CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The eighteenth century forms from many points of view one of the darkest periods in the history of India. We notice a rapid deterioration in the social and political life during this century. The death of Aurangzeb in March, 1707 was the signal for disintegration of the mighty Moghul Empire. On the decline of central authority at Delhi, the inevitable centrifugal tendencies were manifest in different parts of the empire. The provincial satraps one after the other made themselves independent of the titular Delhi Emperor who had virtually lost all power for all practical purposes and paid him only nominal allegiance.

Social, Economic and Political Conditions of Muslims of India in the Eighteenth Century:

The nobility during the eighteenth century had a large share in hastening the decline of the Moghul empire. The nobles of the time had ceased to discharge the duties of their predecessors. To the great misfortune of the country they were interested only in personal ascendancy which had plunged the land into bitter civil wars, disastrous conspiracies, hopelessly confusion and anarchy leading to the
disintegration of the Empire.¹

Society was feudal with the king at its apex. Next in rank to the king were nobles who enjoyed special honours and privileges. They rolled in wealth and luxuries and were addicted to all sorts of vices. The most sinister development, however, was the rivalry and jealousy among the nobles belonging to different factions. Among them the Turanis, the Iranis, the Afghans and the Hindustanis were the most important. The Turanis came from Trans-Oxiana, professed the Sunni faith while the Iranis who had migrated from the eastern and western provinces of Iran were shias. The Afghans came from the mountainous border regions across the Indus. Most of them belonged to the Rohilla tribe and were mostly Sunnis. They had formed permanent settlements at a number of places in northern India. Among the Hindustani nobles were the Muslim families who had been living in the country for many generations.²

So long as the central authority was strong, these factions remained under its effective control, but their importance increased when the weak successors of Aurangzeb solicited their support for claiming the throne. Now each.


of these factions tried to achieve its aim by keeping effective control over the person of the emperor. In this they did not deter from employing any means or seeking help wherever available irrespective of the price.

Dr. Tara Chand writes that the India of the eighteenth century resembled a jungle where fierce and beastly men prowled round, animated by intensely selfish and extra-ordinary short sighted passion for power. They were restrained by neither ethical considerations nor any far sighted aims. Their intrigues and their machinations in the pursuit of their desires, their resort to force and fraud to achieve their immediate objects would put Machiavelli to shame. India exhausted and ruined herself in the insensate and virulent struggles of contending personalities and factions and failed to throw up a leader of sufficient commanding stature who could evolve order out of chaos. The rivalries and conspiracies of the debased nobility, besides casting a malign influence on social life, were also largely responsible for the political disorder of the age. They were like rudderless boats drifting upon a storm tossed sea. Their unbriddled ambitions reduced the empire to anarchy.

Below the nobles, there was the middle class, living on a standard suited to their respective offices and professions. The conditions of the lower orders were hard

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1. Ibid, p. 45.
as compared with that of the two higher classes. But as their demands were few, they did not suffer from want of ordinary food under normal conditions. There was no general starvation or inadequate nourishment except in periods of famine. But they did not have any surplus even in normal years to accumulate and build up economic reserves for meeting calamities like famines. Their clothing was scanty and their dwellings were poor. But in respect of necessities, they probably did not feel want of more than what they had. So they hardly even made an effort to improve their lot. Life was simple and contended and therefore the struggle for existence was not hard at all.

This simplicity and contentment had its own advantages, but it had its drawbacks too. The common man of India did not feel the urge for improvement and so the economic progress of the country suffered a lot. Moreover they were the unprivileged subjects of the state and had no part in the administration. Naturally they showed little interest in the affairs of the state and were indifferent to any change in the administration.¹

**Economic Condition:**

During the closing years of the reign of Aurangzeb, the economic prosperity of India declined as a natural sequel to the disappearance of peace and political order. The

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incessant wars of succession, bankruptcy of the administration and exhaustion of the exchequer made maintenance of peace and order impossible. Consequently agriculture, trade and industries were also adversely affected. This resulted in the lowering of artistic skill and standard of life and disappearance of art and culture over wide tracts of the country.¹

The weakness of the central government, court intrigues, the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739, ravages committed by the marathas, the Himalyan tribes and the Portugues pirates, trade privileges enjoyed by the servants and agents of the English company, the company's monopoly of some of the articles of prime necessity like salt, betelnut and tobacco, the oppression of merchants and weavers for the sake of rich return on investment of the company, the huge drain of wealth out of the country since 1757, the oppressive agricultural revenue system, and currency disorders — all had combined to bring the economic ruin of the country. To add to these the gradual supplanting of the government of the Nawab of Bengal by the East India Company and the consequent disbandment of armies and disestablishments of courts and native secretariats threw many people out of employment who joined the ranks of professional robbers and criminal tribes and produced general lawlessness and insecurity during the post Plassey period.²

There were some other factors responsible for the economic

¹. Ibid, p.664.
decline of the country in the eighteenth century. The princes, nobles and the provincial chiefs lived in great luxury. The tone was set by the emperors and their manner and way of living were imitated by the nobles and the courtiers. Large expenditure was incurred on delicacies, on servants, on horses and elephants, on marriages and on building fort-like houses. A large part of the income was spent in offering gifts - the chiefs making presents to the emperors and in return receiving gifts from those immediately below them and so on. The luxury of the Moghul court, according to De Laet, a European traveller, was simply indescribable, for "their one concern in life was to secure a surfeit of every kind of pleasure".¹ One of the reasons for this lavishness was that all the accumulated wealth of a noble, after his death reverted to the emperors treasury so that a noble had a strong incentive for spending all that he earned during his life time. This together with the irregularity with which the income came, resulted in the habit of living beyond ones means. Some nobles lived frugally and accumulated large fortunes ultimately spending them in marriages, dowries and in constructing buildings rather than investing in business and industry. Thus the economic system lacked two important elements of economic progress - firstly the urge on the part of the masses to make progress and secondly investment of capital by the rich and middle classes for the

¹ Tara Chand, op. cit., p.169.
improvement and expansion of industry, eommerce and agriculture. The gradual establishment of foreign rule accelerated the process of economic decay.

Political Condition:

Aurangzeb held the reigns of a vast empire unequalled in size, population and wealth for fifty years. Yet in spite of it the mighty Moghul empire began to totter and the state grew corrupt and inefficient immediately after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. Thus within three decades of his death, the vast Moghul empire of the Moghuls ceased to exist as an all India political unit and was split up into numerous independent and semi-independent principalities. The effective rule of the emperor was confined to the territories of Agra and Delhi, although he claimed de jure authority over a greater part of Hindustan and continued to confer titles and confirm appointments.¹

Now a sinister factor entered into the politics of the empire. The princes, so far the principal contestants in the war of succession receded into background. Instead the ambitious nobles became the real competitors for power and they used the princes as nominal heads. They started playing the role of king-makers. The emperor was reduced to the status of a puppet and all authority was wielded by the Wazir and the ministers. In their turn they passed their duties to their deputies. Thus, responsibility was divided and

1. Ibid, p.46.
offices were transferred from person to person according to the whim and fancy of the minister in power. ¹

The usual war of succession followed the death of Aurangzeb and from his death to the third battle of Panipat (1707-61), only a little over half a century, no less than ten members of the family of later Moghul wore the crown. This was not merely accidental. Jehandar (1713) and Farrukh-siyar (1713-1719), were strangled to death. Rafi-ud-Darajat (1719) and Niku-siyar (1719) died in imprisonment after a few weeks rule; Rafi-ud-Daula (1719) died of mental and physical maladies within three months of his coronation. Mohammad Shah (1719-1748), though he ruled longer and died a natural death, his system had been shattered by excessive opium-eating and self-indulgence. Sultan Ibrahim (1748) was proclaimed emperor only for a few days. Ahmad Shah (1748-1754) was deposed, imprisoned and blinded and Alamgir II (1754-59) was murdered. ²

The history of the eighteenth century is full of such intrigues. The result was disastrous. The empire began to disintegrate rapidly. Many provinces became virtually independent. Marathas established their power far and wide and became rulers of considerable areas. Jats became

independent near Agra. The Rohila Afghans founded the State of Rohilkhand in the North-Gangetic plain and the Sikhs raised their banner of revolt in the Punjab. In 1737, Peshwa Baji Rao - the peshwa or the head of the Maratha confederation ransacked the capital and exposed the helplessness of the empire.¹

But a far greater misfortune now befell the empire. As a natural sequel to the notorious incapacity of the worthless and imcompetent successors of Aurangzeb, the empire lost its prestige not only within India but also outside it. The country famous for its riches which excited the cupidity of external invaders from time immemorial became exposed to the menace of a foreign invasion.

The weak defence of the North West Province which was the most vulnerable point in the empire offered a splendid opportuntiy to Nadir Shah to undertake a bold adventure by making a push into the heart of Hindustan. The feeble efforts of the government of North West Province were of no avail and their appeal to Delhi for help passed unheard. Nadir Shah routed the imperial troops in a battle at Karnal, twenty miles from Panipat in 1739. The citizens witnessed a dreadful scene of arson and carnage. At last Nadir Shah called off his troops and left for his own country.² Mohammad Shah, no doubt, retained his throne but not without sustaining irreparable losses. The country was still bleeding and prostrate when another Afghan chief by the name of Ahmad Shah Abdali

invaded India. He led several expeditions into India from 1748 till 1767 which administered a severe blow to the empire. By 1761 when the third battle of Panipat was fought between Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Marathas, the central authority had lost whatever control it had over the empire.¹

Out of this confusion and chaos not only the Indian but foreign powers were also gaining strength here. The Europeans entered India sometimes in the 16th century for trade purposes. The French, the Dutch, the Portuguese and the British had established their business settlements and were engaged in gaining supremacy over each other. Out of these the British emerged victorious. From trading, the East India Company started meddling in local politics and with the help of superior weapons they defeated the local Nawabs and Rajas and by 1801 they brought sufficient area under their control.²

The war of all against all was a godsend for the British of which they took full advantage and which in the long run helped them in establishing British rule in India. This brings us to the era of subordination of the country powers and consolidation of the British power in India.

Religion in the eighteenth century also became corrupt. The true spirit of Islam was lost and Mullahs' and

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1. Ibid, pp.535-36.
2. Edward Thompson and G.T. Garratt, 
'Maulvis' dominated the ignorant Muslim masses. The true meaning of the Quran was not clear to them nor did they ever try to know it. Consequently many vices crept into the Muslim society. The time had come when a man should have appeared at the scene to lead them and guide them towards the right path. This gap was filled in by Shah Waliullah who brought about an intellectual renaissance of the Muslims in this sub-continent. He visualised a world of peace and progress in an age of decadence and chaos.

The Waliullah Movement:

Shah Waliullah as a Social and Religious Reformer, and as Political Thinker:

Shah Waliullah (1703-1762), a great Muslim divine, social and political reformer of the eighteenth century and father of a movement which later offered the most serious challenges to British supremacy in India, was an eye witness to the sudden collapse of the Moghul Empire. He was born in Delhi in 1703, four years before the death of Aurangzeb and died in 1762, two years before the battle of Buxur. In this way he had the opportunity to observe very closely the reigns of as many as ten Moghul rulers, namely, Aurangzeb Alamgir, Bahadur Shah I (Shah Alam 1707-1712), Jehandar Shah (1713), Farrukhsiyar (1713-1719), Rafi-ud-darjat (1719), Rafi-ud-daulah (Shah Jehan II 1719), Mohammad Shah (1719-1748), Ahmad Shah (1748-1754), Alamgir II (1754-1759) and Shah Alam II (1759-1806).¹

Among the important events of his times were: the rising of the Sayyed brothers; Farrukhsiyar's imprisonment and his death at the hands of Sayyed brothers; the downfall of Sayyed brothers caused by the rising of Toorani nobles; rising of Marathas; the Sikh rising; invasion of Nadir Shah and the Delhi massacre; invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali and the battle of Panipat; emergence of Rohilla power in the North Gangetic plain; rivalry between the Irani and the Toorani nobility; political manoeuvring and trade investment and last but not the least British East India Company's control over the administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the establishment of its empire.¹

Shah Waliullah could not remain a silent spectator to this great drama enacted on the Indian soil. He was confronted with some of the knottiest problems of society and religion, ethics and politics and he approached all these problems from a point of view which was original as well as logical. He desired to strike at the root of all evils of his times and came to the conclusion that the whole system had been corrupted due to the existing system of government.² The debased nobility and masses, political disorders and economic imbalance were the off-shoot of that system.

His remedy for this state of affairs was the abolition of the entire system (Fakhi-kulli-nizam), the restoration of

justice in human affairs and the re-establishment of harmony.\textsuperscript{1} In the sphere of politics, he was the only Muslim thinker of his time who had a clear insight into the intimate relations between ethics and politics.

According to him ethics has two aspects - private or individual and public or social. But the latter has greater value than the former. In social morality, he assigns the highest place to justice which manifests in our personal behaviour as politeness, courtesy, civility; in our financial transactions as economy; in collective life as civil liberty; in politics as order, and when this virtue is made the basis of brotherhood, mutual affection and fellowship, it is called social good. When men behave justly they create righteous society which is in accordance with the divine wishes.\textsuperscript{2}

According to Dr. Tara Chand Waliullah's conception of justice invites comparison with that of Plato in its comprehensiveness and depth. The process of thoughts by which they arrived at the idea were, however, different.\textsuperscript{3}

The righteous society is corrupted when wealth increases and the satisfaction of appetites becomes the end of life, when vanity and pride possess the rich and the satisfaction of the craving for luxury and dissipation becomes the main

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Ibid, pp.6-7.
  \item Tara Chand, \textit{op.cit.}, p.180.
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object of life. This inevitably leads to the adoption of measures to increase income by oppressing the weak and exploiting the peasants, traders and artisans. The economy of the land is thus turned into wrong channels. Emphasis is placed upon the production of luxury goods and the labour class is impoverished.¹

Shah Waliullah states that there were two main reasons for the economic decline of the country. Firstly, pressure on public treasury which was due to the fact that the people had developed a habit of obtaining money from the exchequer without performing any corresponding duty. They either came out with the excuse that they were soldiers or 'Ulema' and had, therefore, a claim on the treasury, or they claimed to belong to that group of men whom the king himself presented rewards i.e. pious sufis or poets or other groups who received emoluments without doing any service to the state. These people diminished the sources of other peoples income and were a burden on the economy. The second cause of this widespread desolation was the heavy taxation on peasants, merchants and workers and unjust dealings with these groups.²

The result was that all those who were loyal to the state and obeyed its orders were being slowly ruined. The refractory and the evaders of taxes were becoming more refractory and they did not pay the taxes. The prosperity of a

¹. Ibid, loc.cit.,
country depended upon light taxes and reasonable and necessary appointments in the army and other departments. The people should clearly understand this secret.¹

Shah Waliullah surveyed the world around him with the keen and clear vision of a political realist and diagnosed many diseases of the body politic. He looked at the social and economic structure not from the pedestal of the royal throne but from the vantage points of the peasants hut and the worker's cottage. He believed that 'adl' (equity and justice in every sphere of human relationship) and 'tawazun' (balance in economic relationship) alone could sustain a political structure.²

He was fully aware of those inequities in the economic system which had crept into the economy of the empire and impoverished its revenues producing classes. He discussed the social and political abuses which led to the downfall of the Roman and Sassanid Empires - the principles of hereditary succession, narrow and materialistic outlook of the governing classes, their licentiousness and debauchery, the economic exploitation of the people, an inequitable and cumbersome system of taxation, the misery of the peasants and artisans

1. Ibid, loc. cit.
and the growth of parasitic classes inside and outside the court.¹

Shah Waliullah formed a bridge between medieval and modern Islam in India. The main influences which shaped his mind were of the learned scholars of Hejaz, Sheikh Abu Tahir Mohammad ibn Ibrahim al-Kurdi under whom he studied 'Hadis' in Medina and Sheikh Sulaiman Maghribi who taught him the Malikite jurisprudence as well as other Arab scholars like Sheikh al Sanawi and Tajuddin Hanafi.²

It was the same time when his great Arab contemporary Mohammad ibn Abdul Wahab was also studying in these holy places under these very teachers. Although it is difficult to suggest that they influenced each other, it is certain that they had the same source of inspiration.³ Shah Waliullah, as stated earlier, was fully conscious of the religio-ethical disintegration of Islam in India.

So far the religious schools in India had emphasised the study of 'fiqah' or Muslim jurisprudence to meet the Muslim states' requirements of training 'qazis' for judicial

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appointments. With the collapse of Muslim power and the existing political conditions the formal study of traditional Muslim jurisprudence could hardly be expected to revitalise the soul of the decadent community. By the beginning of the eighteenth century the two great Sufi orders, the Naqshbandi\(^1\) as well as the Qadri\(^2\), had also lost their spiritual dynamism. Shah Waliullah's contribution was, therefore, the subordination of Muslim jurisprudence to the discipline of 'Hadis' on the one hand, and complete absorption of the various Sufi disciplines into Islam on the other.\(^3\)

Not only this he took upon himself the task of religious, social and political reformer. The role undertaken by him was similar to that of a Khalifa. But the Khilafat had a dual nature which could be either external (Zahiri) or internal (Batini). Whereas the duties of external Khilafat were

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1. It is one of the earliest mystic orders and owes its origin to the great sufi saint Khwajah Ahmad (d.1166). It came to be known as the Naqshbandi order after the name of Khwajah Bahauddin Naqshband (1388) who made the magnificent edifice of the order and gave it a solid foundation. Khwajah Naqshband laid much emphasis on the faithful observance of the 'Sunnah'. It was consolidated and popularised in India by Sheikh Ahmad (d.1624) of Sirhind.

2. The sufi order that was perhaps the earliest but reached India in the middle of the fifteenth century. It was founded by Sheikh Muhiuddin Abdul Qadir Gilani (1077-1166), one of the most outstanding figures in the annals of Islamic mysticism. (See Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century, Muslim University, Aligarh, 1961, pp. 57-58).

related to administration and defence of religious laws, the internal Khilafat was entrusted with the responsibility of giving direction to the 'Ulema'.

Again as 'Qaimuzzaman' of his own age, he considered it a part of his mission to restore the solidarity of the whole community by bringing a compromise based on whatever was commonly accepted by the various sects of the Muslims. He fully realised that Islam had to be liberal, tolerant and composite in the midst of challenges that it faced at that time. He also worked for a compromise between the four orthodox schools of law in Islam. So he went to the extent of saying that anyone who once professed himself to be a Muslim, remained so whatever be his sins or failings. According to him, a Sunni would be well within his rights if he preferred the authority of other Imams on a number of points of canon law but he would be certainly very much in the wrong if he followed a particular Imam on a point where either the Quran or the 'Hadis' had a clear injunction to the contrary because there could not be any substitute for the unquestionable authority of the Quran and the prophetic tradition which are the only two infallible sources of religious law.

2. Ibid, p.203.
3. Ibid, loc. cit.
4. Ibid, pp.203-204.
In addition, he emphasised the need of 'ijtehad' with the change of time and circumstances. According to Shah Waliullah, 'ijtehad' was an exhaustive endeavour to understand and explain the religious law in a different condition. He said that a revitalised understanding was possible only on the basis of rational reconstruction i.e. 'ijtehad'. The necessity of the 'ijtehad' arises owing to the progress of the human society which is faced with new problems in a new age and in a new environment. Ijtehad is, therefore, a reaction to the element of growth and change in human society.\(^1\)

The prophetic method of teaching, according to Shah Waliullah is that the law revealed by a prophet takes special notice of the habits, ways and peculiarities of the people to whom it is specially sent. The prophet who aims at all embracing principles, however, can neither reveal different principles for different peoples, nor leave them to work out their own rules of conduct. His method is to train one particular people and to use them as a nucleus for the building up of a universal 'Sharia'. In doing so he accentuates the principles underlying the social life of all mankind and applies them to concrete cases in the light of the specific habit of the people immediately before him.

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1. Ibid, p. 204.
The 'Sharia' values (ahkam) resulting from this application are in a sense specific to that people and since their observance is not an end in itself they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations.¹

Shah Waliullah further pointed out that a 'Mujtahid' should have a broader religious outlook and should normally respect the consensus of other 'Ulema'. He has also a responsibility and a mission in relation to the non-Muslims for they should not be forced to accept Islam. If it was done, there was every possibility of their reverting back to their original faith if and when they got an opportunity.

The emphasis on 'ijtehad' was Shah Waliullah's main contribution to modern speculative thinking in Muslim India. In his introduction to Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah, he wrote that the time had come that the religious law of Islam should be brought into the open fully dressed in reason and argument.² It was perhaps this that gave inspiration to Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) who had received his early education in the seminary of Shah Waliullah's successors in Delhi.³ The influence of Shah Waliullah's concept of 'ijtehad' is even more clearly reflected in the work of the Ulema of the Deoband school where religious ideology was directly shaped

¹ Shah Waliullah, op. cit., p. 301.
² Ibid, p. 4.
³ Aziz Ahmad, op. cit., p. 205.
under his influence.¹

His political ideas centred round the growing needs of the workers, the artisans and peasants. These ideas could only be practised in peaceful conditions. Consequently, he directed his energy for the restoration of peace and tranquillity in the country.

Shah Waliullah's movement for the political and spiritual regeneration did not die with him. His message went on echoing through the corridors of time and inspired generation after generation. There is a long distance, both in space and time, between the battles of Panipat (1761) and battle of Balakot (1831), but a clear analysis would reveal that the same mind was at work behind them everywhere. His gifted followers strove day and night to bring about moral regeneration and to awaken political consciousness in the masses.

The immediate objective of his successors changed with the change of political climate but the ultimate goal remained the same. Shah Waliullah's immediate problem was to strengthen the central authority. Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1823) and Saiyyad Ahmad Shahid (1786-1831) were called upon to deal with similar problems and the rising power of the British. But all this opposition was not an end in itself, rather it was a means towards the creation of a favourable and congenial

¹. Ibid, loc. cit.
political and social atmosphere.

Shah Waliullah's influence is clearly visible in the intellectual as well as in the political life of his followers. He had clearly laid down the lines on which his movement had to be carried on in both the religious and political spheres. His descendants and followers analysed and interpreted their master's thought in a remarkable way. The consciousness which Shah Waliullah had inspired the lives of his followers.

In fact, Muslim thought of eighteenth and nineteenth century is inexplicable without reference to Shah Waliullah. No one can deny that when the movement for the liberation was started, many of its stalwarts derived inspiration as well as moral and spiritual strength from his philosophy.¹ The historian cannot fail to discover Shah Waliullah's great influence in the history of Muslim renaissance in the subcontinent. According to Dr. Tara Chand Waliullah's philosophy contained valuable elements of thoughts which, if properly developed, could have helped in the solution of the tangled problems of Indian life but unfortunately the times were adverse and the philosopher's resources inadequate.²

Shah Waliullah's thoughts determined and directed Muslim political and religious thoughts of the succeeding

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generations. The most obvious impact of his thinking could be seen in the life and activities of his son, Shah Abdul Aziz who succeeded his father in the Madarsa-i-Rahimiya at the age of 18 and continued his work in both the political and the academic spheres till his death in 1824.¹

Shah Abdul Aziz:

Shah Abdul Aziz (1746-1824) lived in Delhi for nearly 78 years. During this period Delhi passed through one of the most momentous periods of its history. From the third Battle of Panipat (1761) to the entry of Lord Lake's forces in Delhi (1803) he saw Delhi passing through many ups and downs and to a very great extent his political ideas were moulded by these changes. It is noteworthy that though he condemned, the Sikh, the Jat, the Maratha depredations, he did not declare the country under their control as Dar-ul-Harb i.e. a seat of war for Muslims until by conquest it is turned into a land of peace if not an abode of Islam. But when the British power was established in northern India, he issued a 'fatawa' declaring all land under the British occupation as Dar-ul-Harb.²

Extracts from the 'fatawa' run as follows:

"... In this City (Delhi) the Imamul Muslimin wields no authority. The real power rests with the Christian Officers.

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² Ibid, p. 23.
There is no check on them; and the promulgation of the commands of 'Kufir' means that in administration and justice, in matters of law and order, in the domain of trade, finance and collection of revenues — everywhere the Kuffar (infidels) are in power ... They demolish the mosque without the least hesitation and no Muslim or any 'Zimmi' can enter into the city or its suburbs but without their permission. It is in their own interest if they do not object to the travellers and traders to visit the city ... From here (Delhi) to Calcutta the Christians are in complete control. There is no doubt that in principalities like Hyderabad, Rampur, Lucknow, etc., they have left the administration in the hands of the local authorities; but it is because they have accepted their lordship and have submitted to their authority".

The above 'fatawa' has a significance of its own in the history of the Muslim political thought of the nineteenth century. His opposition to the establishment of British rule in India had no religious background. He made it quite clear that English people did not interfere in the performance of Islamic rituals. But his opposition was due to the fact that in "administration and in justice, in matters of law and order, in the domain of trade and finance, and collection of revenues" they had become all powerful.

Shah Abdul Aziz did not merely pronounce the 'fatawa' he also went to the extent of organising a movement resisting the onslaught of the British. As he was too old to take an

active part himself, he sent Sayyed Ahmad Barelvi to the camp of Amir Ali Khan in Rajputana who was fighting the British in collaboration with Jaswantrao Holkar. His attitude towards the British was, however, extremely realistic and enlightened. He permitted his pupils to acquire knowledge of English and praised the technical skill of Englishmen. ¹

This position was not, however, maintained by the succeeding generations. Those who studied the English language willingly accepted British rule, and those who refused to accept British rule totally refused to learn the English language and literature. As was inevitable two diametrically opposite tendencies developed in Muslim religious and social attitudes - one represented by the Aligarh movement and the other by the Deoband school of thought.

**Sayyed Ahmad Shahid of Rae Bareli:**

According to Dr. Tara Chand the movement which offered the most serious challenge to the British supremacy during the period before the Revolt of 1857 was the preaching of 'Jehad' (holy war) by a section of the Muslims. The leader of the movement was Sayyed Ahmad of Rae Bareli, a district in Uttar Pradesh. ² He was born in a family of noted divines who traced their descent from the Prophet. Sayyed Ahmad

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was influenced during his formative years by the revivalist atmosphere of the school founded by Shah Waliullah which after his death was supervised by his illustrious son Shah Abdul Aziz, who as quoted before proclaimed by a decree (fatawa), in 1803, that India had ceased to be Darul Islam. Shah Abdul Aziz appointed him as his Khalifa. Since India had been declared Dar-ul-Harb or the 'land of the Enemy by Shah Abdul Aziz, Sayyed Ahmad began to preach 'jehad' to the common people. The simplicity of his life, his burning zeal and utter sincerity, his selflessness and his humility made a deep impression upon all those who came into his contact and they became his ardent followers.¹

But before he undertook 'jehad', he decided to perform the pilgramge to Mecca. In July 1821 he started from Rae Bareli and was accompanied by about 800 followers when he arrived at Medina in May 1822. He returned home after an absence of over two years (April 1824).²

What Sayyed Ahmad learned in Arabia was not the creed of Abdul Wahhab, but the story of the humiliation of the Muslim peoples in the world and the rapidly growing domination of the Western powers in Eastern countries. This realisation steeled the heart of a somewhat dreamy idealist into a fiery crusader with a clear and unalterable resolve to fight the

². Ibid. p. 213.
enemies of Islam in order to recover the lands the Muslim had once ruled.¹

He made a remarkable selection of his companions. All were very faithful to him and were of a very strong character. He organised such an effective movement that it soon became a mass movement. Thousands of people became his followers and joined his movement. In this stupendous task he was greatly helped by his two most trusted lieutenants Shah Ismail Shahid (1779-1831) and Maulvi Abdul Hai (d. 1831). Writing about the movement W.W. Hunter says:

"He founded a system by which they (his followers) effected one of the greatest revivals known to Indian history, and which has kept alive the spirit of revolt against the British rule during fifty years".²

The ultimate goal of his movement was to drive away the British from the Indian soil. But circumstances led him to clash with the Sikh.³ Later the British distorted the facts and depicted him as one whose activities centred round merely against the Sikhs. In one of his letters to Raja Hindu Rao, the then Wazir of Gawalior state, he wrote:

"The strangers from across the ocean became the rulers of India, the mere mercantilists laid the foundation of an empire, the masonic lodgings of the wealthy and the estates of the rich no longer existed, and their

1. Ibid. pp. 243-44.
honour and repose was snatched away. Masters of domain and realm retired into the limbo of oblivion. At last it were only a few among the saints and the hermits who girdles their loins of courage. This group of fidelis have raised their heads only for the service of Gods' own faith. They desire neither world nor power. When India will be free from aliens and enemies and the ambitions of the faithful have been fulfilled, the high ranks of the state and politics will be assigned to those who covet them".1

This clearly shows that he had no conflict with the ruler's religion and ideology. His movement was chiefly aimed against the British. He often repeated in his letters addressed to the Rajas and Nawabs of Indian principalities that he neither wanted to establish a kingdom nor had he any design to accumulate wealth; his sole purpose was to turn out the alien rulers from India.2 In one of the official letters addressed to Raja Ranjit Singh, ruler of the Sikh kingdom of Punjab, he wrote that he had no evil designs against his kingdom or the life and property of his people. He only wanted his support against the British whom he was determined to fight. He further promised that he would most willingly surrender the freed land from the Britishers to the Raja himself. But if he refused to accept the offer, he had no alternative left but to declare war on the Raja too.3

He had a burning desire to set India free from the clutches of the British. But it was under the shadow of catastrophe of 1857 that an entirely different colour was given to his movement. How interpolations were made in his letters by the people after 1857 is evident from his letters where in place of the Britishers, the word Sikh has been substituted.¹

To understand the real significance and importance of his mission for which he finally laid down his life in the battle of Balakot, must keep in view all previous Muslim political upheavals and the difficult situation then prevailing in the country. It can never be denied that his movement led to the beginning of outstanding political insight and ripe political wisdom. Though his death was a great blow to the movement, it continued with vigour and confidence and later on 'Sittana' in the Swat Valley was made the headquarters for the fulfilment of the aims and objective for which Sayyed Ahmad Shahid sacrificed his life.

Shah Mohammad Ismail Shahid (1779-1831):

Maulana Mohammad Ismail was one of the most trusted lieutenants of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid. He was also the true representative of the house of Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz. The following lines of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad about

¹ Ghulam Rasul Mehr, op. cit., pp. 243-244.
Maulana Ismail Shahid deserve to be quoted as they give an idea of the greatness of the reformer:

"The principles of reform and regeneration of the community which Shah Waliullah could not propound publicly on account of the impatient and tyrannical attitude of the time, and which lay concealed in the ruins of old Delhi and the hospices and seminaries of Kotla, were now openly preached by Shah Ismail Shahid the great religious reformer, in his public orations on the stairs of the Jama Masjid. He fired the imagination of the people with a revolutionary zeal. The influence of his movement crossed the frontiers of India. What people hesitated to talk about even behind closed doors came out to be discussed in public and in streets".

Maulana Ismail looked back at the history of Islam without any prejudice and with a clear vision he found the whole institution of kingship a negation of the true spirit of Islam. He transfers sovereignty to the Muslim people and in this respect he introduced a progressive element in Muslim thought. He remarked that the politics of Islam and the politics of kings were as different as sweet and saltish waters, should the two be mixed it would obviously be the sweet which would lose its taste.2

While Sayyed Ahmad and Maulana Ismail were at Balakot Ranjit Singh sent an army of about 20,000 Sikhs to destroy them. The full strength of the 'Mujahidin' was only 900 then.

Shah Ismail rightly thought that it was their last battle and he fought with the zeal of a martyr. Both Sayyed Ahmad and Shah Ismail fell fighting at Balakot in May, 1831. Those who were left went to 'Sittara' and continued to trouble the British for a long time.

The Revolt of 1857 and Aftermath:

The revolt of 1857 was a countrywide struggle to throw the British completely from the Indian soil. It was not simply a sepoy mutiny. It was a revolt against the religious, social, economic and political policies of the English government. It is significant that even those powers which were opposed to the Moghul Emperor - the Marathas for instance - gathered round the Moghul Emperor in order to organise a movement against the British occupation of the country. Every community except the Sikhs and Parsis actively participated in it. The participation of Rani Laxmi Bai, Nana Sahib, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Nawab Ali Bahadur, General Bakht Khan, General Bahadur Khan and Nawab Tafazzul Husain etc., gave life to the movement. Muslim Ulema like Ahmad Ullah Shah, Haji Imdadullah, Maulana Mohammad Wasim Nanautvi, Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Maulana Fazal Haque Khairabadi and Maulana Abdul Qadir Ludhianvi actually participated in it. It was only the feeling of patriotism and hostility to foreign rule that prompted them to take active

1. T.A. Nizami, op. cit., p. 90.
part in the struggle for freedom.

It would not be entirely wrong to say that the call for 'jehad' given by the followers of Waliullah school played a great role in preparing ground, for the revolt of 1857. After the death of Sayyed Ahmad Shahid in 1831 a good number of his disciples had upheld the cause for which he had always fought. They established contact with important Muslim centres such as Hyderabad, Mysore and also with some of the states of central India and Rajputana such as Bhopal, Tonk and Jaipur etc.¹

The Revolt of 1857 struck a heavy blow to the aspirations of the upper classes of Indians. They lost all hopes of recovery of their lost power and dominion. The Muslims who became the special target of British hatred after the Revolt naturally suffered most from its consequences.

According to Sir Alfred Lyall, after the Revolt of 1857,

"The English turned fiercely on the Mohammadans as upon their real enemies and most dangerous rivals; so that the failure of the Revolt was much more disastrous to them (Muslims) than to the Hindus ... and it is from this period that must be dated the loss of their numerical majority in the higher subordinate ranks of the civil and military services".²

The 'Mutiny' as the English called it was crushed with an iron hand by the British. The main sufferers were the

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1. T.A. Nizami, op. cit., p. 91.
Muslims. W.W. Hunter remarks:

"The truth is that when the country passed under our rule, the Musalmans were the superior race, and superior not only in stoutness of heart and strength of arm, but in power of political organisation and in the science of practical government. Yet the Mohammadans are now shut out equally from Government employment and from the higher occupation of non-official life".¹

Jawaharlal Nehru also observed:

"After 1857 the heavy hand of the British fell more on the Muslim than on the Hindus. They considered the Muslims more aggressive and militant, possessing memories of recent rule in India and therefore more dangerous".²

In these circumstances there were only two alternatives left to the Muslims, either to face boldly their misfortunes and try to evolve a political order, in co-operation with their fellow countrymen of other faiths, which would guarantee free exercise of faith, equal opportunities of welfare and a self respecting dignified life for men of all faiths and all races, or to surrender the dreams of independence for all times, accept the rule of Britishers and try to obtain their patronage.³

The first alternative was adopted by the Ulema group which advocated religious reform and political freedom. They traced their affiliation to Shah Waliullah who had inspired

the leaders of the so called Wahabi movement and many of whom also joined the Revolt of 1857. According to them the politico-religious issue could only be resolved after the removal of British domination which threatened to destroy Islam politically as well culturally. They believed that once India was free, their religious and cultural freedom would be secure. Their opposition to government was, therefore, spontaneous and irrevocable.¹

On the other hand, the rival group which competed with them for gaining influence, consisted of men who were greatly impressed by political institutions, military power, civilization and culture of the West. They regarded the British dominion in India unshakable and invincible because of the defeat which Indian rebels had suffered in 1857.² They directed their energy to reorganise the Muslim society on a new basis without participating in political activities. They believed that the condition of Muslims demanded concentration on social and educational programmes. By seventies of the Nineteenth century a tangible change in the British policy towards Indian Muslims had also taken place. Efforts were made to end the estrangement and suspicion which existed against the ruling classes.³

The Mohammadan Literary Society of Calcutta which was founded in 1863 combated the propaganda of the Waliullah group.

1. Ibid. p. 350.
for 'jehad'. Maulvi Karamat Ali of Jaunpur, too issued a pronouncement denouncing holy war against the rulers. 'Fatawas' were also obtained from the 'Muftis' of Mecca denying the obligation to fight against Queen Victoria.¹

But the most effective movement in favour of English education and for co-operation with the British government was initiated and successfully led by Sayyed Ahmad Khan who was destined to play a key role in the political resurgence of the Indian Muslims.

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan And the Aligarh Movement:

Sayyed Ahmad Khan thought it necessary to turn the antipathy of the British rulers into sympathy and support. But the main problem was that the Muslim world was sharply divided over its political aims. On the one hand there was the Ulema group who wanted to have no truck with the British Government or Western culture and civilisation which was becoming popular because of the official patronage. They had the support of the Muslim majority.

About the same time, a great Muslim divine by the name of Sayyed Jamaluddin Afghani² visited India for the third time in 1879-80. He was welcomed as a hero by the Muslim youth in India. He stayed for over a year and this very much strengthened

¹. Tara Chand, op. cit., p. 352.
². Sayyed Jamaluddin Afghani (1837-97) was a staunch enemy of the Western imperialism. He was the pioneer of the pan-Islamic movement. He desired the liberation of the Muslims and to revive their past glories.
the forces in opposition to Sayyed Ahmad Khan. He found himself in stiff opposition to the views of Sayyed Ahmad Khan who stood for the Anglo-Muslim alliance. It was this alliance which later became the cornerstone of the Aligarh Movement. Sayyed Ahmad Khan felt that Muslim security was possible only through the Anglo-Muslim alliance.

The disagreement between Jamaluddin Afghani and Sayyed Ahmad Khan consisted of three main points.¹

1. Afghani did not agree with the extremist rationalism of at least some of Sayyed Ahmad Khan's views in so far as they seemed to falsify the words of the Quran.

2. He regarded Sayyed Ahmad Khan's educational programme as political servitude to British interests in India whereas Afghani himself was bitterly opposed to British.

3. As a logical consequence of the second point, he considered Sayyed Ahmad Khan opposed to pan-Islamism and hostile to the conception of universal Muslim Khilafat.

However, there was one point common between the views of Jamaluddin Afghani and Sayyed Ahmad Khan: both believed Islam to be capable of an evolutionary process within the present and future history of mankind and in accord with it.²

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² Ibid. p. 56.
But by 1885 a number of factors had begun working in favour of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan. In Europe, the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire had been thwarted by Great Britain. At the same time the British policy towards Afghanistan had also underwent a favourable change. The fear of Russian advance towards Central Asia had compelled Great Britain to move with great cautiousness in her dealings with the Muslim countries. ¹

In India also the attitude of the British Government towards Muslims had undergone a change. It was now a policy of befriending the community. It begun with the publication of W.W. Hunter’s Indian Musalmans in 1871 which drew the attention of the British Government to Muslim grievances and their miserable plight. Other British advocates of change were Nassau Lees, ex-Principal of the Calcutta Madarsa, Beck and Morison of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh and W.S. Blunt. Blunt advised the Muslims to assert themselves in the following words:

"I told them if the Mohammadans only knew their power, they would not be neglected and ill treated by the government, as they now were. In England we were perpetually scared at the idea of a Mohammadan rising in India, and any word by a Mohammadan was paid more attention than that of twenty Hindus. But, if they sat still thanking Providence for all the favours which were denied them, the English public would be only too happy to leave them as they were".²

¹ Tara Chand, op. cit., p. 365.
Another important development which took place in the Indian political scene was the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885. This upset Sayyed Ahmad Khan because he thought that if the demands of the Indian National Congress, especially Indian representation in the Council on the basis of elections were accepted by the British, it would put the Muslim community who were in a minority in great disadvantage. His reaction was not at all surprising because in those days even in Europe the minorities whether racial, religious or linguistic were often in open conflict with the majorities.

Sayyed Ahmad Khan, therefore, launched a massive campaign against the Congress in 1887.\(^1\) He warned all Indians and Muslims in particular of the dangers involved in supporting its policies. It is likely Theodore Beck who was appointed Principal of the College in 1886 along with the English staff of the Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, played upon the fears of Sayyed Ahmad Khan and employed all his persuasive powers to instil in the youth of the college, feelings of hatred towards the Hindus and loyalty for the British Government.\(^2\)

Beck, in fact, exploited his position both as Principal of the College and an English man of influence in the Government. Paying tribute to the College, he remarked:

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2. Ibid. p. 289.
"The students bred in this college, trained in the cricket and football fields, would be ready to render to the Government and to our beloved sovereign such assistance as would prove that the Mohammadans of India are ready to face the bullets and bayonets in defence of the empire".¹

He requested Sayyed Ahmad Khan to handover the virtual editorship of the Aligarh Institute Gazette to him and used its columns to denounce the national movement. Officially, Sayyed Ahmad Khan remained the editor of the Gazette.² However, all this and his criticism of the Indian National Congress did not in any way effect his social relations with the Hindu community. In fact his opposition was tased on political considerations only.

As stated earlier Sayyed Ahmad Khan held the view that complete independence was unthinkable. The British rule was too powerful and, therefore, the only possible policy is of offering loyal co-operation to the British Government. He was convinced of the futility of the policy of antagonising the Government or the policy of complete disagreement and conflict. This has been made clear by Theodore Beck, who also happened to be the confidant adviser of Sayyed Ahmad Khan at that time, in his address to the London Muslim Association in 1894. Beck impressed upon them the impossibility Hindu-Muslim Unity and, therefore, of a democratic system of government in India because, according to him, the Muslims

1. Aligarh Institute Gazette, July-December, 1893.
2. Sayyed Tufail Ahmad Manglori, op. cit., p. 80.
would become slaves of the majority for all time. He warned them not to repeat the mistake of 1857 and not to join the seditious Indian National Congress. For if they did so, they would lose their posts, and their status. Obviously, the British game was 'to divide and rule'. He exploited the name of M.A.C. College and Sayyed Ahmad Khan as editor of the Aligarh Institute Gazette and tried his best to dissuade the Muslims from joining the national movement.

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan's last days were rather unhappy. Many of his close friends parted company with him, partly on account of Becks increasing influence over the college affairs. Samiullah Khan one of his very close associates and lieutenant and his friends resigned from the trusteeship of the college, Maulana Shibli Numani (1857-1914) resigned from the College, because he differed with the political views of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan. In 1898, the grand old man passed away. The movement he had started swung the educated Muslims of India behind the lead of Aligarh and relegated their rivals to the background to a great extent.

After the death of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan the mantle fell on the shoulders of Mohsinul Mulk. But he incurred the displeasure of the Lieutenant Governor of North-Western Provinces over the issue of Urdu. With the result that

1. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, January, 30, 1894.
3. Mehdi Ali Khan (1837-1907), Commonly known by his title Mohsinul Mulk. His association with Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan dates from 1862. In 1899 he was appointed Secretary of the M.A.C. College, Aligarh. (See: Mohammad Amin Zuberi, Heyat-i-Mohsin) pp. 103-04.
political activity at Aligarh remained in abeyance till the partition of Bengal opened a new chapter in the history of India.

Theodore Morison succeeded Beck and continued to guide the Aligarh movement in the footsteps of his predecessor. He told the Muslims, "this is just the time at which the upper classes, who have been treated with exceptional favour, should show that they are not ungrateful" and warned that, "if the behaviour of the leaders of the community gives colour to the accusations (of disloyalty), would it be strange if the Government withdrew its favours from the Musalmans, if Government disbelieved in their friendliness to the English in recent years, in their hostility to the Hindus and the pursuit of their own interests".¹

The Aligarh movement, however, stole a march over the Ulema group as far as their political aim was concerned in the times to come. Among those who followed Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan were some eminent scholars and politicians. Prominent among them were Mohsiul Mulk,² Viqarul Mulk,³ Altaf Husain Hali,⁴ Chiragh Ali,⁵ Nazir Ahmad⁶ and Zakaullah⁷. The influence of

1. Aligarh Institute Gazette, Oct., 9, 1897.
3. Nawab Viqarul Mulk (1841-1917), Mushtaq Husain was decorated with title of Viqarul Mulk in 1891 while in the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad. He was appointed Secretary of the College in 1907. He took active part in giving the college the stature of a University.
4. Altaf Husain Hali (1837-1914), a great poet as well as prose writer and a critic. The 'Musaddas' of Hali which Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan had desired to be sung everywhere gave him an undying fame. Both Hali and Shibli had expressed their disappointment at the limited achievement of Aligarh.

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Ulema group though continued to dwindle, their hold on religion remained as strong as ever.

The leaders of the Aligarh Movement had adopted a modern outlook in religion but in politics they were conservative. Though they formed a small group in the beginning, their importance was far greater than their numbers. The Government of India recognised them specially as a separate group because they desired its co-operation and chose to consult them and utilise them for their own purposes. The consideration and favours shown to them greatly added to their influence in the estimation of the community.

The Deoband Movement:

Sayyed Ahmad Khan's views and movement met with strong opposition from the Deoband school. While Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan became interested in the politics of Muslims after the Revolt of 1857, the Ulema had been seized of the situation much earlier. The movement as the Ulema believed had been

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5. Chiragh Ali one of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan's principal associates and a civil servant in Hyderabad State. He had developed a modernist approach towards the Quran. It is possible that both Chiragh Ali and Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan influenced each other.

6. Nazir Ahmad (1831-1912), another associate of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan and a novelist. He championed the cause of female education.

7. Zakaullah (1882-1910), a historian and a translator of scientific works from English and a prominent leader of the Aligarh movement.
initiated by Shah Waliullah and had once culminated in the holy war (jehad) led by Sayyed Ahmad Shahid against the British and had organised a mass movement against the British rule. The suppression of the Revolt posed before them the same question which Shah Waliullah had to face after the collapse of the Moghul rule. They knew that they lacked the resourcefulness for an armed struggle against the mighty British Empire. They, therefore, founded a religious seminary at Deoband in Saharanpur district to train religious leaders for the community. Prominent among them were Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi.¹

Darul-Uloom Deoband represented the rebellious spirit of the disgruntled Muslims who had been manifesting their uneasiness and dissatisfaction, in one way or another, with the state of affairs created by the establishment and perpetuation of a foreign rule in India. They were determined

¹. Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi (1832-1880) and Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1828-1905) were the founders of the Darul-Uloom Deoband. They imbibed the tradition of the Waliullah school of thought. Both were disciples of Haji Imdadullah Sahib who had migrated to Mecca in 1857. They also acted as the Commander and the 'Qadi' respectively of the forces that fought against the British at Shamli in 1857. They were the guiding soul of a religio-political venture which consisted of two main points: (1) strict observance of the Hanafi school of 'fiqh' and (2) some sort of liaison with the Ottoman Sultans and disloyalty to the British rule. (See Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1963) pp. 19, 21 & 25.
not to surrender and recoil into a fatal inactivity after their failure in 1857. They were fully conscious of the fact that the British rule, now more powerful than before, would put up innumerable hurdles in their way. Yet they were to march independently, rejecting all official interference and depending entirely on Divine assistance and the sincere religiosity of their brethren.\(^1\)

According to Ziya-ul-Hasan Faroqi 'Shamli' and 'Deoband' were the two sides of one and the same picture. The difference lay only in the use of weapons. The sword and spear used at Shamli were replaced by the pen and the tongue. There at Shamli in order to secure political independence and freedom for religion and culture, resort was made to use violence, here at Deoband a start was made to achieve the same goal through peaceful means.\(^2\)

They realised that the liberation of India was necessary in the interest not only of India but of the Muslims of the world. They had also the clarity of vision to see that the independence of India could not be achieved without Hindu Muslim unity and co-operation. The Deoband school was also in agreement with the views of Jamaluddin Afghani. They had, therefore, welcomed the formation of the Indian National

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2. Ibid. p. 22.
Congress and when in 1888 Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan advised Muslims not to join the Congress, the Deoband Ulema condemned Sir Sayyed's attitude and even issued a religious decree (fatawa) against Sir Sayyed's organisation, the Patriotic Association, as well as Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association whose Secretary and moving spirit was Principal Beck of M.A.C. College. The attempts of Sir Sayyed to obtain the co-operation of the Ulema in his plans were repudiated by the authorities of Deoband.¹

Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi who was the head of the institution succeeding Maulana Qasim Nanautvi at that time declared the stand of the school very clearly. He held that in accordance with the decree of Shah Abdul Aziz, India was Darul-Harb and therefore, it was incumbent upon the Muslims to drive the British out of the country. On the question of co-operation with the Hindus Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi gave the opinion that for the fulfilment of national aims it was permissible, according to the 'Shariat' for the Muslims to enter into agreement with the Hindus.² He, therefore, advised the Muslims to co-operate with the Congress in its activities. This decision of his was an unambiguous declaration that the concept of nationality

¹. Ibid. pp. 43-46.
based upon the unity of all religious groups did not contravene any Islamic principle. The decision created a gulf between Deoband and Aligarh. In spite of the attempts of Mohsinul Mulk, it was not possible to bring the two together. The Deoband continued to uphold the cause of national solidarity and Indian independence even in times of grave communal dissensions.

Among the supporters of the Deoband school was Maulana Shibli Naumani. He condemned the Sayyed's loyalty to the British and opposition to the Congress. He thought that he was too much under the influence of the English staff of the College. Sayyed Sulaiman Nadvi, the pupil and biographer of Maulana Shibli wrote that the English professors had created this conviction in Sir Sayyed's mind that opposition to the Congress and friendship with the British were in the true interests of the College and the Musalmans. He had been so charmed by their magic that his own opinions had been submerged and now whatever he saw he saw with the eyes of Mr. Eeck, and the English staff, and whatever he heard he heard with their ears. Maulana Shibli, like the Ulema

2. Shibli Naumani (1857-1914), a profound scholar of Urdu, Persian, and Arabic. He joined the M.A.O. College in 1883 at the invitation of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan. Though he continued to serve till 1898, he had developed differences with the Sayyed. He could not agree with his religious or political views. He founded the Nadwat-ul-Uloom in Lucknow in 1894-1896 where he tried to give effect to his educational ideas, a midway between the school of Deoband and the school of Sayyed Ahmad Khan. (See: Sayyed Sulaiman Nadvi, Hayat-i-Shibli - Darul-Musannifin, Azamgarh, 1943).
3. Ibid. p. 296.
of Deoband, believed that Muslims could, jointly with the Hindus, create a state in which both could live honourably and happily. He was a supporter of the Congress and argued with Sir Sayyed about it.¹

Till the end of the nineteenth century Deoband school lay low because the Government kept over it a careful watch. It had to struggle hard for its existence. It lacked adequate funds and those in position to help were afraid of the displeasure of the British Government. Yet the school stuck courageously to its ideals and did not falter in its chosen path.

Maulana Mahmood Hasan:

Maulana Mahmood Hasan (1851-1920) was the first student of the Deoband seminary.² He joined the school at the age of fifteen and had the opportunity to study under the able guidance of Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi and Maulana Gangohi. He became a teacher at the Deoband Seminary in 1875-76 and later rose to the position of the head of the school in 1887-88. Early in life he made the freedom of the country his mission of life.

The administration of the Darul-Uloom once suggested to him to keep away from politics. But he ignored the suggestion and said:

"Did our revered teacher (Maulana Nanautvi) found this madarsa only for educational purposes? It was founded

¹. Ibid. p. 297.
². Ibid. p. 46.
in my presence and, as far as I know, one of its main objects was to compensate for the losses in 1857.¹

He planned to fight the British on two fronts - within the country and abroad. The two were to rise simultaneously in an armed revolt against the British. A very remarkable feature of his plan was that he sought the co-operation of non-Muslims also. He sought the co-operation of Sikhs from the Punjab and revolutionary party members from Bengal.²

Meanwhile Balkan wars had started in Europe. The Ottoman empire seemed to crumble. This upset the Maulana. On the eve of the First World War he sent one of his trusted disciples Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi to Afghanistan and himself planned to go to Yaghistan, a small independent principality on the north western frontier. His activities were, somehow, made known to the British authorities and so the Maulana left India for Hejaz in order to avoid his expected arrest by the Indian Government and to make a direct contact with the Turkish Government to seek material help for his programme.³

Unfortunately, that was the time when Sharif Husain of Mecca had revolted against the Ottoman Caliphate on the instigation of the British. He sought support from the Ulema of the Muslim world in his activities. Maulana Mahmood Hasan refused to oblige him. He was arrested along with

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani and his close associates and handed over to the British who exiled them to Malta where they were kept as prisoners till January 1920.¹

His arrest and imprisonment did not deter him from his mission. He joined the Khilafat Movement on his return and called upon the religious leaders of the Muslims to continue their fight for the restoration of Muslim authority over their holy lands and for the liberation of India from the British rule.² However, he did not live long to guide the movement. But left among many, two of his most trusted lieutenants Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani to work inside India and Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, whom he had already sent to Afghanistan to seek their support and organise the 'Mujahidin' to start war against the British. The spark, which lay buried under the ashes, for many years and taken by the British authorities as dead, kindered a new flame and gave yet another jolt to the British Government. Maulana Mahmood Hasan thus, gave a fresh turn to the movement of Shah Waliullah.

**Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani:**

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (1879-1957) was the favourite pupil of Maulana Mahmood Hasan. When in 1910 Maulana Mahmood Hasan arrived in Mecca, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, who

². Ibid. pp. 235-236.
had till then taken no interest in politics, became an enthusiastic supporter of the mission for India's liberation. On his release along with his master in 1920, he became a leader of the Khilafat non-cooperation movement. In 1928 he was selected as the head of the Deoband seminary but he remained intensely involved with the struggle for independence all those years. He was also sent to jail several times for his political activities and defiance of laws. Nothing - persecution by Government and opposition of the Muslim League could deter him from his chosen path and he continued to strive for India's independence and Hindu-Muslim unity which also drew him into many controversies. His approach to the problems of state and society was intellectual. Dr. Tara Chand writes about him.

"On religious matters his knowledge was both in depth and breadth extraordinary. But it is amazing how a Maulvi had gathered a vast amount of information on the political and economic history of India and on international relations of the Western powers with Islamic countries".

Maulana Husain Ahmad found the politics of the Muslim League as harmful not only for India but also for the Muslims of India and the world. He rejected the Muslim League's two nation theory and predicted that an independent Muslim State would have to face even worse troubles.

1. Ibid. pp. 215-16.
2. Tara Chand, op. cit., p. 258.
The Deoband Ulema who played a prominent part in the struggle for freedom founded Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind. It was organised to mobilise the opinion of the leading Indian Muslim divines on religious and political matters. Maulana Mahmood Hasan became its first President and frankly spoke about its objectives in his address in Delhi in 1920. In fact, the sacrifices which the leaders of the Deoband school and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind made in the cause of freedom form a glorious chapter in the history of the freedom movement.

There was no sacrifice which they did not or were not prepared to offer - financial or otherwise. They chose to spend the entire span of their lives from boyhood to death eking out existence on a miserable pittance, stinted over creature comforts and on many occasions were obliged to put up with semi-starvation. They spent years in exile - voluntary or otherwise, or in British prisons - abused, maltreated, denied ordinary conveniences of life and put on the poorest prison rations.

Maulana Mahmood Hasan, Maulana Husain Ahmad Kadani, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Hifzur Rehman, Maulana Ahmad Saeed, Maulana Abdul Halim Siddiqui and a number of other Ulema suffered uncomplainingly the hardships and deprivations which were heaped upon them and which they welcomed as an offering in the service of the country, man and God.
A close study of the Muslim political thought during this period reveal some significant conclusions. In the first place it appears that Muslims once again became determined to throw away the foreign yoke. Secondly the fate of the Ottoman Empire embittered the Muslim mind and the policy of loyally supporting the British followed by Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan suffered a major set-back. Thirdly, the national leaders of both the communities realised that India's freedom could be achieved only through Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind remained a strong supporter of the Congress. But they lost grounds to Muslim League in the end. The Muslim League had wealth and influence on its side. There was one more reason why the League was able to muster a greater support which was the fault of the majority community which either failed to gauge properly the intensity of Muslim fears, or to understand the complexity of the minority problem. But perhaps the most important factor was the attitude of the ruling class. Their propaganda accentuated the fears of the Muslim and they always emphasised their differences with the Hindus. In this propaganda officials, non-officials and the Anglo-Indian press played an important role.