the same diet? Certainly not, even sick people themselves will agree to this proposal, because the diet prescribed will weaken all and there will be no one to care for them."

The Congress had now reached a stage when the need of a particular constitution for its proper functioning was seriously felt. Therefore, the Madras Congress in 1894 requested the Committee of the next Congress at Poona to deal with this issue and to draw up rules to guide the conduct of its business. But nothing could be achieved till the fourteenth session of the Congress (1898) in Madras which again considered the issue, and a formal constitution was drawn up by the committee appointed for

105. Ibid., p. 23 (Introduction).
that very purpose, which was presented to and approved by the fifteenth session held in Lucknow (1899) under the presidency of R.C. Dutt (1848-1919). He declared that the object of the Congress was "to promote by constitutional means the interest and well-being of the people of the Indian Empire" and that the delegates to the Congress were to be elected by political associations, or other bodies and by public meetings.

In this session Muslims beat all the preceding records by sending 313 delegates out of a total of 739. It was the time when Curzon (1899-1905) had assumed office in India as the Viceroy, and the rising nationalism was his main concern.

(III)

The attitude of the Home Government towards the Indian National Congress was becoming unfavourable as the successive Secretaries of State were conscious of the growing influence of the Congress in home politics. Within a few years of the founding of the Indian National Congress a British Committee of the Congress was founded in England with Sir William Wedderburn as

107. Educated at Hare's School, Calcutta, and University College London; passed the I.C.S. Examination, 1869 and retired in 1897; C.I.E., 1892. Barrister from the Middle Temple, had been a lecturer at the University College, London University; author of a number of books.


Chairman, and Naoroji, W.S.Caine, W.S.B. Herbert Roberts and W.C.Bannerji as members. Reputed radical Charles Bradlaugh also spoke vehemently on the mismanagement of Indian affairs by the British. The Congress had won the support of many other influential liberal M.P.s and retired Civil Servants which is indicated by the list of the guests who attended the lunch given to Sir William Wedderburn in 1890 by George Yule. An Indian Parliamentary Committee consisting of Sir William Wedderburn, W.S.Caine, J.E.Ellis, Jacob Bright, A.Illingworth, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, W.S.B.McLaren, S.MacNeill, Dadabhai Naoroji, N.Paul, Sir Joseph Peace, J.H.Roberts, R.T.Reid, S.Smith, C.E.Schwann, E.Wason and A.Webb, was formed which 'was not committed to any particular measures but pledged to attend to Indian interests and see that justice was done.' The membership of this Committee increased rapidly and soon about 154 members of the House of


112. For a detailed account see Dr. Mary Cumpston, 'Some Early Indian Nationalists and Their Allies in the British Parliament, 1851-1906', *English Historical Review* Vol.LXXVI, No.299, April 1961, pp. 279-97; See also Sir Surendranath Banerjea's Presidential Address to the Indian National Congress at Poona in 1895, in *Speeches and Writings*, C.P.
Commons joined it. With the entrance of Naoroji and Wedderburn to the House, India became the subject of frequent discussion in the Parliament. 'India and Congress were indissolubly associated in Dadabhai's daily thought' and he wanted to impress upon the British public the gravity of the situation. Political awakening and a sense of fitness for self-Government was rapidly dawning the educated Indians and the influence and activities of the 'Indian group' had become a major concern of the Home Government. Towards the closing years of the nineteenth century Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, (1895-1903) became aware of this change and of the influence of the Indian National Congress in England and in one of his letters to the Viceroy, Lord Elgin (1894-99), he expressed his concern over evidence of close links between the Congress and Radical candidates for, and members of, Parliament.

Hamilton was struck by the change which had taken place in the tone of the Press in India as well as in England. The

113. Dr. Mary Cumpston says: "By 1906 this figure had grown to 200. From their early days of searching for Irish and radical support the efforts of the Indian nationalists had now brought into being a powerful parliamentary lobby." (See Some Early Indian Nationalists and their Allies in the British Parliament) p. 296.


115. Hamilton Papers, Hamilton to Elgin, July 17, 1895.
Manchester Guardian, Manchester Examiner, Leeds Mercury, the Scotsman, the Glasgow Daily Mail, the Bradford Observer in England and the Hindu Patriot, the Bengalee, the Brahma Public Opinion, the Indian Empire, the Amrit Bazar Patrika, the Tribune, the Hindu and the Hast Goftar etc. supported the Indian cause while the Times in London and the Pioneer, the Times of India, the Englishman and the Aligarh Institute Gazette in India offered their bitter condemnation to the Congress programme and policy. In less than two decades this change had taken place and Hamilton concluded that Indian question was gravitating towards political centre in England. He assured the Viceroy that he would do everything to check this state of affairs but he was afraid that the future Indian administrators would have to face greater problem than what existed in his time. He advised Lord Elgin to be 'thick-skinned' howsoever severe might be the criticism made towards his policy. He was conscious of the fact that the Indian Press did not advocate the overthrow of British rule, but he believed that their harsh criticism would 'ultimately make an impression just as a perpetual drip wears out stone.' He further opined that there would be

116. Ibid.
117. Lord Elgin also felt the same and he always used to say that the Press in India were useful in giving him some indication of what people were thinking about English rule. See Hamitons Papers, Hamilton to Curzon, August 3, 1899.
118. Hamilton Papers, Hamilton to Elgin, October 30, 1896.
no end of the criticism in Press. "Every year", he said, "we turn out more and more educated Natives, every year the Press will increase and become more powerful. Its circulation may now relatively be small but it must continually increase, and if there is nothing to counter-act it, its effect must be yearly more and more pernicious." Suppression of Press he considered something impolitic unless something very gross was written but he had no remedy for the existing state of things and concluded that 'a generation hence the position will be worse, and how it is to end to I cannot see, though during our lifetime the evil will be one of inconvenience rather than of danger.'

To Hamilton the origin of the National Congress was due to 'mismanagement and want of judgment' on the part of Lord Dufferin (1884-1888) which resulted into the preponderance of Indians in higher services as compared with Europeans. This preponderance of Indians in administration was increasing with the rise of English education leading to agitational politics among the Indians. He believed that Lord Dufferin could have restricted the admission of Indians to the higher ranks but now it was impossible.

119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. Curzon Papers, Hamilton to Curzon, May 17, 1900.
The Congress movement, as has been seen in the preceding pages, was gaining momentum and the number of delegates participating in its annual deliberations was increasing. Its demands were becoming popular among the people of India but to Hamilton the Congress did not achieve any promising success.

"It is gratifying to note", he wrote to Elgin, "that the Congress, as a political power, has steadily gone down during the last few years, and this is, I think, largely due to the indifference and unconcern with which the Indian Government have tolerated its proceedings." After the twelfth session of the Congress held at Calcutta in December 1896, Hamilton remarked that the session of the Congress had gone off 'without any notable incident.'

Hamilton-Elgin and Hamilton-Curzon private correspondence is very conspicuous in revealing their attitude towards the National movement. They were greatly irritated by the acrimonious comments made by the Indian Press on their policies. But since Conservative policy towards the Congress, ever since

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122. Hamilton Papers: Hamilton to Elgin, December 11, 1896. (To Curzon also Hamilton after four years wrote the same: "It is clear to me that the influence of the National Congress is waning fast, and I think this is largely due to the influence which you are exercising upon, and the sympathy which you have shown with the Native Communities." See Curzon Papers, Hamilton to Curzon, December 13, 1900.

123. Ibid., December 31, 1896.

124. Ibid.
its inception, had been of hostile indifference, as Conservatives they did not feel constrained to modify their policies to suit the demands voiced by the Congress-supporting or Congress-inspired Press. Some of the remarks of Hamilton indicate his annoyance at the criticisms of the Indian Press, while others expose his inner feeling towards the British Raj in India. "I rather surprised the Radicals in the House of Commons", he wrote to Curzon, "by telling them that, in my judgment, our rule in India never would be, in the strong sense of the word, a popular rule. It is a truism which has been very often expressed before, but it is apparently a shock to their theories, which I assume are that, if a plebiscite was taken tomorrow as to whether our Government should or should not remain in India and the decision was against us, we ought in compliance with that request to retire."

Some of the assessments of Hamilton were far from accurate. The leadership of the Congress at that time was not in the hands of extremists: it was in the hands of moderates, who continued to agitate in constitutional ways. With the exception of Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), who was undoubtedly an extremist,

126. Hamilton Papers, Hamilton to Curzon, June 16, 1899.

126. One of the extremists in the Indian National Congress; imprisoned for six years for writing seditious articles in 1908.
there was no one in the Congress camp who advocated a resort to violent activities. Their only weapon was appeals to their rulers, which were seldom attended to. It was natural under these circumstances for the Indian Press to have a stronger tone and for the annual sessions of the Congress to pass strongly worded resolutions, but such strident criticism was merely verbal. Hamilton's remarks about 'Lord Dufferin's mismanagement and want of judgment' towards the formation of Indian National Congress were also ill-considered, for India had reached a stage when the formation of the Congress was inevitable. The Congress in its initial stages struggled only for the Indianisation of services, for a small representation in the Council and for other minor rights. But it never did intend or advocate the overthrow of English rule. In fact it appreciated the beneficial and salutary effects of British domination, for instance, security of life, equality before law, developed means of communication and a common lingua franca etc. It was only in the later stages of its life, as we shall see later on, that the Congress became a disturbing factor and planned to uproot the foundation of British imperialism.

The fault with the Home Government lay in its misjudgment of the character and intentions of the Congress and the Press.

127. See Presidential Address of Dadabhai Naoroji, 1886, pp.6-7, Congress Presidential Addresses (Natesan 1936) Madras.
Like his contemporaries Curzon (1899-1905) also believed in imperialism. He viewed the Indian National Congress with great hostility, refusing to take it seriously and wrote to the Secretary of State: "My own belief is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambition while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise."

The nineteenth Congress was to meet at Madras in 1903 under the Presidentship of Lal Mohan Ghosh (1849-1909). This had worried Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras (1899-1906), who enquired of the Viceroy as to what attitude he should adopt towards the Congress and its leaders. Should he attend the great social gathering, make them a speech, lend them tents or the Banqueting Hall which was a part of the Government House and which had been sometimes lent for public gathering in the past? This was a thing, he thought, on which the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors ought to preserve absolute uniformity of opinion and therefore he sought to know Curzon's attitude.

128. See his Fourth Budget Speech in the Legislative Council at Calcutta, March 26, 1902, in which he had said: ‘I am myself by instinct and by conviction, an Imperialist, and I regard the British Empire not merely as a source of honorable pride to Englishmen, but as a blessing to the world.’ Sir Thomas Raleigh, Lord Curzon in India (being a selection from his speeches as Viceroy and Governor-General of India 1898-1905) (MacMillan 1906) p.117.

129. Hamilton Papers, Curzon to Hamilton, November 18, 1900.

130. Curzon Papers, Ampthill to Curzon, April 27, 1903.
Curzon in reply wrote that his policy ever since he took the Viceroyalty of India had been to underrate the Congress by never taking any notice of it. He instructed the Governor not to lend any tent or the Banqueting Hall, or to give them a garden party or entertain them in any way. Condemning Lord Dufferin for his big garden party to Congress delegates in 1886 at Calcutta, he wrote that it would be a 'public misfortune' if they were to revive the same stupidity and warned that if a Government servant appeared in the Congress platform or made a speech he would 'require an explanation pretty sharp.' When the Congress was over Lord Ampthill informed the Viceroy that it was a 'miserable affair' and was no more than a 'tamasha.'

But despite the Congress being a 'tamasha' and a 'miserable affair' Curzon could not check the growth of this 'agitational' organisation. The rising tide of nationalism, spearheaded by the Congress, soon became a source of alarm to Curzon, and he had to revise his opinion about the ramifications and potential of the movement. He was especially concerned at the strong roots nationalist sentiments had taken in Bengal, and the general predominance of Bengalis in the Congress. This is borne out

131. Curzon Papers, Correspondence with Persons in India January-June 1903, Curzon to Ampthill, June 15, 1903.

132. Curzon Papers, Correspondence with Persons in India January-to June 1904. Ampthill to Curzon January 5, 9, 1904.
by his letters to the Secretary of State in which he wrote that the Congress party was inspired by political motives and was directed to a political end. "Calcutta is the centre", he continued, "from which the Congress party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal, and indeed the whole of India. Its best wire-pullers and its most frothy orators all reside here. The perfection of their machinery and the tyranny which it enables them to exercise are truly remarkable. They dominate public opinion in Calcutta, they affect the High Court, they frighten the Local Government; and they are sometimes not without serious influence upon the Government of India. The whole of their activity is directed to creating an agency so powerful that they may one day be able to force a weak Government to give them what they desire." Curzon's general attitude towards the Congress and its Bengali leaders led to the widespread belief that he proposed and carried out the partition of the province of Bengal on October 16, 1905, to weaken the nationalist movement by dividing the province regarded by him as a powerful centre of intrigue against the Raj. Curzon's claim that the partition was not a new proposal and was necessary for administrative convenience and efficiency was not given credence by nationalists, who suspected strongly a design to create a breach between the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal behind the act.

With the news of reducing the boundaries of Bengal, agitation had started and with the actual creation of a new province on October 16, 1905, it became incessant. Lord Curzon had realised the gravity of the situation but he was determined to stick to his plan. He desired the consolidation of British rule in India which the young promising Bengalis, educated on English line, were bent upon to subvert. To Curzon a political get together of Hindus and Muslims was bound to jeopardise the interest of the British Empire which he could not ignore and to prevent it he could think of no better plan than driving 'a wedge between the two communities and to crush the new spirit of nationalism in Bengal' which was overflowing to other provinces of India. This is clear from one of his earlier speeches he delivered in a meeting of Mussalmans at Dacca in which he said that the proposal for Partition would make Dacca the centre and possibly the capital of a new and self-sufficing administration. It would invest the Muslims in Eastern Bengal with 'a unity which they have not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussalmaan Viceroy's and kings.' This is further proved by the


fact that notwithstanding the vehement opposition of the parti-
tion, Curzon was adamant and considered that the 'prodigious
agitation' was 'based on sentiment and declamation.'

Muslims from the inception of the National Congress, as has been seen in the preceding lines, were divided among them-
selves. One section led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was hostile to it, while the other led by Badruddin Tyabji supported the Congress ideology and its programme. Naturally the section hostile to Congress therefore welcomed the partition of Bengal. Nawab Salimullah Khan who supported the partition in one of his articles wrote: "There are many good things in store for us which will no doubt come to us by and by, and the Muslim being the largest in number in the New Province, they have the largest share .... This is the golden opportunity which God and His Prophet have offered us, but if we do not now profit ourselves by the opportunity, we may not get another chance. Now or never our destiny is in our hands. We must strike while the iron is hot." Many associations of Muslims were formed

137. Curzon Papers, Curzon to Brodrick, January 26, 1904.

138. Son of Khwaja Nawab Ahsanullah Khan of Dacca; succeeded his father as head of the family of the Dacca Nawabs, 1901; nominated Member of the Bengal Legislative Council, 1903; invited the annual session of the All-India Muslim Educational Conference at Dacca in December 1906 which, after the conference was transformed in a body, founded the All-India Muslim League.

in East Bengal to support the partition. One of such associations was named as Muhammadan Provincial Union with Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhary and Nawab Salimullah Khan as its President and Patron respectively. This was formed to unite the Mussalmans of the new Provinces of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Officially recognised by the Government of East Bengal, this association was to ascertain the views of the Mussalman community on all matters affecting its interest. It should be noted that Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhary was one of the delegates who represented Bengal in the Simla Deputation of October 1, 1906. A year later, at the annual meeting of the Association on October 16, 1906, Nawab Salimullah Khan exhorted the audience to secure their 'political regeneration' and to 'act in consort to advance the interest of (the new) province and of Islam in general.'

The Muhammadan Literary Society of Calcutta issued a circular in support of the partition while the Secretary of Birbhum

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140. One of the champions of the partition of Bengal, took a prominent part in shaping Muslim politics of those early years when the Muslim League was not founded.

141. The Tribune, October 24, 1905.

142. The First Annual Report of the Provincial Muhammadan Association of Eastern Bengal and Assam found in Home Department (Education) Progs. No. 102-103, December 1906.

143. Ibid.

144. The Pioneer, November 16, 1905.
Anjuman-e-Islamia (Bengal) recognised the 'sagacity' and 'statesmanlike wisdom' of the Viceroy in partitioning Bengal. At various meetings Muslim adopted 'memorials' pleading that the new Province had given them untold advantages resulting into general prosperity.

The partition of Bengal was generally hailed by the Aligarh School as well. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk wrote that the Mussalmans of East Bengal had, as compared to the Hindus, been so backward that they could not hope to stand side by side with the Hindus. Their position therefore necessitated a change so that they may compete other communities. The partition of Bengal in his opinion gave an opportunity to Mussalmans to improve their condition and if they did not avail themselves of that golden opportunity they were doomed for ever. "The Mahomedans of Eastern Bengal are not only pleased with the Partition," he said, "but they consider it a boon to their national cause."

On the contrary the pro-Congress section of Mussalmans vehemently criticised and opposed the partition. Nawab Salimullah's brother, Nawab Atiqullah, pointed out that the Mussalmans

145. Home Department Public (B) July 1906 Nos. 228-232; See letter of Moulvi Syed Irfan Ali, Secretary of Birbhum Anjuman-e-Islamia to the Private Secretary of H.E. the Viceroy, August 7, 1905.

146. Home Department (Public) Proceeding December 1906.

147. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, August 20, 1906.
of Eastern Bengal, as a body, were not in favour of the partition. Nor did the Khwaja family (the family of the Nawab of Dacca) welcome it. It was only Nawab Salimullah Khan who supported it in his individual capacity. He reported that the view of the Khawaja family was that the partition was a great wrong done both to Hindus and Mussalmans and should therefore be revoked. Ameer Ali and his Central National Muhammadan Association which championed the cause of Muslims also condemned the project. The association pleaded that no portion of the Bengali-speaking race should be separated. Criticising the policy of the Government in an article entitled 'The Unrest in India - Its Meaning' Ameer Ali wrote: "...no friend of India can view the present situation or the immediate future without the greatest anxiety. For centuries Hindus and Mahomedans have lived side by side in peace and amity. The fact that the latter had been displaced by their Hindu compatriots in Government consideration had made little or no difference in their general relations. Occasional disturbances between the rowdy spirits on both sides on certain festivals did not mar the normal harmony. Between the better minds of the two communities there existed as I hope it still exists and lastingly, sincere


149. The Bengalee, October 16, 1906 editorial. Also see the Indian Review, November 1906, p.356 and Anwika Charan Mazumdar's Indian National Evolution, p.223.
friendship based on mutual respect and recognition of worth."

Thus one would find scores of prominent Muslims and associations who opposed the partition of Bengal. The agitation against the partition gathered momentum and was one of the factors that gave strength to the Extremist section within the Congress and to militant terrorism outside it. The effect of the agitation on Congress fortunes was great, and the Swadeshi and Boycott movements initiated by it as a measure of protest evoked a wide response. The strength and stature of the Congress had increased and Lord Minto who succeeded Lord Curzon as Viceroy, in fact, wrote to Sir Arthur Lawley, the Governor of Madras, that the Congress was a major factor in Indian politics which could not be ignored. The partition agitation took place at a time when Muslim politics was on the threshold of a metamorphosis, from passive loyalism to political activism, a change that had a vital significance in the history of the entire sub-continent.

( IV )

Besides the partition of Bengal, the Ganapati festival; the Urdu-Hindi confrontation and the British intervention in

150. The Nineteenth Century and After, June 1907, p.874.

151. See The Tribune, October 21, 1905; The Bengalee, October 18, 1906; The Pioneer, August 28, 1906; Reports on Native Papers in Bengal for the week ending October 12, November 23, 1907; July 18, 1908 pp. 315, 1114, 1115, 1322; See also Government of India Home Department (Poll.), Prog. August 1908, Nos. 23-29.

152. Minto Papers, Correspondence with Persons in India, November to June 1906-07. Minto to Sir Arthur June 10
West Asia further arouse political consciousness among the Muslims and induced them to organise themselves better.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak organised Ganapati festival in all the important centres of Deccan to save the Hindus from communal riots. Before 1892 both the communities had very cordial relations but the communal riot of 1892 which broke in Bombay marred their good relations. Both the communities accused each other for inciting the riots and the Hindus felt a fear of insecurity. To organise them, Tilak revived the Ganapati celebration which was a means 'first of consolidating the scattered ranks of the Hindu community, and secondly of arousing in them the spirit of nationalism.' He also founded Shivaji festival and said that it was meant 'to provide a focus for the national spirit.' To achieve this object he started the 'Kesarl' in Marathi and supplemented it by an English weekly the 'Mahratta'. But he uttered a caution to Muslims who took these movements in a communal spirit and to convince them of his sincerity he declared: "The Shivaji festival is not celebrated to alienate or even to irritate the Mahomedans. Times have changed and the Mahomedans and the Hindus are in the same boat as far as the present


political condition of the people is concerned." By the close of the 19th century the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals had travelled far beyond Bombay and Poona and found its root in far flung areas of India.

Uneducated Muslims did not see these developments without suspicion. Their restlessness was great and the Anglo-Indian Press - the Times of India of Bombay and the Pioneer of Allahabad - accelerated the pace. The gulf was widening. The Afzal Khan - Shivaji confrontation was taken by them in a communal spirit. The circumstances and politics of the Mughals and Maratha were set aside; they were nearing communalism. But enlightened Muslims still supported Tilak and held his standard. They contributed money for his defence and considered him a veteran soldier against the British.

While the issue of the Shivaji and Ganapati festivals was maring Hindu-Muslim amity in the south, their relations in

156. D.V. Tahmankar, op.cit., p. 65.

157. In 1897 Tilak was arrested for his anti-government activities. His friends raised fund for his defence in Calcutta and more than Rs. 16000 was collected in Bengal; the first and the biggest amount - Rs. 7000 came from a Muslim business firm of Hajee Ahmad and Hajee Hossain Hajee Abdal. The covering letter Hajee Ahmad wrote was: "The moment the Government arrested him, Mr. Tilak ceased to be a leader of the Hindu community. He is going to be prosecuted for his fight for India, the common motherland of the Muslims and Hindus." See Tahmankar, op.cit., pp. 57-8.

* The headquarters of the Pioneer was shifted from Allahabad to Lucknow later on.
the north were being adversely affected by the Urdu-Hindi controversy from the seventies of the nineteenth century. In the days of the later Mughals, the court language was Persian and Urdu. When the English succeeded them they continued the same as the court language. The protagonists of Hindi wanted Hindi to be the official language. Sir Syed was in those days at Benares and he realised the far-reaching effect of the controversy. He was convinced that this move was hostile to Muslims and in days to come there was no possibility of any co-operation between Hindus and Muslims. But he continued his efforts to unite them.

A Nagri Pracharini Sabha was founded in 1893 to 'enlist the sympathies and unite the efforts of those interested in the development of Hindi.' Raja Sheoraj of Kashipur and the Maharaja of Benares, being on the forefront, had applied to the Government for permission to introduce Hindi in their states.

The protagonists of Hindi received much stimulus in Bihar where Urdu was replaced by Hindi in the court from January 1, 1880. This alarmed Muslims who in this movement saw the destruction of their cultural heritage and thought to save their rights

158. Hall, Hayat-e-Javed (Lahore 1957) pp. 192, 3, 4. See correspondence between Sir Syed and a few Hindus in this connection in the Aligarh Institute Gazette, November 27, 1868, July 2, 1869 and January 3, 1873.
from any encroachment which in future was likely to lead them to an intellectual bankruptcy. The following post office statistics for the year 1879-80 are interesting to note whether Hindi or Urdu was more popular dialect. In the North Western Provinces, of official correspondence 43% was in English, 50% in Urdu and 7% in Hindi. Of non-official communications 32% were in English, 36% Urdu and 32% Hindi. In Oudh the figures were somewhat different, where official correspondence was 59% in English, 41% Urdu. This was true for the vernacular newspapers as well. In the Punjab, N.W.P. and Oudh some 80% of the papers were published in Urdu, most of them having 3000 copies in circulation with a proportionately larger number of Hindu readers. Apart from this what is more surprising is the fact that most of the leading newspapers such as the Oudh Akhbar of Lucknow, the Nasim of Agra, the Anis-e-Hind of Meerut, the Rahbar of Moradabad, the Victoria Paper of Sialkot, the Akhbar e-Am of Lahore, etc. were not only owned but also very ably conducted by the Hindus. Many of the literary and religious magazine of Hindus such as the Oudh Review, the Arya Bandhu, the Arya Samachar, the Vaish Netkari etc. were published in Urdu. Therefore to say that the Persian script was not in vogue was not to say fact. But the agitation of Hindus for Devanagri

160. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, January 11, 1881.

161. The Pioneer, February 1, 1902, letter - 'Urdu and Nagri' by Syed Akhbar Ali. See also his another letter March 1, 1902.
script was tremendous and while in 1894 the Nagri Pracharini Sabha had a membership of 82 and an annual income of Rs. 158, it had a membership of 681 and an income of over Rs. 9000 in 1906. The Hindi protagonists succeeded in persuading the Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Sir Antony MacDonnell (1896-1901) in accepting the Devanagri script who issued a circular on April 18, 1900 in favour of the use of Hindi in Nagri script in the courts. It is to be noted that it was not a substitution for Persian character as is believed but the introduction of Nagri script along with the Persian. It appears from one of the letters of Curzon sent to Queen Victoria. He wrote: 'If it had been proposed to substitute the Nagri for the Persian character, the Viceroy would not have sanctioned the proposal. But inasmuch as the use of the Nagri character, to be permissive; as it is the character which is familiar to, and is used by, the vast majority of the population, and as the compulsory use of the Persian character has undoubtedly operated as a hardship upon the poorer classes of the people, the Viceroy had no hesitation in approving of a change which will be unjust to nobody, and will be a great boon

162. The Modern Review September 1907, p.265. The membership of the Sabha as quoted by the author in the Modern Review does not appear to be correct. Report on the Administration of U.P. gives a figures of 380 membership at the time of its foundation. It also received a grant of Rs. 500/- annually from the Government for the collection of Sanskrit manuscript (p. 66).
to many." Not satisfied with the award, the Nagri Pracharni Sabha presented an address to the Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces, Sir J.D. Latouche (1901-1906), for the substitution of Hindi in the courts and also as a medium of instruction in the primary schools. But the Lieutenant Governor refused to accept it and replied that their 'aspirations go beyond what a Government can do and beyond what I am prepared to attempt'.

The great hue and cry raised by the Hindus on Hindi-Urdu issue created doubts in the Muslim mind. 'Already the educated Muslims had become suspicious of the Hindu leaders and their activities; this episode made them even more apprehensive.'

It created an awakening in them and in 1901 as an offshoot of the revised script controversy in the United Provinces, the Secretary of the Aligarh College, Mohsin-ul-Mulk, convened a meeting in Lucknow of the leading Muslims of the province which adopted a strongly worded resolution in protest and demanded the reconsideration of the circular. This annoyed the

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163. Curzon Paper, Correspondence with Queen, January to June 1902, Curzon to Queen, July 18, 1900.

164. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, January 16, 1902.

165. Rafiq Zakaria, Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics (Bombay 1970) pp. 308, 09.

166. The Paisa Akhbar, October 25, 1904; Moulvi Mohammad Amin Zubari, Hayat-e-Mohsin, (Aligarh 1934) p. 87.
Lieutenant Governor who did not like the agitation and disapproved of the activities of Mohsin-ul-Mulk. Sir Antony MacDonnell personally came to Aligarh, addressed the Trustees and asked Mohsin-ul-Mulk to chose between the Secretaryship of the College or the Presidentship of the Anjuman-e-Urdu. He even asked him not to use in official correspondence, the title of 'Mohsin-ul-Mulk' conferred on him by the Nizam for his services to Hyderabad and already approved of by the Government of India. This administered a severe blow to Mohsin-ul-Mulk who resigned from the Secretaryship of the College. But he was the only capable man who could manage the College affairs. Therefore he was pressed by the Trustees of the College to whom Mohsin-ul-Mulk yielded and he withdraw his resignation. This was not a small affair. It, at least, reminded Mussalmans where were they going. The interference of the Lieutenant Governor was fraught with significance. He did not like that Mohsin-ul-Mulk and with him the whole Muslim community should resort to agitational politics. But now the Muslim community was not willing to stoop before their English rulers. The Muhammadan Political Association that had emerged

168. Tufail Ahmad Manglori, Mussalmanon Ka Roshan Mustaqbil(Urdu) (Delhi 1945) p.334.
169. Ibid., p. 335.
170. The Muhammadan Political Association was founded at Lucknow on October 21-22, 1901. For details see subsequent pages of this section.
in the wake of Urdu-Hindi controversy was now stable in spite of the withdrawal of Mohsin-ul-Mulk though its activities were confined to the United Provinces only.

The Muslim agitation over the Hindi-Urdu controversy made the Muslims suspect in the British circles again after about thirty years. In the nineteenth century the Wahabi movement sowed seeds of dissension between Muslims and the Government but the dominating personality of Sir Syed had laboured hard to soften British attitude. Sir Syed had passed away in 1938 and was succeeded by Mohsin-ul-Mulk who was a step ahead of his master. The formation and activities of the Urdu Defence Association in which Mohsin-ul-Mulk was a leading figure was taken as an agitation of the whole of the Muslim community and the Government had come to believe that the successors of Sir Syed did not adhere to his policy. Reviewing the situation Alfred Nundy, an Anglo-Indian journalist, wrote to the Pioneer that the Indian Muslims had changed their attitude towards the Indian National Congress and were drifting towards political agitation. The unexpected comment baffled the Muslim leadership which defended the Muslim loyalty and the policy of isolation.

While Aftab Ahmad Khan (1867-1928) justified the public meetings

171. The Pioneer, December 9, 1900. See his letter to the editor entitled 'Mahomedans and Political Agitation.'

172. Son of Ghulam Ahmad Khan; proceeded to England for higher studies, 1891; joined Inner Temple and returned to Aligarh as barrister, 1894; appointed Professor of Law at the M.A.O. College, 1897; Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, 1923-27.
of the Muslims 'held and conducted in the most constitutional manner,' with no idea of 'hostility to the Government,' and held that the 'Mahomedans will continue to carry on their national work in the same spirit and on the same lines which Sir Syed has left clearly marked out for them,' Theodore Morison (1863-1936) considered Muslim loyalty to the British Government as a 'religious obligation.' Nundy reiterated his assertion and concluded his another letter by saying: 'The point at issue is not so much whether the Mahomedans are going to join the Congress, but whether they are repudiating their oft-repeated assertions never to take part in any political agitation.' Mohsin-ul-Mulk refuted the findings of Alfred Nundy which according to him, were to misrepresent the attitude of the Mussalman community and to attribute to them a suspicion of the benevolent intention of the Government and a distrust of its impartiality. To Mohsin-ul-Mulk the Urdu Defence Association and its meetings to support the cause of Urdu could not be termed as agitational politics.

173. The Pioneer, December 20, 1900. See his letter to the editor entitled 'The Mahomedans and the Congress.'

174. Graduated from the Trinity College, Cambridge; came to India as a regent to the Maharaja of Chatterpur; appointed Professor of English at the M.A.O. College, 1889; devoted to the Muslim education; succeeded Theodore Beck as Principal, 1899; presided the annual session of the Muhammadan Educational Conference, 1904; member of the council of the Secretary of State for India and was knighted.

175. The Pioneer, December 17, 1900. See his letter to the editor entitled 'The Mahomedans and the Congress.'

176. The Pioneer, January 20, 1901.
It was a mere expression of their views in a submissive manner. 'Though Sir Syed Ahmad is dead', the Nawab said,' his opinions still live among his people and we, who have shared his counsels and his lessons, are not going to swerve one jot from the policy he has convinced us the best both for ourselves and the country.' Nawab Imad-ul-Mulk who was also a subject of discussion in Nundy's letters contradicted him and wrote to the Pioneer that 'the great body of Mahomedans held themselves aloof from the movement now, as they have wisely held themselves aloof from it from the outset.' The methods of the Congress were 'abhorrent to them' and there was no question of their joining the Congress. Humourously he remarked that if 'Mr. Nundy is able in his new born zeal to convert any Mahomedan to his creed we may regret it, but we cannot prevent him. Missionaries sometimes succeed in converting stray Mahomedans to Christianity.' But an observer would not fail to see that anti-British feeling in the Muslim middle-classes, who realised their mistake of isolation from politics, had crept and Nundy's assessment of Muslim political unrest was not superficial. The Muslims were certainly drifting from passive loyalism to active politics.

Some of the Muslim leaders candidly expressed their restlessness on the changing situation. Mehdi Hasan Fateh Nawaz

177. The Pioneer, January 26, 1901.
Jung, while owing allegiance to the British Raj supported the public speeches delivered by Muslim leaders. To him, 'No community can prosper if it sits with folded hands trusting to Government to satisfy its needs, but ready to reproach it for not having learnt by inspiration what was likely to promote its welfare.' He held that with the death of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, their 'best mode of approaching Government' was lost and in the absence of a powerful leader 'a public discussion of grievances carried out in a temperate and constitutional manner' was a necessity if 'we are desirous of preserving ourselves as a nation and not becoming hewers of wood and drawers of water.' He also believed that the educated and thoughtful Muslims 'must take into their serious consideration whether they gain anything by living in alienation from the other communities who are making rapid strides, not only materially but in the cultivation of those higher and manly qualities which at any rate remove from them the reproach of obsequiousness and sycophancy.' He admitted that 'the policy of isolation hitherto adopted is gradually losing its advocates and a change of some kind seems both imminent and desirable.'

179. Home Secretary to the Government of the Nizam, having been promoted to that office from the high and responsible post of Chief Justice of Hyderabad; Nizam conferred on him the title of Nawab Fateh Nawaz Jung Bahadur for his services to his Government; a powerful writer in the Times; visited England with Mohsin-ul-Mulk and received the high acknowledgement of His Highness, the Nizam and of the British Government.

180. The Pioneer, April 14, 1901.
At that very moment the British policy in West Asia had become hostile to Islamic countries. On the question of Tabah (a place in Arabia) in which Turkey and Egypt were involved, the British gave an ultimatum to Turkey and sided with Egypt which had already taken it under its control. This was highly resented by the Egyptians. British move in Sudan, praised in English Press, had antagonised the Muslims much earlier. Consternation in the orthodox sections of the Muslims started. Largely attended meetings of the Muslims were called for immediate British withdrawal from Islamic countries. The relation of Mussalmans with the Sultan of Turkey was a much discussed topic of the day in the Muslim Press. Dr. Fazal-i-Husain (1877-1936), a reputed barrister of Lahore, wrote to the Paisa Akhbar of June 11, 1906, that in the event of a struggle between England and Turkey 95 per cent of the Prophet's followers in India were not likely to remain true to the allegiance they owed to British throne. The Pioneer quoted a telegram sent to the Viceroy by the Aligarh School which stated: "The


182. Graduated from Government College Lahore, 1898; joined the Christ College, Cambridge and was called to the Bar; earned high reputation as a speaker; found Lahore Branch of Muslim League; joint Secretary, All-India Muslim League; Minister of Education, medicine and Local Self-Government under Dyarchy, Member of the Council of Governor-General, 1930, K.C.S.I., 1931.

Mahomedans of Aligarh have heard the news of the British ultimatum to Turkey with profound grief and alarm, and request your Excellency to use the influence of the Government of India in persuading the British Government to avoid an Anglo-Turkish war, and earn thereby the gratitude of the entire Mahomedan population of British India." Thus the resentment among the Muslims was great and caused anxiety to the Viceroy. Lord Minto wrote to Morley that there was a Pan-Islamic movement working in India hostile to the British and in case of war with Turkey it would help to aggravate fanatical action against the Raj on the frontier. Lord Kitchner (1850-1916) also suggested to him that it would be better not to employ Muslim troops as there was always a possibility of their revolt in favour of the Turks. The Viceroy felt "serious anxiety" about the Amirs of the frontier tribes, and the Muhammadan population in India.

The Pan-Islamic movement was novel neither to the British nor to Muslims of India. The movement was started by Syed Jamaluddin Afghani (1837-1897) in the early eighty's of the

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185. Conqueror of Sudan; later Commander-in-Chief of India.
186. Minto Papers, Correspondence with the Secretary of State November-June 1905-06. Minto to Morley May 9, 1906 and Morley to Minto May 18, 1906.
187. A man of extra-ordinary calibre visited almost all Islamic countries and started Pan-Islamic movement against British; founded at Mecca Pan-Islamic Society, Ummul Qura, which aimed at creating one Caliph for the whole Muslim world either at Constantinople or Kufa (See Brown, Persian Revolution) (Cambridge 1910) p.14.
nineteenth century to unite Islamic states of West Asia to oppose British penetration. It was taken up by the Muslims of India in sympathy with their co-religionists who were suppressed by British imperialists. Sir Syed during his lifetime was always too busy to combat the sentiments of Pan-Islamism and challenged the pretention of Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey to be the Khalifa of the Muslims of India. But the Pan-Islamic tendencies continued to grow in India unabated despite the best efforts of the loyalist to counter it. The Government suspected the Indian Muslims and whenever they happened to go to London or West Asia, their activities were keenly watched.

Ziauddin Ahmad Khan (1878-1948), (later Dr. Sir) Professor of Higher Mathematics and Physics, of the Aligarh College who obtained very high distinctions at Cambridge, ending with Issac Newton scholarship, was one of those Muslims of India whose movements, among the Pan-Islamists of Cairo, while on his way to India, became a matter of deep concern to British officials stationed there. In one of his confidential letter to W.A.J. Archbold (1865-1929) Principal of the M.A.O. College, Dunlop

188. Sir Syed wrote, 'The Caliphate' in 1897 to refute the claim of Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey to be the Khalifa of the Muslims of India (See - The Aligarh Institute Gazette September 11, 1897). A similar article entitled 'Shaikh-ul-Islam' also appeared in which Sir Syed denied the authority of the Shaikh-ul-Islam of Turkey on the Muslims of India. Tahzeeb-ul-Akhlaq (Vol. II, p.374).

189. Educated at M.A.O. College and Trinity College, Cambridge; Member Calcutta University Commission; had been Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University.
Smith (1858-1921) wrote: "Ziauddin has kept away from all British authorities and called on him (Lord Cromer) only the day before he left for India. He (Lord Cromer) says he was in constant communication with all the leading members of the Pan-Islamic movement. The explanation he gave at his interview, Lord Cromer considered unsatisfactory." In his another letter the Private Secretary to the Viceroy again wrote to the Principal of the Aligarh College: "Lord Cromer told Ziauddin that all the time he had been in Cairo he had never called at the Agency and had associated with that class of Mohammedan who is most opposed to the principles which it is sought to inculcate at the Aligarh College and also most hostile to British Government. Lord Cromer writes that the interview rather increased the unfavourable impression he had formed of Ziauddin Ahmad, whom he told he would write to the Viceroy giving an account of his behaviour." It was feared that the Congress people might twist him in their own way. Therefore Archbold proposed to arrange

190. Sir James Robert Dunlop Smith was educated at Edinburgh University and the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, 1883-87; Private Secretary to Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India, 1905-1910; Knighted, 1910, Political A.D.C. to the Secretary of State for India, 1910-19.

191. Evelyn Baring Cromer (1841-1917), British diplomat and administrator who controlled Egypt for 24 years.

192. Minto Papers. Correspondence with Persons in India - July to December 1906, Dunlop Smith to Archbold, December 11, 1906.

193. Ibid., Dunlop Smith to Archbold December 14, 1906.
a meeting of Ziauddin with Dunlop Smith at the time of the Muslim Educational Conference held at Dacca in the last week of December 1906 to detract him from falling into either the nationalist or Pan-Islamic cobwebs.

The concept of Pan-Islamism dominated the English press as well. The Spectator advised the English people to convince the Mussalmans of India that when the British Government withstood the unjust claims of the Sultan of Turkey to be the Khalifa of Indian Muslims, they were in no way acting in opposition to Islam. "We must do all" the paper wrote, "in our power to dispel the notion that to withstand the Sultan is to attack the Moham­medan faith." Morison believed that unrest prevailed in the Muslim circles and they would either start a political party on the lines of the Congress to agitate for their rights or would not 'stand out against the blandishments of the Congress' and would join it. "Congress ideas are in the air, and you can't keep them out of any people's eyes and ears when once they have begun to read English. Ideas can only be combated by ideas, and you won't keep the younger generation away from the Congress unless you have other programme and another set of ideas to

194. Ibid., Archbold to Dunlop Smith, December 15, 21, 1906
Dunlop Smith to Archbold, December 23, 1906.

195. The Spectator, May 12, 1906 a cutting of which was sent by Morley to Minto found in the Minto Papers - Correspondence with Secretary of State 1905-6 Morley to Minto June 22, 1906.
set up against their," he asserted. Morison convinced the Secretary of State that the Mussalmans had not gone over and if the Government would follow a progressive policy it might capture Muhammadan support. Aga Khan (1877-1957) also told Sir W. Lee Warner that everywhere there was unrest and the Hindu Press had infused a feeling among the Muslims that they had not been treated well by the Government. It was the cumulative effect of three-fold dilemma - the Ganapati festival, the Urdu-Hindi controversy, the Pan-Islamism - that brought about a wider participation from among the ranks of the Muslim community in politics, which had earlier been the preserve of the aristocracy of that community, and led to the entry of Muslims into the folds of political activity.

With the withdrawal of Mohsin-ul-Mulk, as shown earlier, from the Urdu Defence Association, the cause of Urdu had slightly waned but the question of the protection of the rights of Muslims had become very important in the politically conscious Muslims

196. A Note of Morison sent by Morley to Minto attached with the above letter of Morley dated June 22, 1906. See Minto Papers, 1905-6.

197. Ibid.

198. Head of the Ismaili Mussalmans; Member of the Viceroy's Council, 1902-4; headed the Simla Deputation, 1906; led the India Delegation to the League of Nation; a great philanthropist and statesman; the foundation of the Aligarh Muslim University owes very much to his efforts.

199. Aga Khan's note attached with the above letter of Morley.
circles. In September 1901, Mir (later Sir) Muhammad Shafi (1869-1932) wrote a series of articles in the Observer, Lahore, asking his co-religionists to form an All-India Muslim League. In U.P. the formation of separate provincial association as well as an all India 'corporation' to protect the rights of the Mussalman was considered necessary. It was also suggested to revive the Muhammadans Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Sir Syed and to adopt a modified line of political activity - neither complete inactivity on the one hand nor popular agitation on the other. Nawab V iqar-ul-Mulk also condemned the policy of inactivity and vehemently criticised his community for having left everything to the rulers. He also pleaded for the revival of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India. He wrote a letter to Mohsin-ul-Mulk as well asking him to follow the same line of action. Thereafter, Theodore Morison, the Principal of the M.A.O. College, suggested to the Mussalmans that there were two courses of action opened.

200. A leading barrister of the Punjab; Member of the Simla Deputation, 1906; founder of the Punjab Muslim Association which emerged into the Punjab Muslim League; Khan Bahadur, 1908; Member of the Punjab Legislative Council and Imperial Legislative Council 1909-1912; President All-India Muslim League, 1913 and 1927; Education Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council 1919-22; Knighted, 1922, Law Member of the Council, 1923-24.


202. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, July 11, 1901. Article 'What methods should Mussalmans adopt to save their political right.'

203. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, August 22, 1901.
to them. Firstly, either to join the Congress agitation, or secondly, to form an organisation of their own upon the same lines as the National Congress to defend their interests. The functions of the newly created body would be: (a) to hold an annual meeting of the Association, (b) to organise demonstration of Muhammadan opinion in various towns, and (c) to publish one or two newspapers to spread its views, and ventilate Muhammadan grievances.

Dissatisfied with what Morison and Mohsin-ul-Mulk said the prominent Muslims convened a meeting on October 21, 22, 1901 at the residence of Syed Hamid Ali Khan, barrister of Lucknow, which agreed to form a political Association 'with a view to secure united action in social and political affair.' The meeting authorised Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk to convene representative meetings in each district for the election of representatives for the larger meeting. Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk thereafter toured northern India visiting district headquarters and important towns in many parts of the provinces, and arranging for the election of representatives for the general meeting after

204. Ibid.

205. The Tribune November 7, 1901. The first session of this Political Association was held at Lucknow on November 1, 1901. The aims and objects of this Association were as follows: (a) To impress the Muhammadans of India that their well-being and prosperity depended entirely on the stability and permanence of British rule in India, (b) to lay the grievances of the Muhammadan community before the Government in a moderate and respectful tone (c) to refrain from assuming a hostile attitude towards other communities and (d) to keep themselves aloof from the Indian National
explaining the objects of the new association, both in private
and public gatherings.

The Muslim opinion on this issue was sharply divided.
Some favoured the continuance of the Sir Syed policy while
others stood for a political organisation and still others
for co-operation with the Congress. Khushi Mohammad Khan, a
leading representative from the Punjab said that there was no
change for the better in the conditions of Muslims, economically
or educationally and political organisation would be of no use.
Syed Muhammad Ghulam Jabbar, Vakil High Court Hyderabad, Deccan,
supported the above contention. To him the political organisa­
tion was another name of agitation. Opposing Nawab Viqar-ul-
Mulk he exhorted the Muslims to eschew such idea till the founda.
tion of the Aligarh Muslim University. It was suggested that
the Government servants would not participate in it; it would
lack unanimity and politics would inevitably take the community
to agitation.

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206. The Tribune August 18, 1903. See The Aligarh Institute
Gazette, August 1 and 8, 1903, articles 'A New Muhammedan
Movement', and also 'Muhammedan Political Organisation -
the Work which lies before it.'

207. The Aligarh Monthly, December 1903 and February 1904. See
articles 'Do Mussalmans need a Political Association',
(Urdu Text).

208. Ibid.

209. The Aligarh Monthly, September 1903, p.34. Article
'Political Association'. (Urdu Text).
Thus it is clear from the above that even by 1903, it was not decided what course of action should the Muhammadans follow: whether it was at all necessary that Muhammadans should have an organisation for political purposes. Was such an organisation desirable? Was it in consonance with the policy laid down by Sir Syed? The answer to these questions could be in the affirmative, but there were some other questions which could not properly be answered. Was it feasible or warrantable to make an All-India organisation? If so, what evidence was there to prove that Madras, Bombay, Sindh, were in touch with the organisers? These questions hovered over the minds of the movers of Political Association for a pretty long time.