

INDIAN MUSLIMS
A POLITICAL HISTORY
(1858 - 1947)

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by

RAM GOPAL



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To
the Hindus and Muslims of
India and Pakistan

P R E F A C E

IN THE post-Revolt history of India, the phase which puts to the severest test a historian's sense of objectivity is the growth of Muslim politics. One who starts with preconceived notions is bound to arrive at wrong conclusions. One notion which has often led writers astray is that followers of Islam were different from the followers of Hinduism, and that therefore their politics during the British regime flowed into a separate stream. Islam is undoubtedly different from Hinduism, but it was not religion which divided Hindus and Muslims politically. Islam was not the cause but was employed as an excuse by persons who themselves were victims of accidents of history. It is not an assertion like the one that religion created political divisions in India, but a conclusion, which, as will be seen in the first few chapters of this book, clearly emerges from the evidence I have collected. I have carefully avoided assumptions, and made actual happenings the basis of my conclusions.

For example, one need not depend on indirect inferences to say that Government jobs, during the post-Revolt period, appeared as the first dim dividing line between Hindus and Muslims. They were the starting-point of a separatist movement which grew in the last quarter of the 19th century in the north-west of India under the patronage of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Aligarh school, and in the eastern provinces of Ameer Ali's Central National Mohammedan Association, which in the course of time extended its activities to several provinces in the south and north-west. My wanderings from Delhi to Calcutta have put me in possession of material which unambiguously reveal that it was aristocratic and middle-class Muslims who believed that Hindus, happening to be ahead of them in English education, were depriving them of Government jobs—their monopoly under Muslim rule—which produced the urge for separate Muslim organizations. For many years, the only function of the Central Mohammedan Association and of its branches was to represent to official dignitaries that Government posts should be filled by a system of nomination, which suited Muslims, and not by competitive tests, which suited Hindus.

The beginning of the Hindu-Muslim clash over jobs coincided with the formative period of nationalist politics, whose sponsors

happened to be non-Muslims, mainly Hindus; Muslims, advised by their leaders to devote themselves exclusively to education, remained indifferent to the new development. And when the Congress demand for the introduction of an elected element in the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils led Parliament to adopt the Indian Councils Act of 1892, expanding the Councils, there occurred another accident conducive to the growth of Hindu-Muslim differences. The Act and the Rules made thereunder did not provide for representation of Indians as such, but gave, in the interest of British rule, excessive representation to vested interests, like the landed aristocracy and the world of commerce, in which Hindus happened to be predominant. In the Councils, as they emerged, both British rulers and Muslim leaders counted the number of Muslims only to find that they were fewer than their proportion in the population. Amusingly enough, they were searching for a result which could never flow from the provisions in the Act and the Rules. They extended the demand for separate reservation in the services to separate reservation in the Legislatures, and spread the impression that Muslims were being discriminated against because they belonged to a different religion.

As a river is small at its source and swells on its journey towards its destination with its tributaries, so did Muslim communal politics, starting from a humble beginning, develop into a turbulent stream. Its tributaries were the use of Muslim communalism by the British rulers as a shield against rising nationalism, and the counter-communalism of Hindus. Here and there, in this book, I have quoted authoritative statements which have led me to this conclusion. What was glaringly peculiar to contemporary Indian politics, as different from the politics of a democratic country, was that here self-appointed leaders passed for decades together as representatives of different Indian communities. This conclusion again is based on clear evidence: the results of the first election under the Government of India Act, 1935. And what havoc these leaders played before they were rejected by the electorate is recorded in the chapters relating to pre-1935 period.

Pre-1947 India was a battlefield with communalism arrayed against nationalism, and with nationalism losing all along the line. Until the results came of the 1946 general elections, by far the largest number of Muslim voters stood neither with nationalism nor with

communalism. Self-appointed leaders or organizations vied with each other in inflating demands for their representation in the Legislature and the services in order to acquire a better claim to represent their community. Nationalism stood defeated, for it could not transcend certain limits. Exhortations made in the name of Islam, reduced nationalism virtually to mean Hinduism: in spite of all its untainted nationalism and secularism, the Congress was reduced, by the results of the elections of 1936 and 1946, to a Hindu organization. In the details of the settlement of political questions, the Congress, too, made mistakes. But few political organizations in the world have perhaps found themselves in more difficult waters than the Congress: it stooped to make compromises with communalism, and then struggled to turn again and become secular. It was one such endeavour which antagonised Muslim communalism for good and eventually became an excuse for the demand for the partition of India.

The nearness in time of the period made me conscious of the delicacy of my task. I realized that I must exercise all possible care in presenting my material and putting interpretations on it so that they might endure when put to scrutiny by those who were players in the drama and are still living. To get the little account about the Central Mohammedan Association, I had to visit Calcutta to study some rare reports in the possession of the National Library; and in order to satisfy myself as to the role of the Aligarh school, I studied original sources available in the Lytton Library of the Aligarh Muslim University. I also had the advantage of the knowledge I had gathered during my search for material in the National Archives for my biography of Lokamanya Tilak, and from my association with the Government of India's project for the history of the freedom movement.

For the first chapter, *Muslims Enter*, I have depended on T. W. Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*, and on my own study of census reports published by the Government of India in the latter half of the 19th century. Arnold was Professor of Philosophy with the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, and published his book in 1896. For other early chapters dealing with jobs, linguistic differences, progress of education among Muslims, etc., I have taken my material from the reports of the Education Commission, 1882, Government's education reports, provincial gazetteers, newspaper

files, and reports of different political and educational conferences that functioned during the last four decades of the last century, and also from general books whose authenticity I had no reason to doubt. There is no dearth of material for the period beginning with Gandhi's Khilafat and Non-Co-operation Movement, but here a writer's problem is to deal with the abundance of material which includes a lot of propagandist material. To the best of my ability, I have sifted the truth from it. Where a political party's account appeared tendentious to me, I verified it from reports in contemporary newspapers. For a connected study of political events since the 'twenties, I have depended on the *Indian Quarterly Register* and the *Indian Annual Register* volumes, again referring to newspapers whenever I needed to do so for verification or elaboration.

This study is, I believe, the first complete account of Muslim politics up to the Partition of India, where ended the phase dealt with herein.

I must express my gratitude to Nek Ram Sharma, MLA, for facilitating my access to some source material at Aligarh.

"Shanti Sadan"
Motinagar,
Lucknow

R. G.

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CHAPTER I
MUSLIMS ENTER

AMONG THE Muslims of India there are vast numbers of converts or descendants of converts, whose conversion was secured either by force by the Muslim ruling power or by the teaching and persuasion of peaceful missionaries. Persuasion, according to fragments of evidence collected in the 19th century, played a much greater part than force. The lure of high posts or feudatory gains secured to Islam, during the Muslim rule, many high-caste Hindus. But by far the majority of converts, who entered the fold of Islam through the persuasion of missionaries, belonged to lower castes or classes of Hindus to whom the religion of Arabia at once brought that social equality which Hinduism had denied them from time immemorial.

The penetration of Islam into India by persuasion had begun long before it was in a position to use force. The first contacts of Islam in South India date as far back as the 8th century, when some Arabs landed on the west coast as traders, and not as missionaries. But the Muslim in the trader claimed a share of his energy for Islam: every Muslim considered himself a missionary, and sought and welcomed opportunities for the conversion of men, women and children of other faiths. Muslims found the west coast propitious and receptive both for trade and Islam. They traded in spices, ivory and gems, among other things, and acquired in course of time the sole monopoly of India's foreign trade. The kings of the South Indian territories were deeply interested in the export trade, for they levied a tax on every sale. Consequently, the Arab traders were more influential and respected in the country than their Indian counterparts. The kings, all Hindus, paid much regard to the prejudices and customs of the Muslims and avoided any act of aggression against them, except on some extraordinary provocation. The Arab traders grew rich, and lived in great comfort.

Muslims and Hindus began to live side by side in tranquillity; they tolerated each other's usages and customs, and allowed no differences to grow because of their different faiths and customs. Both

had an opportunity to know each other's faith as it was practised. In the previous two centuries, the Muslim had imbibed an element of rationalism and he looked on South Indian customs with amazement. When Mohammed's followers struck down the idols of Mecca and when no curse came upon them, all fear of the mystic power disappeared and people grew rational-minded. Similar results were obtained in other countries in which Islam was spread by force or persuasion; many idolators rallied to the banner of Islam, as they did in the land of its birth. With this faith in himself and his religion, the Muslim appeared and moved among the indigenous population. He saw the oppressive tyranny of caste intolerance. In Travancore, for instance, certain of the lower castes were not allowed to come nearer than seventy-four paces to a Brahmin and had to make a grunting noise as they passed along the road in order to give warning of their approach. The so-called low-caste Hindus lived under many social disabilities. As a knife goes into a melon without much effort, so did Islam penetrate into these castes with little persuasion. Many came forward to free themselves from degrading oppression and raise themselves and their descendants in the social scale. Islam's equality coupled with the powerful influence of Muslim merchants made conversions a daily occurrence.

For centuries, peaceful proselytising influence had been at work on the Malabar coast. At the beginning of the 16th century, the Moplas (who trace their descent to Iraqi and Arab traders) are estimated to have formed one-fifth of the population of Malabar. They spoke the same language as the Hindus. The converts were not hated or harassed by those of their low-caste brethren who still remained in the Hindu fold.

It is difficult to say to what extent the tolerance of Hindu rulers and their dependence on Muslims for the export trade, and the wealth and influence of the Muslims themselves were responsible for these conversions; and to what extent the social evils of Hindu society were responsible for the same. T. W. Arnold, an authority on the spread of Islam, believes that the former did account for a certain number of conversions. He says on the authority of Odoardo Barbosa: 'But for the arrival of the Portuguese, the whole of this coast would have become Mohammedan, because of the frequent conversions that took place and the powerful influence exercised by

the Muslim merchants from other parts of India, such as Gujarat and the Deccan, and from Arabia and Persia.¹

Muslim immigrants and their descendants were not only merchants, but a naval power. They had built for themselves a position of privilege from which only a superior naval power could dislodge them. It so happened that at about the close of the 15th century, the Portuguese, a superior naval power, actually appeared on the western coast, destroyed Arab ships, and, with dramatic suddenness, wiped out six hundred years of the Arab monopoly of export trade. Like the Muslims, the Portuguese came to trade and not to spread their religion. But, as had happened with the Muslims, their religion came with them, and they began to claim their share of converts to Christianity. With the decline of Muslim influence on the economic life of the people, the social evils of Hindu society and the persuasive efforts of Muslim missionaries remained the only urges towards the gaining of converts. This aspect of conversion continued with considerable success throughout the conflicts of the European powers in the south and throughout the period of British rule. It would not be wholly correct to assume that if missionaries had not received a fresh impulse under the Muslim dynasties of the Bahmini (1347-1490) and Bijapur (1489-1686) kings, conquest in the cause of Islam would have been checked. This gained greater speed after British rule was firmly established. According to the report of the Second Decennial Missionary Conference (Calcutta, 1883), Muslims on the west coast were increasing so considerably in number through accessions from the lower classes of Hindus that it had begun to be apprehended that in a few years the whole of these castes might become Muslim.² There were no Muslim rulers, and there was no Muslim influence on the economic life of the south. For four centuries, since the arrival of the first Europeans in India in the closing years of the 15th century, Muslim missionaries vied with Christian missionaries in the race for converts and left them far behind. The Muslims did not have the resources and organization of the Christians and, as if both these were of doubtful value, the Muslims proved that individual persuasion without the backing of money secured better results. The Christian missionary did his job by beat of drum; the Muslim did it quietly.

¹ T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (1896), p. 219.

² *Ibid.*, p. 220.

The life of a Christian missionary was dedicated to a cause; the Muslim continued to be a man of the world. Seldom has the Muslim used a public platform to preach his religion.

In Sind, as in several countries of the Middle East, Islam made its first appearance with the conqueror's sword. Muhammad bin Qasim sought to achieve by force what his co-religionists had accomplished by persuasion on the western coast. Many subsequent invaders gained converts, like territories, by force or fear of force. But those who became ruling kings preferred inducement, often as irksome as coercion, to the direct use of force. Feroze Khan Tughlaq says in his autobiography: 'I encouraged my infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the Prophet, and I proclaimed that everyone who repeated the creed and became a Mussalman should be exempt from jazia, or poll tax. Information of this came to the ears of the people at large and great numbers of Hindus presented themselves, and were admitted to the honour of Islam. Thus they came forward day by day from every quarter, and, adopting the faith, were exonerated from the jazia, and were favoured with presents and honours.'³ The Khiljis, the Tughlaqs and the Lodis, though primarily engaged in conquest and civil war, did not lack religious zeal, and encouraged proselytism rather systematically by various kinds of inducements. These dynasties, as also the Mughals, unlike the earlier plunderers and adventurers, remained in India to found kingdoms and empires, and ruled out the use of force as a matter of policy. Afraid of unpopularity and anxious to conciliate the people, they adopted the policy of non-interference. They did not lack zeal for Islam, and those unable to exercise self-control crossed the border line of non-interference and displayed the force of authority. Arnold, who reached the general conclusion that persuasion rather than force was the instrument for spreading Islam in India, says: 'It is established without doubt that forced conversions have been made by Mohammedan rulers, and it seems probable that Aurangzeb's well-known zeal on behalf of his faith has caused many families of Northern India (the history of whose conversion has been forgotten) to attribute their change of faith to this, the most easily assignable cause. Similarly in the Deccan, Aurangzeb shares with Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan the reputation

³ Sir H. M. Elliot, *The History of India As Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. III, p. 386.

of having forcibly converted sundry families and sections of the population, whose conversion undoubtedly dates from a much earlier period.⁴

But, shrewd ruler that he was, Aurangzeb gave people to understand that he was tolerant of other faiths. Once replacement of two Parsi officers (paymasters) by Muslims was suggested to him on the authority of the Koran (1x.i.): 'O believers, take not my foe and your foe for friends.' The Emperor replied: 'Religion has no concern with secular business, and in matters of this kind, bigotry should find no place'. He, too, appealed to the authority of the Koran: 'To you your religion, and to me my religion' (cix. 6), and said that if the former verse were to be taken as an established rule of conduct, 'then we ought to have destroyed all the Rajas and their subjects.' Aurangzeb himself did not always act upon such tolerant principles.⁵ He was one of those rulers who could not suppress their zeal for advancing the cause of Islam. He revived the discriminatory tax, *jaziya*, which had been abolished by Akbar, and incidentally proved that coercion provoked people to rise against authority. According to Khafi Khan, 'the infidel inhabitants of the city and the country made great opposition to the payment of the Jaziya. There was not a district where the people with the help of the *faujdars* and *mukaddams* did not make disturbances and resistance.' Some officials connived at and abetted the rebellious movement. Akbar's tolerance of other faiths solidified the roots of the Mughal Empire; Aurangzeb's partiality for Islam shook them.

A comparison between the results gained by coercion or force and those gained by persuasion at once established the superiority and effectiveness of the latter. Some Muslim rulers may have satisfied their sense of authority and power by forcing the acceptance of Islam on certain of their Hindu subjects, but the point that significantly stands out is that Islam's triumphs in times and places in which its political power had been the weakest, were far more splendid than in territories where it reigned supreme. For centuries, the Muslim power dominated the political scene in northern and central India, with its headquarters at Delhi, but compared with these parts, conversions were four-fold in Bengal, where Muslim

⁴ Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

missionaries found the atmosphere more favourable and the soil more fertile. Even in important centres of Muslim power, the Muslims hardly exceeded one-tenth of the total population. This proportion compared most unfavourably with that in Bengal where in the race for numbers, the Muslims had nearly overtaken the Hindus.

In Bengal, as in the south, Islam paraded itself as a deliverer of social oppression. In the tyrannous behaviour of the high castes towards the low castes, the missionaries saw an opportunity of success. Social inequality among Hindus had been handed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. The Aryans, in the beginning, had no such practice; the Rig Veda knows little or nothing of caste—at any rate it is not explicit about it. Manu's four-fold classification of Indian society gave birth to the caste system, which in the course of time grew into elaborate social distinctions—cruel differences between man and man. They became part of the complicated religious system of Brahmanism. For a long time the caste system remained confined to what was called 'the middle land'—now Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab—and the Aryans who had settled in lower Bengal remained unaffected by it. But they were the aristocracy of that region, and had established themselves as the social superiors of non-Aryans. The Aryan invaders, almost all of whom assumed the rank of Brahmins as the caste system travelled down to Bengal, reduced the aborigines to serfdom. Conquered and humiliated, they ever remained serfs; the great gulf between the conquerors and the conquered has never been bridged. The Aryans detested the aborigines, and the aborigines rendered the Aryans all kinds of menial service. The Aryans never attempted to extend their own religious system to the aborigines; any idea of allowing them access to Brahmanism was repulsive to the Aryans. During the long association of the two, some Aryans borrowed the superstitious beliefs of the aborigines, and the latter made an improvement on their animism, but the social distinctions remained as sharp as ever. Even after time had effaced ethnical distinctions, and all came to be known vaguely as Hindus, the Aryans consistently continued, for all practical purposes, to keep the aborigines away from the citadel of Hinduism. In practice, the aborigines claimed themselves to be Hindus, but the Aryans by their behaviour repudiated the claim. At the time of Islam's

spiritual invasion, the Aryans generally were called 'high castes' and the aborigines 'low castes'.

The caste Hindu was not much to blame. His scriptures were his guide in social conduct. He had been told that 'the Shudra (low caste) must not be spoken to when performing a sacrifice and a Shudra must not be present when a sacrifice is being performed', (The *Satapatha Brahmana*, iii.1.1.10, the *Maitrayani Samhita*, vii.1.1.6, and the *Panchavimsa Brahman*, vi.1.11); that 'the wicked Shudra race is manifestly a burial ground', therefore (the Veda) must never be recited in the presence of a Shudra (The *Vasistha Dharma Sutra* chap. XVIII, verse 11.15); that if the Shudra 'assumes a position equal to that of twice-born men in sitting, in lying down, in conversation or on the road, he shall undergo (corporal punishment)'. The scriptures are full of all manner of restrictions against the low castes.

Among the high castes themselves, young widows were condemned by custom to lead a wretched life; the supreme religious duty that they could perform was to burn themselves on the pyres of their dead husbands. They were looked down upon as God's curse on earth. They were excluded from religious and social ceremonies; their presence at marriage ceremonies was considered inauspicious. On the other hand, the priesthood, which had degenerated into debauchery, allowed its members to have any number of wives. Many girls, according to custom, could be married only to a higher caste among the high castes; it seemed as if this custom was introduced to provide a number of wives for each member of a higher caste. Sometimes young girls were married to old men.

Young widows, whenever Muslim missionaries happened to meet them, were told that they had committed no sin to deprive them of the pleasures of this world, and that Islam showed liberality to those in distress. A widow became a bride once again; an 'untouchable' drew water from the common well to which he had been denied access when he was a Hindu; such was the power of Islam. Untouchability was not peculiar to Bengal or to the south, but in these places it was more rigid, more cruel and more oppressive than in other parts, and consequently accounted for the greater success of the work of propagating Islam.

A Muslim kingdom was founded in Bengal at the end of the 12th century by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji, who conquered Bihar

and Bengal, and the continuance of Muslim rule for five centuries and a half naturally assisted the spread of Islam. This long period was interrupted by ten years of Hindu rule, which incidentally gave Islam a larger number of converts than it had acquired under a Muslim ruler. The first Hindu ruler in the *interregnum* was Raja Kans, 'whose rule is said to have been popular with his Muslim subjects'. But his successor, Jatmall, renounced the faith of his ancestors and embraced Islam, taking the name of Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah. 'According to tradition numerous conversions were made during his reign. Many of these were however due to force.'⁶

But the missionaries flourished more on the evils of the Hindu society than under the patronage of Muslim rulers, for they won a far larger number of converts in those parts of the country where low-caste and outcaste Hindus abounded than in the centres of the Muslim government. Hinduism is not a missionary religion, and no Hindu organization ever challenged the onslaught of missionaries or Afghan adventurers who settled in Bengal; no Hindu ever cared to reform Hindu society in order to retain its members within its fold. It may be asked whether there was any consolidated religious system among the aborigines and depressed classes to bar the progress of Islam. For all practical purposes, there was none. In the north-west of India, where the Muslim invaders built up empires, things were different. There, Brahmanism, after a long struggle with Buddhism, had emerged triumphant, and was in a position to resist the overtures of Islam. But in Bengal, the Muslim missionaries 'were welcomed with open arms'.

Unabated conversions during the British regime proved beyond doubt that Islam was bound to grow in Bengal whether the backing of political power was available to it or not. The Census Report of 1891 gives a revealing account: 'It is satisfactorily proved that since 1872 out of every 10,000 persons, Islam has gained 100 persons in Northern Bengal, 262 in Eastern Bengal, and 110 in Western Bengal—on an average 157 in the whole of Bengal proper. The Mussalman increase is real and large. If it were to continue, the faith of Mohammed would be universal in Bengal proper in six and a half centuries, whilst Eastern Bengal would reach the same

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 228 ; and J. H. Ravenshaw, *Gaur : Its Ruins and Inscriptions*, (1878) p. 99.

condition in about four hundred years . . . Nineteen years ago in Bengal proper Hindus numbered nearly half a million more than Mussalmans did, and in the space of less than two decades the Mussalmans have not only overtaken the Hindus, but have surpassed them by a million and a half.⁷

It would be wrong to assume, as some people do, that the pro-Muslim attitude of the British facilitated the work of Muslim enthusiasts. The vigorous revival of conversions in the 19th century was largely due to the Wahabi influence, and it is well known that the Wahabis carried on for several decades a rebellious movement against the British. The abandonment of that movement in the early 'seventies quickened the pace of conversion, because the Wahabis were now in a position to devote exclusive attention to the spread of Islam.

A deep consciousness of Hinduism and of its superiority to any other religious system, among the high-caste Hindus, and the lack of it among the lower classes, explains the phenomenon that while the former resisted force and temptation, the latter succumbed to them. In Sind and the Punjab, as in East Bengal, the higher castes were like islands in the Pacific, and the lower classes the ocean. In their mental attitude towards religion, a fairly large number of Hindu ruling princes also resembled the so-called lower classes and differed from the middle classes of the high castes. The middle classes were temple-goers. Steeped in orthodox Hinduism, they would suffer privations, but would not go over to Islam. They were traders, shopkeepers, teachers, clerks, priests. The Census Reports of the Punjab, as of several other provinces, again and again confirm this conclusion. In the predominantly Muslim districts of the Punjab, those entered as Hindus belonged to high classes or to such of the lower classes as were under their influence. In Assam, extreme ignorance of the elements of the faith of the soil manifested itself more conspicuously. This factor made the task of the proselytizers easy. They had only to go to the peasants and enrol them as Muslims. But, the converts remained as ignorant of Islam as of Hinduism. 'Some of them', says the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. I (1885), 'have never heard of Mohammed; some regard him as a person corresponding in their system of religion

⁷ *Census of India*, 1891, Vol. III ; C. J. O'Donnell, *The Lower Provinces of Bengal and Their Feudatories*, pp. 146, 147.

to Rama or Lakshman of the Hindus. The Koran is hardly read even in Bengali, and in the original Arabic not at all ; many of those who have heard of it cannot tell who wrote it. Yet any Muslim peasant is able to repeat a few scraps of prayer in Arabic.⁸ This prayer gave him a sense of religion, and he considered himself as a member of a socio-cum-religious system. He did not have it while, loosely speaking, he was a Hindu. During the periods of his isolation from learned Muslims, he borrowed from the environment Hindu customs which were offensive to the tenets of Islam. For example he began to eat swine's flesh and to drink strong liquor; the religious circumcision also fell into disuse. Later, when the *mullas* re-appeared, he began once again to profess all the orthodox doctrines of Islam.

In the Punjab and Sind also, those who came under the banner of Islam in overwhelming numbers were peasants. But great upheavals and convulsions were associated with proselytism in this part of the country. Here in most cases, force won the initial success for Islam; subsequent mass conversions were like the surrender of a country after the fall of its capital. The conversion of a chief was followed by the conversion of a large number of men, women and children of his tribe and kingdom. The Ghakhar tribe of the western Punjab, and the Samas and Sumras of Sind, are outstanding examples. After many an encounter with Muslim invaders, the Ghakhars were completely subjugated during the reigns of Sher Shah and his son, Salim Shah. One of the Ghakhar chiefs embraced Islam, and immortalized his later master, Salim Shah, by converting many persons of his and of other tribes and calling them Salim Shahis or Islam Shahis.⁹ The Sama and Sumra tribes became Mussalmans centuries after the invasion of Muhammad Qasim. In the Punjab, a certain Haji Muhammad was credited with having converted 200,000 Hindus.¹⁰ The history of Islam's expansion in India is replete with the names of missionaries whose individual efforts brought to the religion of the Prophet tremendous success. There was reason for them to be prouder still of their success in

⁸ *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, (1885) Vol. I, p. 358.

⁹ *Gujrat (Punjab) District Gazetteer*, 1921, p. 115. *Jhelum District Gazetteer*, 1904, p. 63.

¹⁰ Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 232 quoted from Garcin de Tassy, *La Langue et la Litterature Hindoustanies, de 1850 a 1869*, p. 343.

the Punjab where they had to deal with brave Rajputs, sturdy Jats and recalcitrant Gujars. But this pride is minimised to some extent by the fact of the missionaries treading a road made safe by the sword. The Rajput, Jat and Gujar peasants of the Punjab, especially of the western districts, were much different from their educated brethren in Rajasthan, East Punjab and the west of U.P. Many of them lived a nomadic life, and had not much attachment to Hinduism. In this respect, they were different even from their uneducated brethren in other parts of the country. They had yet to assimilate that spirit of Hindu conventions which created a class distinction between the Hindus and the followers of other religions, and which incidentally repelled missionary appeals or political temptations. The Jats of the western Punjab freely gave away their daughters in marriage to Mohammedans, before they themselves formally embraced Islam. Many families remained for a long time indecisive with regard to their religion—they were neither Hindus nor Muslims—until a decision was taken by them (or for them) at the time of enumeration. Even after the census operations compelled the reaching of a decision, many people continued to be half Hindus and half Muslims. They observed caste rules, they joined in Hindu festivals and took part in numerous idolatrous ceremonies. It was only in the last two decades of the 19th century that a movement was started by devout Muslims towards a religious life patterned in accordance with the law of Islam. These efforts yielded desired results, and the Hindu tribes, who were from time to time converted to Islam in rural areas, became more orthodox and regular in their religious observance, and began to abandon the ancient customs which they had hitherto observed in common with their Hindu neighbours.

In the 19th century, the census returns gave the enthusiasts of Islam an added impetus; and Christian missionaries gave them a modern system. Numerous *Anjumans* (associations) sprang up in the chief centres of Muslim culture in India, such as the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam of Lahore, and the Anjuman Hami Islam of Ajmer. Paid agents were appointed; but persons engaged in trade or business also devoted their leisure time in the evenings to the service of Islam.¹¹ There was no resistance from Hinduism; on the contrary Muslim saints had cast a spell over many Hindus,

¹¹ Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

who flocked in large numbers to the tombs of Muslim divines on the days appointed to commemorate them. Until recently, the worship of Muslim saints was common among certain low-caste Hindus as also among some sections of high-caste Hindus.¹² Understandably, therefore, the revived zeal for proselytism was bound to be crowned with success. It did bring encouraging success. Hinduism did not have any counterparts of the Muslim preachers who, for centuries, had an easy field.

The phenomenal rise of the Muslim population in Sind and western Punjab and the consequent reduction of the Hindus to an insignificant minority was, in a nutshell, due to the fact that these two provinces had to bear the main brunt of the early Muslim invasions whose object, next to conquest, was conversion. After the first wave of enthusiasm had passed, and when the Mughals established themselves as tolerant rulers of India, direct state aid or encouragement to conversion, was, generally speaking, stopped and Islam's onward march was not as sweeping as it was in Sind and the Punjab. Even Aurangzeb's encouragement cannot be compared with what the Punjab experienced during and after the early Muslim invasions. The other factor which cannot be lost sight of is that in the land of the Ganga and the Yamuna, and in the territories under the religious influence of these two rivers, Hinduism was more virile and more assertive; the number of vulnerable people was not so great as in the Punjab and Bengal.

These converts became, as we shall see in the following chapters, a serious political problem. They did not create this problem, they did not know of it, and they did not understand it. That was the paradox of Indian politics for three-quarters of a century.

¹² *Census of India*, 1891, Vol. xvi, pt. 1, pp. 217-44, Allahabad, 1894.

CHAPTER II

MUSLIM ARISTOCRACY IN A DILEMMA*

THE MOHAMMEDANS of India could be divided into two categories: descendants of those who came as traders and invaders; and converts and descendants of converts. The Census Reports do not help us to make a precise division of the Muslim population into these two categories. Once, an idea of the numbers of the first category was given at an All-India Muslim League meeting: Mazhar-ul-Haq, in his presidential address to the League's annual session of 1915, said that of the whole Muslim population, 'those who have claimed their descent from remote non-Indian ancestors amount only to eight million', while the entire Muslim population at that time was 70 million. Many converts whose origin had been effaced by time took pride in calling themselves descendants of foreigners. The pretension was excusable because the foreigners and their descendants were held in much greater esteem; many constituted the aristocracy of the Muslim regime. The vast numbers of Muslim Jats, Gujars and Rajputs in West Punjab, and the low classes in that province, and in Bengal, South India and other territories, unmistakably proved that it would not be safe to accept wholly the figures presented in Mazhar-ul-Haq's address.

For the purpose of this study it is essential to make a distinction between foreigners and Indian converts; the former provided personnel for civil and military appointments, while the latter were confined mostly to the agricultural and menial classes. During six or seven hundred years of Muslim rule, the former virtually enjoyed a monopoly of Government employment. They spoke and wrote the rulers' language, and it was easier for foreign Muslim adventurers than for local Hindus to get lucrative jobs under the Government. Hindus were not debarred from high office, but those who held such posts were few and far between. Even during the enlightened rule of Akbar the discrimination continued. For example, 'among the twelve highest appointments, with the title of "Commander of more than

* The narrative relating to the growth of education in the 18th and 19th centuries is based on the *Report of the University Education Commission (Government of India)*.

Five Thousand Horses”, not one was a Hindu. In the succeeding grades, with the title of “Commander of from Five Thousand to Five Hundred Horses”, out of 252 officers, only 31 were Hindus. In the second next reign, out of 609 Commanders of these grades, only 110 were Hindus; and even among the lowest grades of the higher appointments, out of 163 “Commanders of from Five Hundred to Two Hundred Horses”, only 26 were Hindus.’ Similar discrimination was exercised in making appointments to high civil offices, and this continued even after Hindus had acquired proficiency in Persian and Arabic. There were, however, exceptional periods when certain Muslim rulers preferred Hindus, their employment being considered a safety device against the court intrigues in which Muslim officials were thickly involved. Alivardi Khan, who usurped the throne of Bengal in 1740, made it a policy to appoint Hindus to high offices in order to ensure that no Muslim adherent of the late ruling family was smuggled to a place of responsibility. His successor, Siraj-ud-daula, continued this policy.

Such rulers, however, were exceptions. Almost in every Muslim regime, Muslim divines exercised a powerful influence, and while the relation of the conquerors to the indigenous population was regulated rather by political necessity than by the Islamic Code, it was not easy to ignore this influence. If ever, during the reign of a broad-minded ruler, any Hindu broke into the Muslim monopoly of Government, the Muslim *mullas* grew restless and created unrest. Akbar had relegated the *mullas* to the background; yet they organized an agitation against the appointments of the Hindu chiefs, Raja Todar Mall and Raja Man Singh, as Finance Minister and General respectively. Deputations of remonstrance were sent to Court. But that quick-witted Emperor sent the deputationists back satisfied. ‘Who manages your properties and grants of land?’, he asked them. ‘Our Hindu agents’, they answered. ‘Very good’, said Akbar, ‘allow me also to appoint a Hindu to manage my estates.’ The appointment of Hindus to fiscal and financial posts was a usual practice with Muslim kings and estate-holders. Muslim aristocrats would not worry their heads with the details of collection and accounting, and left the job to Hindus, who, with their business acumen, discharged it with much greater efficiency. Direct dealing with the husbandman was also vested in the Hindu bailiffs. The subordinate revenue service was manned mostly by Hindus; they

took their share of the profits before passing the collections on to their Muslim superiors, who formed a very important link between the Emperor and the Hindu revenue staff, and were officially responsible for the collections. The Muslim nobility thus had three sources from which fabulous amounts of money came into their coffers: military command, collection of revenue, and judicial and political employment.

With the conquest of different territories by the British, the edifice of Muslim nobility was violently disturbed. The Muslim aristocrats of Bengal were the first to feel the blow. Between the actual revenue collector and Government, he was a superfluous link; to a Muslim ruler, the link was important; to the East India Company, it was quite unnecessary. As the Company grew confident of its position, the link was either extruded or allowed to drop out. The series of changes in the land management system introduced by the Company, ending in the Permanent Settlement of 1793, virtually brought about the extinction of the superfluous Muslim aristocrat. James O'Kinealy describes the effect of the change thus: 'It elevated the Hindu collectors, who up to that time had held but unimportant posts, to the position of landholders, gave them a proprietary right in the soil, and allowed them to accumulate wealth which would have gone to the Mussalmans under their own Rule.' The loss of revenue offices also meant the loss of many exactions which had become customary.

Gradually, the East India Company shut the Muslim aristocracy out of the army, believing that their exclusion was necessary to British security. But for more than half a century, after the Company became the real ruler of Bengal, the Muslim monopoly of civil services remained. And, as usual, the Code of Islam remained the law of the land, and Muslims continued as judicial officers. Persian continued to be the official language, and Muslim aristocratic families were, by tradition, considered the only sources which could be drawn upon for manning the services.

The Muslim system of education was retained, and Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India, established the Calcutta Madrasah which was intended 'to qualify the sons of Mohammedan gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices in the State'. The course of studies followed the traditional pattern, embracing theology, logic, rhetoric, grammar, law, natural philo-

sophy, astronomy, geometry and arithmetic.

Persian became the official language of Bengal, because it was the spoken language of the Muslim rulers and their officers who were descendants of foreigners who had been sent from Northern India to man administrative and army services. Discretion prompted the East India Company to follow a policy of continuity for some time, although it was obvious that the natural official language under the new set-up should either be Bengali, the spoken language of both the Hindu and Muslim masses, or English, the language of the new rulers. The substitution of Persian for English, even after half a century of British rule, was considered impracticable because English-knowing Indians, needed to man the subordinate Government services were not available in requisite number. Therefore Persian, a legacy of Muslim rule and though a language foreign both to the rulers and the ruled, was tolerated for a long time.

Gradually, Persian was replaced by Bengali. The change was naturally most unwelcome to the Muslim aristocracy, because it opened the gates of state employment to Hindus also. Hindus poured into official life with a joy which knew no bounds, and hailed the British as their great benefactors. The pride of the Muslim aristocracy was deeply hurt; accustomed to a life of respectable aloofness, the Muslim aristocrat considered it against the grain of his religion and below his dignity to change from Persian to Bengali. He had inherited high Government office in the past, and considered that the new measure was a usurpation of his rights. Learned in Mohammedan law, he felt it was his birthright to be a judicial officer. That, too, was now denied him. It was now, long after the province had passed under the British rule, that he desperately realized that the new Government had thrown him over.

The next step, which antagonised the Muslim aristocracy even more bitterly, was the change of the official language from Bengali to English, and the consequent spread of the English education. In order to understand the Muslim reaction, we must have an idea of how the British system of education unfolded itself in India.

The Calcutta Madrasah was designed to be a Mohammedan college, because Bengal, having been conquered from the Muslims, was considered a sphere of Muslim influence. In pursuance of the

same policy, a Sanskrit College was established at Benares 'for the preservation and cultivation of the laws, literature and religion of the nation, to accomplish the same purpose for the Hindus as the Madrasah for the Mohammedans, and especially to supply qualified Hindu assistants to European judges'. As the years rolled by, some British administrators and citizens in India felt that the instructions given in the two colleges fell far short of modern requirements of education, and urged the necessity of teaching English to Indians. For about half a century, the suggestion was repeated many times, but went unheeded.

In 1813, the East India Company's Charter was again renewed, and this time a clause was inserted stipulating that 'a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India'. Raja Rammohun Roy, the most shrewd Indian politician of those days, saw in this offer a favourable opportunity of founding an institution where the Hindus would receive instruction in European languages and sciences. An association was formed, and the Hindu College was founded in 1817. As if it was an invitation to another of a different variety, in 1818, the Bishop of Calcutta opened an institution for training young Christians as preachers, and imparting knowledge of the English language to Mohammedans and Hindus.

These efforts met with the approval of the Court of Directors of the Company, mainly because they would raise a class of persons qualified for employment in the civil administration of India. They wrote: 'As the means of bringing about this most desirable object, we rely chiefly on their becoming, through a familiarity with European literature and science, imbued with the ideas and feelings of civilised Europe—on the general cultivation of their understanding, and specifically on their instruction in the principles of morals and general jurisprudence.'

English now caught the imagination of most educated people, and the demand for instruction in English grew more and more insistent. English classes were attached to the Calcutta Madrasah and the Benares Sanskrit College. It was here that a controversy was started whether the medium of instruction should be Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit or English. The Committee of Public Instruction

referred the matter to the Government in 1835, and Macaulay, then the Law Member of the Company's Government, prepared a Minute, now a famous historical document. Macaulay's mind had been made up much before. He had once, in the House of Commons, given expression to his view thus: 'Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or do we think that we can give knowledge without awakening ambition? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? . . . It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system until it has outgrown that system, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. Whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in English history . . . The sceptre may pass away from us. Victory may be inconsistent to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse.'

So, Macaulay gave his verdict in favour of English. His Minute was approved by the Governor-General, William Bentinck, and his Council, and on March 7, 1835, they passed a resolution in which they emphasized 'that all the funds at the disposal of the Government would henceforth be spent in imparting to the Indians a knowledge of English literature and science'. What gave cause of complaint to the protagonists of Arabic and Persian was that part of the resolution which said that 'while the colleges of Oriental learning were not to be abolished, the practice of supporting their students during their period of education was to be discontinued'.

This resolution was heartily welcomed by leading Hindus, who had themselves been demanding English instead of Sanskrit, but it greatly injured the feelings of Muslims. According to the Sanskrit scholar, H. H. Wilson, 'upon the proposal to appropriate all the funds to English education, there was a petition from the Mohammedans of Calcutta, signed by about 8,000 people, including all the most respectable Maulvis and native gentlemen of the city. After objecting to it upon general principles, they said that the evident object of the Government was the conversion of the natives; and they encouraged English exclusively and discouraged Moham-

medan and Hindu studies, because they wanted to induce the people to become Christians.' The Government did not anticipate this reaction, and immediately William Bentinck announced a policy of strict religious neutrality: 'In all schools and colleges . . . interferences and injudicious mingling, direct or indirect, of the teaching of Christianity with the system of instruction, ought to be positively forbidden.'

The fears of the Muslims were not wholly unfounded. The Christian mission schools, which were the forerunners of Government institutions, were already mingling the teaching of English with the teaching of Christianity, and did not accept the policy of religious neutrality. In the Presidency of Madras, Danish missionaries had been working since the beginning of the 18th century. In Bengal, the pioneers were Carey, Marshman and Ward, who started work at the Danish settlement at Serampore in 1793. Twenty years later, Baptists arrived to work at Dinajpore and Jessore; the London Missionary Society came to Dutch Chinsurah and Vizagapatam, the American Board to Bombay and some workers to Bellary. They gave precedence to the teaching of Christianity rather than to English, and even paid more attention than they did to English to the study of modern Indian languages.

They began to be looked upon with greater suspicion when, in the late 1830's, they adopted a new policy that English education would itself lead to the spread of Christianity. This announcement of the attitude of the missionaries, and the Government announcement shifting the emphasis from Oriental learning to English, came at about the same time, and men religiously tied to a certain pattern of education, concluded that the Government was also working for the same end. In the next few decades, a large number of Government and missionary institutions sprang up simultaneously—the latter in larger numbers—and confirmed the suspicion. Muslims heard with strange misgivings the missionaries declare (in the words of Dr. Duff): 'Our great object was to convey, as largely as possible, a knowledge of our ordinary improved literature and science to the young persons; but another, and more vital object was to convey a thorough knowledge of Christianity with its evidences and doctrines.' The Muslims were so horrified by such statements that sincere Government announcements regarding religious neutrality were interpreted as part of a clever design to deprive them

of their religion. Therefore, they mostly kept aloof from the new system of education. The Hindus, in whose daily life the rigidity of Hinduism was little reflected, took lessons in English and sciences at the missionary school, and did not take home those in Christianity. They did not develop the same attachment to Sanskrit as the Muslims had to Persian and Arabic. In fact, they gladly supported Raja Rammohun Roy and other Hindu leaders in demanding the substitution of Sanskrit by English, knowing that the latter was better fitted to carry them into the world of modern knowledge and open the gateway to Government service.

That all those Hindus who went to English schools were not lost to Hinduism evidently proves that the Muslim fear was unwarranted. The Muslims denied themselves the opportunity of receiving English education and deprived themselves of the opportunity of employment under the Government. In 1844, the Government decided to prefer for public employment those who had been educated in Western science and were familiar with the English language. Many Hindus had already equipped themselves with these qualifications, and monopolised, in the course of time, all Government services. This development caused great distress to and aroused jealousies of Muslims.

All this left an indelible mark on the future politics of the country. Hindus were on the side of the Government and Muslims arrayed against it. During the first half of the 19th century, the journals and public addresses of prominent Hindu leaders in Bengal made violent denunciation of Muslim rule, and enthusiastic, almost rapturous, applause of the British administration. Almost all the evils from which the country was suffering were attributed to the Muslim rule.

Hindus were the main beneficiaries of the new system of education as of the new revenue system under the Permanent Settlement. The Muslims of the upper classes developed a dislike of the Hindus, and vice versa. But the Muslim and Hindu masses were not affected by the new development. Together, they had a grievance that while the Permanent Settlement had fixed amounts of land revenue for all times, the rent collectors were raising the rents according to rises in prices. If higher prices did not mean higher rates of revenue, why should their annual rental be increased, they asked. There was a point in this which any agitator could make use of.

The displaced Muslim aristocracy and educated Muslims developed, in a state of despondency, an attitude of revolt, and gave a call to the Muslim peasantry to join them for the restoration of Muslim hegemony, which would re-establish indigenous rule and relieve them of the exploitation of the new zemindars.

CHAPTER III
WAHABI MOVEMENT, JOBS AND
POLITICS*

EARLY IN THE 19th century, a Muslim adventurer, hailing from the district of Rae Bareilly in U.P. and fired by Islamic zeal, took it into his head to plant the Crescent throughout every district of India. His name was Syed Ahmed. He was a visionary, and believed that he could, by reviving the true spirit of Islam, re-establish a lasting empire in India. He had begun life as a horse soldier in the service of one Amir Khan Pindari, afterwards Nawab of Tonk and, according to W. W. Hunter, 'for many a year harried the rich opium-growing villages of Malwa'. But his ambition took him to a Muslim *maulvi* of high repute at Delhi, to study the sacred law of Islam. He attributed the downfall of Islam in India to the abuses which had crept into the faith. He became a preacher and zealously attacked the abuses, obtaining a turbulent following. This was in the second decade of the 19th century. He styled himself, and was verily regarded as, a prophet. His piety and the steadfastness of his purpose travelled ahead of him, and wherever he went multitudes came forward to join his standard. Men of rank and learning ran like common servants, with their shoes off, by the side of his palanquin. It was now apparent that he could raise an army for the mere asking. 'In Calcutta the masses flocked to him in such

* The narrative relating to the Wahabi Movement is based on the following books :

W. W. Hunter, *Indian Mussalmans*.

Sir Alfred C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies (Religious and Social)*.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, *The Causes of the Indian Revolt of 1857* (Original in Urdu, *Asbab-e-Baghawat*).

Graham, *Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmed*.

Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided*.

Tufail Ahmed, *Musalmanon-Ka-Roshan Mustaqbal* (Urdu).

The Aligarh Institute Gazette dated September 8, 1871.

Muhammed Jaffar, *Sawanat Ahmadiya* (Urdu).

Henry Dodwell, *A Sketch of the History of India from 1858 to 1918*.

B. D. Basu, *India Under the British Crown*.

Records relating to the Wahabi Movement in the History of the Freedom Movement Department of the National Archives.

numbers that he was unable even to go through the ceremony of initiation by the separate laying on of hand. Unrolling his turban, therefore, he declared that all who could touch any part of its ample length became his disciples.' Money was necessary for his future campaigns, and he appointed agents to go forth and collect, during his long itineraries, a tax from the profits of trade in all the large towns which fell on his route. He assumed the authority of spiritual and temporal command over his co-religionists and, like the Mohammedan Emperors, issued *farmans* (orders). In 1822, he made a religious journey to Mecca, and came under the influence of the Wahabi cult, whose success in Muslim countries gave him greater confidence and vigour. Within a short period of six or seven years, his influences spread over two thousand miles of thickly populated area from the Peshawar Frontier to the delta of Bengal.

Abundantly equipped with men and money, Syed Ahmed was now ready for a war. He knew that the movement for the reconquest of India must start in the north with the help of Afghanistan, and he chose the Punjab as his first target. The supposed ill-treatment of Muslims by Sikhs in the Punjab, which was then under the rule of Ranjit Singh, was paraded as a cause of *jihad*. With his numerous followers, Syed Ahmed proceeded to Kabul via Sind. At the gate of Kandahar, he was given a rousing reception by the nobles and masses of that city. Both in Kandahar and Kabul, there was an enthusiastic response to his call. The strength of his volunteer army swelled to a hundred thousand at one time. The Afghanistan ruler denied his association with Syed Ahmed, but it is difficult to believe that he was absolutely indifferent to the preparations for the war against the Punjab being made in his own country. The adventure failed, and Syed Ahmed was killed. But his movement remained, and continued even after the Punjab had passed under British rule.

Patna was the centre of the Wahabi activities in the British Indian territories. The organizers managed their underground activities so efficiently that the authorities did not know of Patna's role in the movement for a long time. Even the police had leagued themselves with the rebels. The rebel leaders had shed their fear of British authority, and one of them, who had assembled seven hundred men in his house, had declared his resolve to resist any investigation by the magistrate by force. In 1853, several Indian

soldiers in British employ were convicted of correspondence with the rebels. On the Frontier, the rebel leaders had established contact with the British Indian troops in 1852, and a correspondence that passed between them was seized by the Punjab authorities.

The Wahabis had permanent machinery throughout the districts for spreading disaffection against British rule. The district centres kept up a regular correspondence with the propaganda office at Patna. Each district unit had its own machinery for raising funds and recruits. The recruits were trained like missionaries with an admirable system of morality. The propaganda ceaselessly insisted that Indian Muslims who would save themselves from hell had the single alternative of war against the Infidel or flight (*Jihad* or *Hijra*) from the accursed land. They were repeatedly told that no True Believer could live loyal to an infidel government without perdition to his soul. 'Those who would deter others from Holy War or Flight are in heart hypocrites. Let all know this. In a country where the ruling religion is other than Mohammedanism, the religious precepts of Mohammed cannot be enforced. It is incumbent on Mussalmans to join together, and wage war against the Infidels. Those who are unable to take part in the fight should emigrate to a country of the True Faith. He who denies this, let him declare himself a slave to sensuality. In short, oh Brethren, we ought to weep over our state, for the Messenger of God is angered with us because of our living in the land of the Infidel.'

The Wahabis involved the British rulers of India in several costly wars on the Frontier. There was a network of conspiracies in the provinces, and each war on the Frontier produced its corresponding State trial of non-belligerents. Each case gave clues which led to a whole crop of others. Between 1864 and 1871, there were five great State trials, as a result of which dozens of Muslims were awarded capital punishment, transportation for life, and heavy sentences of imprisonment. As a matter of policy, in every case, capital punishment was commuted to transportation for life. At the time of the 1871 trial, the Muslim bitterness against the British reached its climax, and the Chief Justice of Bengal, John Paxton Norman, was stabbed to death by a Muslim on the steps of his own Tribunal. He had imposed heavy sentences on some Wahabi Muslims. The same year, Viceroy Mayo was murdered in the Andaman Islands by a Wahabi convict, Sher Ali.

Mayo had fallen to the blow of a Wahabi, but he had already laid out a clever tactic to break up the movement. For half a century, Muslim rebels had tried without success to convert the *Darul-Harb* (land ruled by the Infidel), that was India under British rule, into *Darul-Islam* (a country ruled by the Faithful), but their spirit remained unsubdued and their followers were not disheartened. It was apparent that the victory of British arms on the Frontier did not secure to the Government the obedience of most of the Muslims and could not quell the unrest. If doctors of the Muslim law continued to declare India *Darul-Harb*, Muslims would consider it their religious duty to help the rebellion against the Infidel. Quite naturally, therefore, it had occurred to Mayo that if one set of doctors declared British territories as *Darul-Harb*, another could be secured to interpret it as *Darul-Islam* in which *jihad* was a sin. Accordingly, a discussion was started throughout the country as to whether India was *Darul-Harb* or *Darul-Islam*. Obviously, nobody would come forward openly to suggest that she was *Darul-Harb*; such a suggestion would have landed the maker of it in gaol or made him a suspect in the eyes of the authorities. The discussion was, therefore, one-sided. Orthodox and semi-orthodox doctors of Islam came out with new interpretations, and forcefully suggested that the Wahabi interpretation was wrong and misleading. Opinions were obtained from certain Muftis of Mecca who, in effect, said that 'as long as some of the peculiar observances of Islam prevail in a country, it is *Darul-Islam*'. Doctors of Muslim law in Northern India, who were approached by the Personal Assistant of the Commissioner of the Bhagalpur Division said: 'The Muslims here are protected by Christians, and there is no *jihad* in a country where protection is afforded.' The Mohammedan Literary Society, founded in Calcutta at about the time of the Wahabi trial of 1863 by Nawab Abdul Latif, had been opposing the Wahabi agitation. It was a pro-British organization, and lent support to the favourable interpretation. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan also participated in the discussion, and in a letter in the *Pioneer* dated April 14, 1871, he wrote: 'Mohammedans, be they dwellers in *Darul-Harb* or *Darul-Islam*, are prohibited from rebellion against a government which interferes in no way with the free worship of their religion.'

Already, before Mayo had propounded his new policy, men like Sir Syed, who had been loyal to the British, had been trying persist-

ently to wean Muslims away from the Wahabi influence. Sir Syed was one of those Muslims who had, at great personal risk and in spite of their having been condemned by learned doctors of Islam, rendered invaluable help to the British during the Great Revolt of 1857, and he continued to support the Government throughout the Wahabi agitation. Many Muslims had enlisted willingly in the British armies during the long northern wars, and even marched with those armies to Kabul and Kandahar. The Muslims fought for the British against the wild tribes on the debatable frontier lands between India and Afghanistan. During the 1857 Revolt also, there were many Muslims, as there were Hindus, among the Company's troops and informers. But the British authorities and chroniclers turned fiercely on Muslims, and held them mainly responsible for the Revolt, believing that its success would re-establish Muslim rule, rather than that of the Marathas or the Sikhs. The conciliatory policy of the British Government, after the failure of the Revolt and Queen Victoria's announcement that Indians 'will be freely and impartially admitted to offices in' Government services, may have brought about a change in the attitude of the Indian Government of the Queen, but the resumption of Wahabi activities hardened the Government's attitude towards the Muslims. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the discrimination against Muslims was applied vigorously in Bengal, for example, where the Wahabis had firmly entrenched themselves. In the territories now called Uttar Pradesh, which had been the main battleground of the Revolt, the Wahabis could not flourish, and Muslims were trusted with Government jobs, while in the north-eastern provinces, almost every Muslim was a suspect or a rebel.

The Muslim aristocracy of Bengal, which had looked at the Wahabi bravado with admiration or indifference, began now to realize that the long-drawn rebellion had completed their ruin; they had quite forfeited the confidence of their foreign rulers. They looked with dismay at the reversed order of things; Hindus monopolised the Government employ in every department. U.P. was far from Bengal, and they did not know that in this territory Persian and Urdu-knowing Muslim gentlemen, belonging to the old houses of the nobility, had been appointed as judicial officers, and that a knowledge of English was not insisted upon in their case. The discrimination exercised in Bengal, mainly because Persian

had ceased to be the official language and because the Wahabi movement had antagonised the British against the Muslims as a community, gave rise to a feeling of lamentation and grievance, which found expression in the columns of newspapers owned by Muslims.

The Calcutta Persian paper, *Durbin*, (dated July 14, 1869) expressed the Muslim sentiment thus: 'All sorts of employment, great and small, are being gradually snatched away from the Mohammedans, and bestowed on men of other races, particularly the Hindus. The Government is bound to look upon all classes of its subjects with an equal eye, yet the time has now come when it publicly singles out the Mohammedans in its Gazettes for exclusion from official posts. Recently, when several vacancies occurred in the office of the Sundarbans Commissioner, that official, in advertising them in the Government Gazette, stated that the appointments would be given to none but Hindus. In short, the Mohammedans have now sunk so low, that even when qualified for Government employ, they are studiously kept out of it by Government notifications. Nobody takes any notice of their helpless condition, and the higher authorities do not deign even to acknowledge their existence.'

Muslims of the old generation recalled how in a few decades, all State departments had been denuded of Muslim officials. Up to 1838, the Muslims in service were almost as numerous as the Hindus and the English put together, the proportion being six Muslims to seven Hindus and Englishmen together. Even as late as 1851, after English became the official language, the Muslims stoutly held their own, and equalled the combined number of English and Hindu pleaders, the reason being that an adequate number of English and Hindu pleaders, possessing knowledge of English or Persian, was not available. From 1851, the scene changed. Out of 240 Indians admitted from 1852 to 1868, 239 were Hindus, and only one was a Muslim. In Government offices, there was hardly a Muslim to be seen.

The Muslim aversion to the European system of education kept Muslims out of other new professions. They despised the English science of medicine, and did not offer themselves for training at medical colleges. In 1869, the year in which attention began to be drawn prominently to the 'pitiable plight' of the Muslims, out

of 104 Licentiates of Medicine, there were 98 Hindus, five Englishmen and only one Muslim. Among the graduates of Medicine in Calcutta University there were four doctors: three Hindus and one Englishman. For many years, the Muslims continued to lag behind the Hindus in all branches of learning and, consequently, in the State services, despite Mayo's policy of lifting the discrimination against them. Even after the Wahabi movement had died out, and the Muslim leaders of the pro-British school had constantly advised their co-religionists to take to European arts and sciences and English education, the orthodox *maulvis* continued to exercise a dominating influence over the Muslim mind: British jurisprudence as against Islamic law and the *Kazi* system; the European system of medicine as against the time-honoured *Tabib*, *Hakim* and *Jarrah*; exclusion of the Koran from the textbooks, and emphasis on secularism as against theocracy; substitution of Persian by English; the teaching of European arts and sciences, which were considered inferior by learned Muslims—all offended against the tradition of centuries. Hindus, in this respect, were distinctly different from Muslims. During the six hundred years of Muslim rule, they had made themselves remarkably adaptable. During Muslim rule, they not only learnt Persian and Urdu with equanimity but produced eminent scholars and poets. The subordinate revenue service and clerical jobs being open to them under the Muslim rulers, Hindus learnt the official language without allowing any thought to enter their minds that they were doing something offensive to their religion. The Hindu priesthood did not withhold Hindus from Persian schools and service under the Muslim rulers. With the Muslims, the case was different. Whether in Persia, or as invaders, rulers and administrators in India, they were never faced with an occasion to make a departure from the traditional way of life. When it came, the powerful influence of the *maulvis* applied a brake.

History so shaped itself in the half a century just surveyed, that Muslims grew jealous of Hindus, and Hindus became unfriendly to Muslims. Again, let it not be forgotten that the jealousy and unfriendliness did not extend to the Muslim and Hindu masses, but were restricted to the aristocracy and the middle classes of the two communities whose living depended on Government jobs and Government favours. Yet naturally, this minority shaped and

influenced the entire politics of the country. Muslim politics began, as did Indian politics (in practical result, Hindu politics) with the pertinent question: What was to be the representation of Muslims in the services? Would a time ever arrive when Muslims would have their share? Muslim leaders, in these circumstances, put a sensible question to their co-religionists: What should be their immediate interest in public life, education or politics?

CHAPTER IV
LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES

WHILE THE jealousy between the upper and middle classes of Muslims and Hindus over Government jobs was still persisting, a controversy, leading to another difference, appeared in Northern India in the 'seventies of the 19th century: whether the court language should be Urdu or Hindi. In Bengal, the controversy took different form: Muslim leaders demanded that the Bengali language, to be fit for Muslim students, should have an admixture of Persian rather than Sanskrit words. In order to understand these controversies, we must acquaint ourselves with the prevailing indigenous system of education in India, and see how it was being replaced by the British system.

In many parts of the country, Hindu indigenous schools were different from their Muslim counterparts. The former were attached to Hindu temples and the latter to Muslim mosques. There were no regular classes, each boy taking his lessons independently from the teacher. The pupils came to the private house of the teacher or to houses which suited the teacher's convenience. Quite often, the compounds of temples and mosques were used for teaching boys of the neighbourhood. At Hindu schools, the instruction included a course on religious books such as the Ramayana, and the Bhagavad-Gita. At Muslim schools, the Koran was a compulsory subject. The medium of instruction at the former was Sanskrit or Hindi, at the latter, Persian, Arabic or Urdu. There were secular schools, too, for both the communities, but in a Muslim secular school exclusion of the Koran was unthinkable. It differed from the religious one only in its emphasis: it paid greater attention to the teaching of other subjects.

In the Arabic schools, which existed in large towns only, the masters were generally the *maulvis* renowned for their knowledge of the Arabic language. The Koran schools were generally taught by *hafizs* (those who learnt the Koran by heart) and who could read and recite the Koran correctly. The Sanskrit schools were conducted by men highly reputed for their Sanskrit learning. The Hindi schools were ill-equipped: they had to content themselves

with teachers who knew a little of Hindi and arithmetic.

The most conspicuous feature of these schools was that while there was to be found a good number of Hindu students at the Arabic, Persian and Urdu schools, there were practically no Muslims at the Sanskrit and Hindi schools. The reason was apparent. Persian had been the official language for several centuries, and Urdu had replaced it in the whole of Northern India as the court language. Arabic enriched these two languages as a stone did a ring. Then, while Hindus took to enjoying and writing Persian and Urdu poetry, it was seldom that Muslims were attracted to Sanskrit and Hindi literature. A number of Muslims composed elegant verses in Sanskrit and Hindi, but while they can be counted on the fingers of the hand, the number of Hindu poets who wrote in Urdu runs into hundreds.¹

The indigenous system of education continued throughout the first half of the 19th century, in spite of the appearance of modern schools imparting English education. These schools were few and far between, and most children continued to receive the old system of education. Scrupulously cautious about the religious susceptibilities of the people, the British rulers did not disturb the indigenous schools, but opened their own in addition to these. The Government village schools, which made their appearance at the *tehsil* headquarters in pursuance of a Government resolution of February 9, 1850, were intended 'to enable the land-holders and cultivators to protect themselves from fraud on the part of the *patwaris* by teaching them to read and write, and to comprehend the system under which their rights are recorded, their payments entered, and arrears specified in the *patwaris*' books'. Incidentally, these schools gave an opportunity of bringing Hindu and Muslim students under one roof. The schools provided a course of instruction in Hindi, Urdu, accounts, mensuration of land according to the Indian system, geography, history, geometry, and other subjects. They did not teach English. Only schools in the towns taught English.

Muslim boys freely entered the Government-managed schools, and, in proportion to their population, did not lag behind Hindus; sometimes their number proportionately exceeded that of Hindu students. According to the educational returns for 1880-81 of the

¹ Above paragraphs are based on the evidence tendered by prominent Hindus and Muslims before the Education Commission, 1882.

North-West Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), there were 769 Hindus and 112 Muslims in colleges; for 'anglo-vernacular' middle schools, the figures were respectively 1,70,478 and 32,619.

Yet, the assumption persisted among leading Muslims even in Northern India that Muslims generally were not taking advantage of English education, the reason being that Muslim landlords and aristocrats considered it derogatory to their position to allow their children to associate with commoners at educational institutions. The Hindu landlords exhibited the same mentality, and preferred to deprive their children of modern education. But rich Hindus of the towns did not join the boycott of the aristocrats.

That Muslim commoners went in for English education as a result of the persuasive efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, which had started in the early 'seventies, is not a fact. There were three colleges and nine 'anglo-vernacular' schools in the North-West Provinces in 1843, educating about 2,000 boys. Of these pupils 1,598 were Hindus, 385 Muslims and the rest Europeans or Eurasians.² Nor were Muslim commoners averse to receiving secular education with Hindus. They mixed freely in Government schools, and also joined those that were started by Hindu charitable institutions. As far back as 1818, a Hindu philanthropist, named Jai Narain Ghosal, started at Benares a charitable school which taught English, Persian, Hindi and Bengali. Muslim students freely entered it.³ In the course of time, the religious schools were relegated to the background, and secular schools became more popular among the Muslims as well as among Hindus.

Curiously, the Muslim aristocracy remained ignorant of this development, and several Muslim witnesses grievously asserted in their evidence before the Education Commission of 1882, that compared to their Hindu brethren, Muslims were backward in education and fewer in numbers at schools and colleges. They were surprised when they were told by a member of the Commission that 'according to the census returns of 1881 the percentage of children under instruction to total population is larger respectively for the Mohammedan than for the Hindu community'.⁴ The

² *Report of the Education Commission, 1882* (North-West Provinces), p. 8.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴ Appendix to the *Report of the Education Commission* (North-West Provinces Provincial Committee, 1884). Evidence of Sayyid Ali Hassan, Deputy Collector, Bareilly.

evidence of one Rev. B. H. Badley brought home this fact more precisely. He said that while the Muslims formed about 10 per cent of the population in the North-West Provinces, Muslim students at schools and colleges numbered about one-fourth of the total.⁵

For several decades, the aversion of the Muslim aristocracy to the new system of education was interpreted as an aversion of the entire Muslim community. There was no design in it. Muslim leaders had close association only with aristocratic classes, and the sight of young boys moving about aimlessly set them thinking. The causes of the indifference were investigated. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan believed that the 'aversion of the Muslim community' was 'due to the fact that when in the reigns of the Caliphs of Baghdad the Greek sciences of logic, philosophy, astronomy, and geography were translated into Arabic, they were accepted by the whole Mohammedan world without hesitation, and with slight modifications and alterations, they gradually found their way into the religious books of the Mohammedans, so that in course of time these sciences were identified with their very religion, and acquired a position by no means inferior to that of the sacred traditions of faith'.⁶ Again, according to Sir Syed, European learning, 'founded on the results of modern investigations, differed widely in principle from these Greek dogmas, and the Mohammedans certainly believed that the philosophy and logic taught in the English language was at variance with the tenets of Islam, while the modern sciences of geography and astronomy were universally regarded, and are still regarded by many, as altogether incompatible with the Mohammedan religion. As regards literature, it must be admitted that it is a subject which is always more or less connected with the religion of the nation to which it belongs; and, such being the case, the Mohammedans, as a matter of course, viewed this branch of knowledge too, in anything but a favourable light. Their antipathy was carried so far, indeed, that they began to look upon the study of English by a Mussalman as a little less than the embracing of Christianity, and the result was that Mohammedans generally kept aloof from the advantages offered by Government institutions.'⁷

'Practical steps' for the spread of education in the 'Muslim

⁵ *Report of the Education Commission, 1882 (North-West Provinces)*, p. 151.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 292 (Evidence of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

community' began in 1871, in which year the Government of India adopted a resolution through which the attention of the local governments was invited to the subject. Calcutta was the headquarters of the Government, and the Muslims of Bengal were really educationally backward. The Muslims of Bengal had for many years been under the Wahabi influence, and the Government of India's resolution was in pursuance of a policy of appeasement of the Muslim sentiment. The frustrated Muslim community of Bengal badly needed to be helped to catch up with Hindus, and the realization embodied in the resolution came none too soon. In 1880-81, as against 36,686 Hindu pupils at the English High Schools, there were only 363 Mohammedans; at English middle schools, the figures respectively were 29,469 and 4,346.⁸ These figures naturally shocked Muslims, for they were more numerous in Bengal than Hindus.

But the Government resolution received a warmer welcome in Uttar Pradesh, and leaders like Sir Syed applied themselves heart and soul to the task of Muslim education. For several years, Sir Syed had been persuading his co-religionists to take to English education, and in 1871 he took a positive step by appointing a committee to investigate the causes of the aversion of Muslims to English education, and to suggest means by which their attitude could be changed. The committee's findings nearly tallied with the picture he had formed in his own mind.

He gathered around him a body of influential Muslim gentlemen, and opened a high school for Muslim boys at Aligarh in 1875. Within three years, the school was raised to a second-grade college. The original object of some of the supporters, according to Sir Syed himself, was to confine the college to the Muslims, but 'so much goodwill, sympathy, and generosity were displayed by the Hindu nobility and gentry' that the college was declared open to Hindu students also.⁹ The Aligarh College, though similar in courses of instruction to other colleges, differed from them in one respect: it gave instruction in Islam and encouraged Muslim boys

⁸ Education Commission 1882 (The Bengal Provincial Committee Report), pp. 106-7.

⁹ Letter of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to the Director of Public Instruction North-West Provinces, dated June 1881, quoted in the *Report of the Education Commission*, p. 51.

to visit the mosques regularly for prayers, Sunnis and Shias praying separately. Sir Syed's efforts succeeded admirably, and boys of Muslim aristocracy from distant parts of the provinces began to seek admission in the Aligarh College. Besides the educational institutions conducted by Christian missionaries, there was no college which combined secular education with compulsory religious instruction. This combination greatly assuaged Muslim antagonism towards English education. (The term 'Muslim' here refers to the Muslim aristocracy.)

But if Muslim commoners were ahead of Hindus in education, though the Muslim aristocracy held aloof, why was the number of Muslim graduates in arts and sciences strikingly low compared to that of Hindus? In 1878, Sir Syed had a comparative statement prepared for the preceding twenty years. There were 3,155 Hindus as against 57 Muslims holding graduate and post-graduate degrees in law, civil engineering, arts, medicine, etc.¹⁰ Muslims were absolutely unrepresented among doctors of law, law honours graduates, civil engineers, doctors of medicine and honours graduates in medicine. Out of 1,373 bachelors of arts, there were only thirty Muslims; the proportion of masters in arts was 326 to 5. For an explanation of this paradox, one has again to turn to that phase of history which professionally distinguished the upper and middle classes of Muslims from their Hindu counterparts. Most Muslims of these classes were landlords; most Hindus were businessmen, traders, contractors, etc. While the former imbibed the aristocracy of the Muslim rulers, the latter had no prejudices, social or religious, and freely sent their boys for higher education. The poorer classes of Muslims, who educated their children up to the high school and intermediate level, could not pay for higher education. In paying capacity, only the landed aristocracy of Muslims matched the rich Hindus of the towns. The sense of preservation of the respectability of their order kept Hindu landlords away from English education longer than it did the Muslim aristocracy. In Uttar Pradesh, both Hindus and Muslims were far behind the Hindus of Bengal in higher education; therefore, while the comparative statement gave a cause of grievance to the rich Muslim houses of Bengal, the Muslims of Uttar Pradesh had little to complain of. Persian and Urdu-knowing Muslim gentlemen were sub-

¹⁰ *Report of the Education Commission, 1882, p. 291.*

ordinate judges even in the last quarter of the 19th century; this was not so in Bengal. When a Muslim of U.P. ridiculed English education, he was conscious of the fact that he was missing little by ignoring it. Early in the 'eighties, a Hindu inspector of schools suggested to two Muslim subordinate judges (of U.P.), both ignorant of English, that they should put their boys in an English school. 'They will be spoilt', the judges argued; and their argument was that from the little they had heard of English, they concluded that the English language lacked the delicacy of Persian and Urdu. How jarring, they said, it was to the ears to hear 'tor, tor' every now and then, as in 'collector, administrator, debtor, waiter'.

Therefore, it was clear to Muslim reformers that the removal of bigotry, conservatism and prejudice was a prerequisite to the spread of higher education among Muslims. English was gradually becoming the official language all over the country, and the sooner this realization dawned upon the Muslims the better. Propaganda was disseminated by Sir Syed and his colleagues through journals and public speeches. Sir Syed even exhorted Muslims to enter missionary institutions, telling them that the study of the Bible did not offend Islam; on the contrary, 'it affords a valuable help in acquiring a knowledge of English literature'.¹¹

While Northern India had in Sir Syed an ardent reformer, Bengal, whose need was greater, never possessed one. A change of attitude was, no doubt, brought about by the Muslim leadership of Bengal, but it was a change from anti-British to anti-Hindu. Hunter's finding in his *Indian Mussalmans* became their text. Hunter had observed: 'The truth is that our system of public instruction ignores the three most powerful instincts of the Mussalman heart. In the first place, it conducts education in the vernacular of Bengal, a language which the educated Mohammedans despise, and by means of Hindu teachers, whom the whole Mohammedan community hates. The Bengal schoolteacher talks his own dialect and a vile Urdu, the latter of which is to him an acquired language, almost as much as it is to ourselves. Moreover his gentle and timid character unfits him to maintain order among Mussalman boys.'¹²

Hunter had in mind those Muslims of Bengal whose mother-

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹² Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

tongue was Persian or Urdu, and who belonged to Persia or Northern India, and not to Bengal. These Muslims assumed the leadership of the Muslim masses, who, being converts, were the children of the soil and whose mother-tongue was the same as that of Bengali Hindus. It was this fact which the Government of Bengal had in mind when it observed in its resolution dated November 19, 1881: 'The ordinary primary schools of the country are believed to be in general as fully suited to the requirements of Mohammedan as of Hindu pupils, the vernacular of the former being in nearly all cases that of the people among whom they live; but the Lieutenant-Governor is glad to observe that the practice of subsidising Mohammedan Maktabas on condition of their teaching the vernacular and a little arithmetic in addition to the Koran, has been extended with successful results.' Bengal, at that time, had Bengali as the court language, and that was the justification for emphasis on Bengali; and since Muslims, under the Wahabis, had developed too much attachment to religion, complete indifference to religious education was considered inexpedient.

Ameer Ali, one of the foremost Muslim leaders of Bengal whose forefathers belonged to Persia, demanded in his evidence before the Education Commission that 'Urdu should be to the Mohammedans what Bengali is to the Hindus of Bengal, and Arabic and Persian should take the place of Sanskrit'.¹³ Another Muslim leader, Nawab Abdul Luteef, Khan Bahadur, taking his inspiration from the above quoted paragraph from Hunter, said that the ordinary Bengali school was unsuited to the requirements of the Mohammedan peasantry. 'There is too much of Hindu influence. The *guru* in almost all cases, is a Hindu; so are many of the pupils, and there is not much of sympathy between them on the one hand and the Mohammedan pupils on the other.'¹⁴ He suggested that the language of the school in which Muslim boys might be able to study, must be a mean between the highly Sanskritised Bengali of the Hindu school on the one hand, and the Muslim Bengali *patois* on the other, which was thickly intermingled with Persian and Arabic terms. Bengali, laden with Persian and Arabic terms, was, in fact, the local dialect of the Bengali Muslim aristocrats of foreign origin. But since they were the religious preceptors of the

¹³ Education Commissioner 1882, p. 222.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

Muslim masses of Bengal, they had acquired a right to speak for them. Abdul Luteef, however, wanted a different system of education for the upper and middle classes of Muslims. In order that they might be 'respected in their own society as educated men', they 'should possess a thorough knowledge of Urdu, a fair knowledge of Persian, and, if possible, some acquaintance with Arabic'. He desired Urdu to be recognized as their medium of instruction. He made no secret of his reason: 'The middle and upper classes of Mohammedans are descended from the original conquerors of Bengal, or the pious, the learned and the brave men who were attracted from Arabia, Persia, and Central Asia to the services of the Mohammedan rulers of Bengal, or from the principal officers of Government, who, after the absorption of the province into the empire of Delhi, were appointed and sent from the Imperial court, and many of whom permanently settled in these parts.'

Whether the Hindu teachers of the Bengali schools were too saturated with Hinduism or whether the Muslim leadership was without cause prejudiced against them, it is difficult to say at this distance of time: there is no evidence clearly supporting one assertion or the other. On behalf of the Hindus, it might be said that the natural language of the converts should be the language of their forebears; Muslims might argue that for a Muslim to be true to his faith, a background of Arabic, Persian and Urdu is necessary. Whatever be the reasons, the separatist tendencies, which arose from the jealousy over jobs, received strength from a public discussion as to the system of education that would suit the Muslims. Separate teachers were demanded for Muslim boys. Ameer Ali's argument was that the Muslim English teacher would obviate the difficulty under which the Muslim students laboured 'owing to the Hindu teachers in Bengal not knowing Urdu'. Mohammedan *maulvis* were wanted for district schools to teach Persian and Arabic. These tendencies, whether communalist or religious, brought forth separate schools. They became an accomplished feature of the social and political life, and a contemporary eminent Hindu politician and reformer, Rai Rajendralala Mitra (LL.D., CIE), made an implicit admission of this fact while expressing himself on the scheme of self-government. He said: 'Each village or a group of villages, having a school should have a panchayat; and it may be necessary at times (but not often) to have both a Hindu and a

Mohammedan panchayat in the same village where there are separate schools for the two classes of persons.’¹⁵

At about the same time, that is in the 'seventies and 'eighties, there was a conflict between protagonists of Hindi and Urdu, dividing the learned men and social institutions of the two communities. The Persianised form of Hindi or Hindustani is known as Urdu, a name derived from the Urdu-e-Mu'alla, or royal military bazaar outside Delhi Palace, where it took its rise, during the Khilji period. Muslim foreign troops, settled in and around Delhi, had to learn the local dialect for intercourse with the local people. Allahuddin Khilji had a book prepared in which Persian and Arabic equivalents of common Hindi words were collected. The book was named *Khalikbari* and numerous copies of it were distributed among Muslim troops and others. It was impossible to expect these foreigners to speak a one hundred per cent chaste Hindi, and often the dialect they spoke, which later came to be known as Urdu, contained many Persian or Arabic words. For some five hundred years, Urdu remained just a spoken language. With Persian words scattered through it, Urdu later became a literary language, and produced a galaxy of poets. Even when Urdu had developed a beautiful style of expression, there were some Muslim *littérateurs* who employed Hindi laden with Sanskrit words for their works. Persian words, freely thrown into the spoken dialect, became current coin, and as if by right, found their way into Sanskritised Hindi works of Hindu poets, now occupying the topmost position in the world of Hindi literature. Urdu employed Persian characters, and this is what pre-eminently distinguished it from Hindi whose script was Devanagari. Urdu developed its own elegant style of poetry.

But, until after the collapse of the Mughal Empire, Urdu had no access to the public offices and courts. It was only in the 19th century that Urdu began to replace Persian, and reached the highest pitch when Bahadur Shah read out his own Urdu verses before his court poets. With Government patronage, Urdu rose in importance over Hindi, and many Hindus, descendants of officials, preferred to acquire a proficiency in the former only because it helped to get Government jobs. Urdu was the court language throughout Northern India when the British seized power. And the British

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

deliberately retained it as such in the interests of continuity.

The official position of Urdu was a damper to Hindi ; but the Hindus never abandoned it. In fact, the assumed superiority of Urdu provoked Hindi protagonists to work harder for the progress of their own language. They murmured that Hindi, in an Indian character, and not Urdu written in Persian, should be the court language. In the 'seventies, these murmurs developed into noisy protests. In Bihar, which then formed part of Bengal, the Government of Bengal issued orders in 1873 for the use of Hindi and the 'Nagari character in the courts and offices of the Patna, Bhagalpur, and Chhota Nagpur divisions, and directed that all processes, notifications and proclamations should be made in Hindi ; the official records should be kept in Hindi ; petitions should be received at the option of the presenters in the Hindi or Urdu character ; a knowledge of the Hindi character should be insisted on in the case of police and ministerial officers. These orders having practically proved a dead letter, reminders were issued in April 1874 and July 1875. Again, there was no co-operation forthcoming ; petitions, police orders, diaries, reports and registers, as well as collectorate and other official papers continued generally to be written in Persian character, and even forms of notices, etc., printed in Hindi, were filled up in Persian. Therefore, in April 1880, Sir Ashley, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, finding that no real advance had been made in giving effect to the wishes of Government, came to the conclusion that the changes enjoined by Government would never be thoroughly introduced until 'Nagari was made the character for exclusive use in official documents in Bihar. He accordingly directed that this character should be exclusively used from January 1881, and that the issue from the courts or the reception by the courts of any document in Persian character, except as exhibits, should be absolutely forbidden. Police officers were also warned that if they could not read and write the 'Nagari character by January 1881, they would be replaced by those who could. An inquiry showed that those who insisted on ignoring the Government orders were ministerial officers, pleaders, *mukhtars* and touters, both Hindu and Muslim, who monopolised all power and had virtually made these offices hereditary.¹⁶

¹⁶ Based on the note of Radhika Prosunno Mukherjea before the Education Commission, 1882, p. 399.

These orders, and the doggedness with which they were pursued, antagonised Muslims against the Hindus at whose instance Urdu had been displaced. Angry representations were made to the Government, and the grievance was ventilated whenever an opportunity offered itself.

In Uttar Pradesh also, the battle for Hindi did not succeed, and this gave many Hindus a cause of grievance which they nurtured for several decades. But the differences between the two communities grew quite as acutely as they did in Bihar. The Hindi-Urdu controversy arose in 1883, with an innocent-looking suggestion that the character of the court language should be changed from Persian to Devanagari ; the replacement of Urdu by Hindi was not specifically mentioned. But the intention was obvious, and the entire Muslim official world arrayed itself against the proposal. The public platform and newspapers were invoked by the protagonists of the two languages, and the agitation seemed to draw a demarcation line between educated Hindus and Muslims. Arguments and figures were collected in support of the case for Hindi : that 71 per cent of the boys at schools, as stated in the North-West Provinces Education Report for 1873-4, 'spontaneously chose to be taught in Hindi in preference to Urdu'; that Urdu, being the spoken and written language of a minority in the towns, was unintelligible even to Hindi-knowing educated Hindus ; the Hindi-knowing persons had to pay a few annas to learn the contents of court summons, and a rupee or a half for writing out a small petition ; that in all countries of the world, the language and the character of the country were the language and character of the offices and courts ; that Hindi and the Devanagari script were easier to learn and that a change-over would cause little difficulty to Muslims ; that with Urdu as the official language, Muslims monopolised Government employment ; that even the Director of Public Instruction in the North-Western Provinces (he was an Englishman named Griffith) observed in his report for 1877-78 that 'as a rule Hindi is the true vernacular of the province and is used by the rural population with greater or less purity according to the greater or less influence of Mohammedan rule and colonisation'.

Two orders of the local Government issued in 1878 sharpened the edge of the agitation for Hindi. One said that the possession of the middle-class certificate was a *sine qua non* in getting an appoint-

ment ; another laid down that a certificate would not be given even if the candidate had passed the examination creditably, if his second language was not Urdu. This was construed as a conspiracy against Hindi designed to discourage its study. Surprise was expressed as to why Urdu was taught in villages wholly peopled by Hindus, and a demand was put forward that instruction must be given in Hindi where the number of Hindu boys was 60 per cent of the total.

Muslims of several towns—Aligarh, Bulandshahr, Roorkee, Meerut—conjointly represented that 'the Persian character has been commonly used by every class of people in India during hundreds of years. Urdu has been for two centuries and a half the native tongue in these provinces. 'Nagari character will take longer time to write.'¹⁷ The Hindu leadership of the Hindi movement countered the argument on the basis of their helplessness during the time of the Muslim rulers who had reason to adopt a foreign script.

Muslim learnt their Persian alphabet and Koran at their own schools; when they came to the secular schools, they chose Urdu as medium of instruction, and with them a fair sprinkling of Hindus did so also. But nothing alienated the two communities towards each other as did the Hindi-Urdu controversy. (Again the word 'communities' is used in its limited sense to mean the Muslim aristocracy and middle classes, and the upper middle classes of Hindus.)

In the Punjab, Hindus were far behind Muslims in the teaching profession, as Muslims were in Bengal, and when Hindus grew conscious of this fact and swarmed the profession, Muslims became apprehensive of losing what they had enjoyed for a long time. The Hindu consciousness grew in volume when pointed attention was drawn by Captain Fuller, Director of Public Instruction, in the Education Report for the Punjab for 1860-61. The Report said: 'The preponderance of Muslims among teachers, who are being trained in these institutions, is very apparent; there being 334 of them to 111 of Hindus and six of other castes. There seems no way of equalising the proportion very readily. Except in the Ambala circle, vernacular education is in the hands of the Muslims, and we cannot supersede them, so long as they retain their popularity.

¹⁷ Education Commission, p. 421.

District officers, however, might prepare the way for a gradual change by encouraging more Hindus to qualify as teachers, and appointing them to schools where the residents are not too strongly prejudiced in favour of Muslim instructors.'

Fuller's observation coincided with the spread of the Wahabi influence in the Punjab; during the 'sixties, most educated Muslims in the Punjab, as elsewhere, were suspected of alliance with Wahabis.¹⁸ But, in the absence of direct evidence, one can only conjecture that Hindus were thought of at that particular time as safer persons for the teaching profession. If a generous interpretation is put on the observation in the annual report, it may as well be believed that there was a genuine desire to extend opportunities of employment to Hindus. In any case, the increasing number of Hindus in the teaching profession and the corresponding decrease in the employment of Muslims, inevitably caused bitterness among educated persons. In the Punjab, the cause of difference between the two communities was economic and not cultural or sentimental, because in spite of the ascendancy of Hindus in the sphere of education, Urdu continued to be the medium of instruction, and Hindi remained practically unknown in educational institutions until the appearance of the Arya Samaj influence.

In the ultimate analysis, jobs were the cause of differences over language and script also.

¹⁸ An Old Punjabi (An English District Officer in the Punjab). *The Punjab and North-West Frontier of India* (Published about 1878 ?), pp. 143-6.

CHAPTER V
SIR SYED AHMED AND JUSTICE
AMEER ALI*

DURING THE latter half of the 19th century several Muslim leaders made it their mission in life to promote education among Muslims and agitate for a share for Muslims in Government services. The leader of the former movement was Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and of the latter, Ameer Ali. The fame of Sir Syed overshadowed that of Ameer Ali. But Ameer Ali's contribution to Muslim politics is more important and more powerful. 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.

According to his biographer, Col. Graham, Sir Syed was descendant from Hazrat (Lord) Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed in the 36th degree. Being persecuted by the Omniades, his ancestors took refuge in Damghan and finally settled down in Hamadan and Herat. It was in the reign of Shahjahan that the members of the family came to India, and were appointed to posts of trust and responsibility by that Emperor.

Sir Syed's childhood and youth were spent at the Mughal court. There he saw 'the whole of falseness of the Padishah's position, the fiction of his phantom authority and the power of the British. In 1837, then a youth of 20, he refused to remain with the Padishah, much to the displeasure of his relatives, and took service under the British authorities.' At first he was a clerk; later he became a *Munsif* (a judicial officer of lower rank). He did not know English, but was otherwise a man of letters, and produced several valuable works. His *Archaeological History of the Ruins of Delhi* won him a Fellowship of the Royal Asiatic Society. He was so enamoured of the British that Indians to him were 'animals' compared with Englishmen. During the Revolt of 1857-58, he chose to support the British, and in doing so invited the wrath of his co-religionists.

* Biographical sketch of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan taken from Graham's *Life and Works of Sir Syed Ahmed*.

Biographical sketch of Ameer Ali taken from Wilfred C. Smith's *Modern Islam in India*.

For his services, he won high praises and substantial material reward from the Government. A Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces said of him: 'No man ever gave nobler proofs of conspicuous courage and loyalty to the British Government than were given by him in 1857: no language that I could use would be worthy of the devotion he showed.'¹ He was granted a special pension of Rs. 200 per month, which was to continue throughout the life of his eldest son, and he also received symbolic rewards in kind. In 1869, he has awarded the Third Class of the Star of India. Another reward given him the same year was a sum of £ 250 per annum for two years 'in consideration of the services during the Mutiny'.

Sir Syed carried his loyalty to the British to the extent of criticising the Government for not using the Hindu-Muslim differences to ensure the loyalty of the Indian army. In his *Causes of the Mutiny*, he observes: 'The English army system in India has always been faulty, and one great fault was the paucity of English troops. When Nadir Shah conquered Khorasan, and became master of the two kingdoms of Persia and Afghanistan, he invariably kept the two armies at equal strength. The one consisted, or rather was composed of Persians and Kuzul Bashis, and the other was composed of Afghans. When the Persian army attempted to rise, the Afghan army was at hand to quell the rebellion, and vice versa. The English did not follow this precedent in India. The sepoy army was no doubt faithful in its day and served the Government well, but how could Government feel certain that it would never act contrary to its orders? Government certainly did put the two antagonistic races into the same regiment, but constant intercourse had done its work, and the two races in regiment had almost become one. It is but natural and to be expected, that a feeling of friendship and brotherhood must spring up between the men of a regiment, constantly brought together as they are. They consider themselves as one body; and thus it was that the difference which exists between Hindus and Mohammedans had, in these regiments, been almost entirely smoothed away. If a portion of the regiment engaged in anything, all the rest joined. If separate regiments of Hindus and separate regiments of Mohammedans had been raised, this feeling of brotherhood could not have arisen.'²

¹ Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 19. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 54-5.

Sir John (afterwards Lord) Lawrence, who took an active part in putting down the Revolt, and who was later appointed Viceroy of India, said almost the same thing as Sir Syed: 'Among the defects of the pre-Mutiny army, unquestionably the worst, and the one that operated most fatally against us, was the brotherhood and homogeneity of the Bengal army, and for this purpose the remedy is counterpoise; firstly, the great counterpoise of the Europeans, and secondly of the native races.' A Royal Commission, known as the Peel Commission, was appointed to make suggestions as to how the policy should be given effect to, and in 1861, the army was re-organized. Various communal groups were so arranged that they retained their tribal or communal loyalties and at the same time balanced the characteristics and influence of one another.³

Sir Syed's suggestion fitted in with a series of such suggestions which had earlier emanated from eminent British rulers. Monstuart Elphinstone, a Governor of Bombay, suggested in his Minute dated May 14, 1859: '*Divide et Impera* was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours.'⁴ Earlier, in 1843, the Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, had given warning to London (in a despatch to the Duke of Wellington, dated June 18) and suggested the use of communalism to preserve imperialist rule: 'I cannot close my eyes to the belief that that race (Mohammedan) is fundamentally hostile to us and our true policy is to reconcile the Hindus.'⁵

It will be interesting to contrast how later political developments necessitated passing the reconciliation to Muslims. The Secretary of State for India, Lord Olivier, said in a letter to *The Times* (London) dated July 10, 1926: 'No one with any close acquaintance of Indian affairs will be prepared to deny that on the whole there is a predominant bias in British officials in India in favour of the Muslim community, partly on the ground of closer sympathy but more largely as a make-weight against Hindu nationalism.'

For many years, far-sighted Englishmen had been warning the British rulers that Indian unity would prove disastrous to their rule. Sir John Seeley, writing in *The Expansion of England*, ob-

³ Nirad C. Chowdhry, *Defence of India*, quoted in Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan, *Communal Triangle in India*, p. 54.

⁴ Monstuart Elphinstone's Minute dated May 14, 1859, quoted in R. P. Dutt, *India Today*, p. 389.

⁵ Parulekar, *The Future of Islam in India, Asia*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 11 (November 1928), p. 874.

served that 'so long as the populations have not formed the habit of criticising their Government, whatever it be, and of rebelling against it, the Government of India from England is possible, and there is nothing miraculous about it. But if the state of things should alter, if by any chance the population should be welded into a single nationality, then I do not say we ought to begin to fear for our dominion; I say we ought to cease at once to hope it.'⁶

Therefore, naturally, Sir Syed's suggestion was received by the British rulers with gratitude. He was not popular, however, with Muslims of the old conservative school. His attitude in favour of the British and the British system of education antagonised many learned doctors of Islam. He received numerous anonymous letters in which the writers said they had sworn on the Koran to take his life. But threats did not change the course of his life. He was an ardent religious reformer, and naturally his reforms came seriously into conflict with the prevalent Muslim conservatism. His interpretation of Islam was thoroughly compatible with progress—progress that the British connection with India was ushering in. In his journal *Tahzib-al-Akhlaq*, he vigorously attacked the social conservatism which rejected any advance or change, and the type of religion which upheld this.

He organized, in 1864, the Translation Society, later renamed as the Aligarh Scientific Society. Mainly Muslim Government servants, and some English officials, were members of the society. Brick by brick he built the edifice of the co-operation of the Muslim aristocracy with the British and its liking for English education. When his high school at Aligarh was being raised to a second-grade college, the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, was invited and presented an address, in which the founders of the institution expressed these sentiments: 'The aims of the college are to educate our fellow countrymen in order that they may be able to appreciate the benevolence of the British; to make the Muslims of India worthy and useful subjects of the British Crown; to inspire them with loyalty which flows not from a servile submission to a foreign rule but from a sincere appreciation of the benevolence of a good government . . . these are the aims of the founders of the college.'

About the time the Aligarh Muslim College took birth, Indian nationalism had mildly begun to express itself, especially in Bengal

⁶ See p. 270.

and Maharashtra. Sir Syed's utterances caused hopes to be entertained that in him this nationalism could find sagacity and leadership of a high order. He once said: 'Remember that Hindus and Mussalmans are religious words; otherwise, Hindus, Mussalmans and even Christians who inhabit this country, all constitute one nation. Now the time is gone when only on account of difference in religion the inhabitants of a country should be regarded as of two different nations.'⁷ At another time he said, addressing a gathering of Hindus in the Punjab: 'The word "Hindu" that you have used for yourself is in my opinion not correct, because that is not in my view the name of a religion. Every inhabitant of Hindustan can call himself a Hindu. I am, therefore, sorry that you do not regard me as a Hindu although I too am an inhabitant of Hindustan.'⁸ Hindus, too, looked upon him as a national leader, and presented him with addresses of welcome.

His sense of self-respect was painfully hurt when discrimination was observed between Europeans and Indians. On the occasion of the Durbar at Agra, he walked out because in the seating arrangement the chairs for Europeans were placed on the platform and those for Indians down below. In the *Tahzib-al-Akhlaq*, he wrote: 'No nation can acquire honour and respect so long as it does not attain equality with the ruling race and does not participate in the Government of its own country. Other nations can have no respect for Mussalmans and Hindus for their holding the position of clerks or other similar petty posts. Rather, that Government also cannot be looked upon with respect which does not give to its subjects due respect. Respect will be commanded only when my countrymen will be holding positions equal to those of the ruling race.'⁹

In 1877, he associated himself with the agitation started by Surendranath Banerjea's Indian Association demanding equal opportunities and facilities for Indians to enter the Indian Civil Service. (His association was limited to the speech he made at a public meeting at Aligarh over which he presided in response to the request of Banerjea, while the latter was in that city during his tour of Northern India.)

⁷ Tufail Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 283 quoted from *Majmua-e-Lectures of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (Urdu)*, p. 167.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 283, quoted from *Safarnama Punjab*, Sir Syed Ahmed (Urdu), p. 138.

⁹ Quoted in Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided*, p. 53.

But, as we shall see in the next chapter, Sir Syed stayed away from active politics; indeed, after the birth of the Indian National Congress, he virtually grew hostile to Indian nationalism, and advised Muslims to hold aloof from political agitations.

Unlike Sir Syed, Ameer Ali first appeared to be gravitating towards nationalist politics, but later he devoted himself exclusively to the promotion of Muslim interests. Ameer Ali's forefathers were in the employ of the Persian kings. One of them, Mohammed Sadiq Khan, held high office under Shah Abbas II. One of Sadiq Khan's descendants, Ahmed Fazil, a soldier by profession, joined the army of Nadir Shah, when the latter invaded India in 1739. After the departure of the Persian monarch, Ahmed Fazil chose to remain in India taking service under the Emperor of Delhi. When the Marathas sacked the capital, Ahmed Fazil's son fled and took refuge in Oudh. There, under the Nawab Wazir, his sons rose to distinction, and one of them, Saadat Ali, established himself in Bengal shortly before the annexation of Oudh. Ameer Ali was Saadat Ali's son. Saadat Ali was a liberal-minded man, and gave his sons an English education. Ameer Ali took his M.A. degree in history and political economy. He joined the Inner Temple and was called to the Bar in 1873. He formed, in 1877, the Central National Mohammedan Association, and remained its secretary for a quarter of a century. In 1890, he rose to the position of a High Court Judge, the second Mohammedan to be honoured. He retired in 1904, and chose to settle in England with his English wife. In 1909, he was sworn in to the Privy Council, the first Indian to be honoured with that position.

In the first few years, Ameer Ali's National Mohammedan Association concerned itself with petty social affairs, but by 1882, it developed the ambition of becoming the champion of Muslim interest in a larger sphere. During that year it adopted the following as its objects :

The present backward condition of the Indian Muslims is due partly to internal and partly to external causes. The disintegration of Mohammedan society, the decadence of their principal families and the general ruin which has overtaken all classes of the Mussalman community, combined with the absence of any means to represent to Government faithfully and honestly, the

views of the Mussalmans of India, have placed them in a most disadvantageous position, as regards political influence and power, relatively to the other Indian communities. It may safely be affirmed that until the establishment of the Central National Mohammedan Association, there existed no political body among the Indian Mohammedans capable of representing to the Government, from a loyal but independent standpoint, the hopes and aspirations, the legitimate wants and requirements of the large body of Muslims in this country, who by their number and homogeneity constitute such an important factor in all questions concerning the welfare of India. The few Mohammedan societies which had been formed here and there were, in the main, literary and scientific, having for their object, the promotion of a desire for European knowledge among the Mohammedans. The absence of a really representative political institution occasionally forced the Government to consult these societies upon questions affecting the Mohammedan community of particular localities. The opinions thus elicited hardly represented however the views of the leaders of thought among them, who were alive to the exigencies of the times. The factions and cliques into which the Mohammedan community was divided not only prevented their acting in concert with their Hindu and Christian fellow-subjects on general questions of public policy, but absolutely precluded the possibility of collective action in the way of social progress and reform. In order to obviate the difficulties under which the Mohammedans have laboured hitherto, the National Mohammedan Association was instituted four years ago for the protection and conservation of the general interests of the community.

The Association has been formed with the object of promoting by all legitimate and constitutional means the well-being of the Mussalmans of India. It is founded essentially upon the principle of strict and loyal adherence to the British Crown. Deriving its inspiration from the noble traditions of the past, it proposes to work in harmony with Western culture and the progressive tendencies of the age. It aims at the political regeneration of the Indian Mohammedans by the moral revival and by constant endeavours to obtain from Government a recognition of their just and reasonable claims.

The Association does not, however, overlook the fact that the welfare of the Mohammedans is intimately connected with the well-being of the other races of India. It does not therefore exclude from its scope the advocacy and furtherance of the public interests of the people of this country at large.

It is hoped that the Association, whilst working in the cause of the Mussalmans, will also be able to promote and conserve the interests of their non-Muslim compatriots. It is also hoped that the Association may, by conveying and interpreting to the Government, the wants, feelings and opinions of a considerable portion of Her Majesty's Indian subjects, prove in no small measure a useful auxiliary towards establishing upon a solid basis the permanent stability of beneficent rule in India.¹⁰

Ameer Ali's utterances did not betray any feeling of communalism, and therefore one wonders why he did not make Banerjea's Indian Association the medium of his activities. There is no clear explanation of this, but it appears logical to infer that since the benefits of employment in higher ranks, expected to flow from the Indian Association's agitation, were to go almost exclusively to Hindus and not to Muslims, Ameer Ali believed that the Muslims, being backward educationally, needed a different organization, one which could apply itself to the task of opening educational institutions and agitating for a share for Muslims in Government appointments.

Unlike Sir Syed, Ameer Ali travelled far and wide, disseminating the aims of his Association, opening its branches and exhorting Muslims to unite. He travelled all the way from Calcutta to Karachi to impress on local Muslims the necessity of establishing a college of their own, 'where the Mohammedan youths could receive religious and moral training equally with secular education'.¹¹ His efforts succeeded, and Karachi gave itself a Muslim college, through the zealous work of Hassan Ali. By personal visits and correspondence, he had as many as 53 branches of his Association opened in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, the Punjab, the U.P. and Bihar.

¹⁰ *The Rules and Objects of the National Mohammedan Association with a List of the Members 1882*, available in the National Library, Calcutta.

¹¹ *Report of the Central National Mohammedan Association of the Past Three Years 1885-88* p. 3, available in the National Library, Calcutta.

So powerful was his persuasiveness that even Hindus associated themselves with his cause. The Tumkooor Association in the South was presided over by a Hindu (P. N. Krishnamurti). The annual report of the Central National Mohammedan Association speaks of Krishnamurti as 'a Hindu of high position and extremely enlightened view'. Among the honorary members of the Central Association also, there were quite a few Hindus and Europeans. Ameer Ali gathered round him a galaxy of learned Muslims of Bengal, always yielding the presidency of the Association to men of higher position. The first President was Nawab Amir Ali, Khan Bahadur. He came of an old Persian family which had long been settled in India. He was ninth in descent from Kazi Syed Noah who, after filling the office of the Kazi at Baghdad, left his native land to seek his fortunes in India. He was proficient in Arabic, Persian and Urdu. In 1875, he was awarded by the British Government the title of Nawab.

CHAPTER VI
DISAPPOINTMENT OVER JOBS
AND DEVIATING ATTITUDES

CIRCUMSTANCES, one of which was the continued backwardness of Muslims in higher education and their failure to get high posts under Government, and not communalism, made Sir Syed and Ameer Ali change their attitudes again and again, and finally think exclusively in terms of their own community. They became communalists for all practical purposes, but one cannot pass this judgment without sympathising with them.

In 1868, it occurred to Sir Syed that Indians should get a share in the Indian Civil Service—this service was then monopolised by Europeans—and should, therefore, be enabled to proceed to England and appear at the competitive examinations. What happened to this proposal and how he narrowed it down later to apply only to Muslims had better be narrated in his own words: ‘As far back as 1868, we had tried to form an association which should prepare Indians to undertake a journey to Europe. The members of the association were to pay two rupees each as subscription, and after these subscriptions grew into a fund, suitable Indians—Hindus and Muslims—were to be got ready to go to Europe. But alas, the proposal did not succeed. The apparent cause of the failure was that the Hindus of our country regarded a journey to Europe as impinging upon their religion and caste, and the Muslims, too, were victims of religious bigotry. The most important cause was that Indians believed that a journey to Europe was very difficult. . . . Later, other communities made efforts, and obtained success at the civil service examinations. . . . But until today, there is not one Muslim who has obtained a position in the civil service. Therefore, we propose to establish a fund to send up selected Muslim candidates for the civil service examination in London. . . . Undoubtedly, the civil service examination is very hard these days; and since the maximum age was reduced from 21 years to 19, it has become extremely difficult to pass it. And if our memory does not fail us, since the age limit was reduced, only one Indian has found entry into the civil service. Before that, about a dozen

Indians had obtained success; most of them were Bengalis.¹

The Mohammedan Civil Service Association was formed in 1883, but it did not produce any encouraging results. The Association was formed at a time when frustration had begun to be seriously felt and expressed, and men like Ameer Ali had already lost faith in the method of selection by competition. In 1882, Ameer Ali had drafted a 'comprehensive memorial' on the subject of 'Mohammedans' grievances and claims', and submitted it to the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, on behalf of the Central Association, urging the recognition of the Muslim claim to Government jobs. It was here that the aims of the Mohammedan Association differed from those of the Indian Association. The latter was demanding the holding of the competitive examination simultaneously in England and India, and also that the age limit of candidates should be raised. But the Mohammedan Association demanded jobs for Muslims through a system of selection, and not through competition. Ameer Ali complained that 'up to the year 1865, the Government maintained a fair balance between the Muslims and Brahminical people. A sharp digression took place then, and the Muslims found themselves gradually ousted from the public services by their more adaptive compatriots.'²

Ameer Ali's memorial was examined thoroughly by the authorities concerned, but it was not until July 1885, that a favourable resolution was adopted by the Government of India. The Governor-General-in-Council observed in the resolution (dated July 17): 'There are a large number of appointments the gift of which lies in the hands of the local Governments, the High Courts, or local officers. The Governor-General-in-Council desires that in those provinces where Mohammedans do not receive their full share of state employment, the local Governments and High Courts will endeavour to redress this inequality as opportunity offers, and will impress upon subordinate officers the importance of attending to this in their selection of candidates for appointments of the class referred to. The subject of the extent to which Mohammedans are employed in offices under Government might usefully be

¹ *The Annual Report of the Mohammedan Education Conference, 1887* (Appendix, p. 38).

² *The Indian Central Committee Report, 1928-29. Supplementary Note of Dr. Abdullah Al-M'amun Suhrawardy.*

noticed in the annual reports of the provincial administration.'

It was the strikingly disproportionate number of Muslims in the Government services of Bengal that had mainly given Ameer Ali cause of grievance, and it will be appropriate to examine the actual condition and the reasons for it in that province. With a view to give effect to the wishes of the Government of India, the Bengal Government asked heads of departments to ascertain and report to what extent the services of Muslims were being utilised. The reports said that of the 215 ministerial officers in the 24-Parganas, only six were Muslims. The proportion was more or less the same in other districts of Bengal. In several offices at Calcutta, there were no Muslims at all.

'The cause of the disparity', according to the Bengal Government's findings, as contained in its resolution dated October 8, 1886, 'is to be sought primarily in the predilections of the Mohammedans themselves, who prefer Persian and Arabic learning, now of little use in the conduct of business, to the English education given to their children by Hindus. Even the Mohammedans, who go through classical languages in addition, have less time to devote to studies more immediately remunerative.'³

A few years earlier, W. W. Hunter, in his capacity as the President of the Education Commission for India, had made almost the same observation, in his reply to an address presented to him by the managing committee of the Anglo-Oriental College Fund Committee (August 8, 1882): 'in each province of India, the Commission has heard much of the special difficulties which beset the higher education of the Muslims. In almost every province, we see the Mohammedan children numerous, bright and eager in our primary schools, while in the upper schools, they dwindle in numbers, until in some parts of India, they are scarcely represented in the colleges at all. Many explanations of this state of things have been urged in memorials and by witnesses. But among such explanations, we almost everywhere find the pleas of the poverty of the Mohammedan population, and the necessities of their religion. . . . Before a Mohammedan child begins his secular education in our schools, he has to obtain the rudiments of his religious training in a mosque or some Mohammedan institution. He starts heavily weighted in our primary schools; and in our higher schools,

³ *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, dated October 19, 1886.

the best of the Mohammedan youths are tempted from the broad road which leads to secular honours into the bypaths of sacred learning. In point of fact while the young Hindu is devoting his whole energies to obtaining a single education on a purely secular basis, the young Mohammedan is struggling to acquire a double education on both a secular and religious basis.⁴

But the branches of the Central Mohammedan Association, in their periodical reports, submitted to the Association's head office at Calcutta, often complained of Muslims being deliberately ignored by appointing authorities. In its report, for the period 1885-88, the Central Association, also said: 'instances have come to the knowledge of this Association in which claims and acknowledged claims of qualified Mohammedan candidates have been completely ignored and overridden by shuffling of cards in the departmental offices.'⁵ The instances are not quoted in the report, and it is difficult to accept or reject the complaint.

But from the memorial the Association submitted to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (which included Bihar and Orissa) in March, 1888, it appears that in other provinces there was no cause for grievance. The memorial said: 'In the presidencies of Bombay and Madras, the proportion of Mohammedans and Hindus in the Statutory Civil Services is extremely fair, and in the North-West Province, the number is exactly equal. In Bengal alone, the disparity between the number of Mohammedans and Hindus in the statutory civil service is too marked to escape your Honour's notice, for whilst there are nine Hindus, there are only two Mohammedans. The explanation of this difference between the number of Mohammedan statutory civilians in the Madras and the Bombay presidencies and the North-West Province and of those in Bengal is to be found in the fact that the Governments of these provinces have followed a consistent rule of selecting probationers, according to their merit and ability, instead of submitting them to the uncertain test of competitive examinations. We will not presume to call your Honour's attention to the fact that competitive examinations are, at the best, most fallacious tests of merits and ability. And so far as the Mohammedans are concerned, an unfortunate

⁴ *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, dated August 8, 1882.

⁵ *The Report of the Committee of the Central National Mohammedan Association, for 1885-1888*, p. 15, available in the National Library, Calcutta.

and uncertain test.⁶

The Lieutenant-Governor dismissed the memorial by saying that the Government of India's resolution 'was meant to meet a temporary occasion and was not intended to prescribe the method by which nominations to the statutory civil service will be made.'⁷ This reply made Ameer Ali and his Association more earnest in their purpose, and they sounded their branches to consolidate themselves for a common cause.

From the developments, recorded above, it is clear that the grievances of the Muslims of Bengal were different from those of Northern India where Sir Syed's writ prevailed. In the latter territory, the Muslims were over-represented in services below the rank of Indian Civil Service, and this provides us with the reason why Sir Syed and his Aligarh school later adopted, so far as the Indian Civil Service was concerned, Ameer Ali's tactics of opposition to competition. But in effect the two kinds of grievances were similar: Hindus were devouring the Muslim share. It was not any animosity between Hinduism and Islam which caused this feeling; the Muslim lack of preparedness for higher services was due to the emphasis at early stages on religious education.

Muslims themselves realized this and openly admitted it again and again in the addresses they presented to official dignitaries. The establishment of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh and several Muslim high schools at other places in the country and the subsequent development of the Aligarh College into a University does not, as we shall presently see, offer proof that for secular education also Muslims wanted separate institutions. The establishment of the few separate institutions was not dictated by any religious urge, but by the anxiety to extend the facilities of education to Muslims. At these institutions, religious education did not occupy a dominating position. The establishment of Allahabad University was jubilantly welcomed by the Mohammedan Education Congress of 1887, which resolved to send a memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces and another to the Vice-Chancellor of the University to the effect that greater attention should be paid to imparting 'high English education'. Sir Syed joined in the jubilation by

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

saying in his speech that the country, 'and particularly the Muslims' badly needed instruction in 'high English education'.⁸ The ambition of the Aligarh college to grow into a university was natural, as it was of any school to grow into a college, and of the Central Hindu College of Benares to grow into a Hindu university, which actually obtained its fulfilment before the Aligarh Muslim University came into being.

There is no truth in the belief, commonly held, that the Aligarh College attracted many Muslims for degree courses. According to figures collected for 1898-1902, the total number of Muslim graduates in India was 1,184. Out of this, Aligarh's contribution was 220, Allahabad's 410, Calcutta's 398, and the Punjab's 255. In 1890-91, for the first time, Aligarh sent one Muslim candidate up for the M.A. examination; in 1891-92, two; none in the next two years; in 1894-95, two. The number declined to one by 1901-92, and to zero in 1902-03. Between 1882 and 1887, a period of intense propaganda for employment of Muslims in Government departments, the Aligarh College produced only ten graduates.⁹ Thus, Aligarh's contribution to the education of Muslims during the lifetime of Sir Syed was insignificant, and there is no warrant for the assumption that but for the Aligarh movement, Muslims would not have received higher education.

The most prominent and conspicuous among those who wanted this assumption to prevail were the English principals of the Aligarh College. The second principal, Theodore Morrison advocated denominational institutions: 'The general principle which I believe is capable of very wide application is that a university should be the university of a community, not of an area; there should, for instance, be a university for the Mohammedans, for the Parsis, for the Hindus of Eastern India, etc., but no university for the Punjab or Madras or Bombay.'¹⁰ He cited the Central Hindu College at Benares and the Mohammedan College at Aligarh as worthy examples to be emulated, and observed: 'I cannot help recognising that a large number of English-educated Mohammedans,

⁸ *The Annual Report of the Mohammedan Educational Conference, 1887.*

⁹ Theodore Morrison, *The History of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, from Its Foundation to the Year 1903*, p. 63, available in the Lytton Library, Aligarh University.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

incontestable as are their merits in other directions, are indifferent to religion, and many of them have no faith at all. This is an acknowledged evil which is growing with the spread of English education.¹¹

Aligarh was in a whirlpool of confusion. While the cause of the lack of higher English education among Muslims was the disproportionate emphasis on religious instruction, the English principals of the M.A.O. College preached religious exclusiveness with a view to withholding Muslim students from the rising current of political consciousness. While the object of the College was to be concentration on English education, the emphasis was shifted to creating an anti-political and anti-patriotic atmosphere; the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, instead of devoting itself to educational matters, specialised in abusing and deriding political activities; it published and reproduced articles condemnatory of these activities. In the whole series of the *Gazette* and contemporary speeches delivered in the College premises, one hardly comes across an endeavour to prepare Muslims for life in the competitive world. On the contrary, they were told that unqualified co-operation with the Government and loyalty to the British would get them Government jobs as a matter of course. Under the inspiration of the College authorities, campaigns were carried on against competitive examinations and political India's demand for the holding of the Civil Service examination simultaneously in England and India. Here is a sample of one such campaign as reported in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* dated September 1, 1893: 'A very large public meeting of the local Mohammedan community was held last evening to memorialise Parliament against simultaneous examinations. Syed Nizam-ud-din, a graduate in arts and law, presided. Several telegrams and letters expressing sympathy were read. Mr. Mohammed Yassin moved: "That this meeting, considering that simultaneous examination would be unwarranted in the present condition of the country, prays that the House of Commons be pleased not to give effect to the resolution affirming its desirability." In a long and vigorous speech, he said that educated India was divided into two camps—one of Muslim moderates who would leave the country's progress in the hands of its rulers, the other of red-hot radicals who claimed the most comprehensive surrender, the latter consisting of Babus and

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Brahmans, who arrogated to themselves the power of controlling the destinies of the country.'

The two Muslim leaders were now transformed almost unrecognizably. Sir Syed, the sponsor of a fund to prepare Indian students, and later Muslim students, for the Civil Service competitive examination, had now reversed his position. Ameer Ali had extended his demand for an allotment of jobs for Muslims to separate representation for Muslims in the Legislatures.

CHAPTER VII

MUSLIMS AND NATIONALISM— TWO SCHOOLS—I

POLITICAL awakening in India is traced to Raja Rammohun Roy and his Brahma Samaj; along with religious reformism, they disseminated political ideas of liberty and equality. Their field of activities was Bengal, which, being the first to come under British rule, was ahead of other provinces in political consciousness.

The Zamindari Association, formed in Bengal in 1837, was the first organization with which constitutional politics may be assumed to have begun. In course of time, other organizations sprang up: the Bengal British India Society (April, 1843) and the British Indian Association (October, 1851). The leadership of these organizations belonged to prominent members of the Brahma Samaj. The Samaj was not an anti-Muslim society and was prepared to welcome Muslims into its fold. But the cult of the Brahma Samaj was supposed to be reformed Hinduism, and Muslims were not attracted to it. The political organizations were secular, and open to all the communities including the Muslims. But those decades of the growth of political consciousness coincided with the rise of the Wahabi movement and the Muslim boycott of English education. Educationally, economically and politically, the Hindu upper classes were on the ascendant. They deplored the disloyalty of Muslims to British rule.

Nevertheless, the atmosphere in which political consciousness was growing was not wholly without a Hindu bias. One can only guess why Rammohun Roy named his pioneering English institution the 'Hindu College'.¹ Was it because of the knowledge of the hostility of Muslims to the British system of education? Or was it because the Hindu aristocracy had become distinctly different from the Muslim aristocracy over the privileges of landlordism and Government jobs? As if exclusive Hindu membership of political organizations was a natural phenomenon, Muslims did not enter them, and their absence did not worry them. Some ardent patriots of those days organized an annual festival to arouse feelings

¹ See p. 17 of this book.

of nationalism and patriotism. They called it the Hindu *Mela* (Hindu fair). It was not until the appearance of Surendranath Banerjea on the Indian political scene that an invitation was extended to Muslims. Among the objects of his new organization, the Indian Association, Banerjea provided for 'the promotion of friendly feelings between Hindus and Mohammedans',² and asked Muslims to make common cause with Hindus. There was no response.

By 1883, the idea had grown that Indians should have some representation in the Legislative Councils. In that year, one Theodore Beck, an Englishman, took over the principalship of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh. Before he left for India, Beck made a speech in England, in which he expressed himself thus on Indian aspirations: 'The parliamentary system in India is most unsuited and the experiment would prove futile if representative institution is introduced. The Muslims will be under the majority opinion of the Hindus, a thing which will be highly resented by Muslims, and which I am sure, they will not accept quietly.'³

Later, in the same year, Sir Syed gave expression to similar views. He said: 'I am convinced that no part of India has yet arrived at the stage when the system of representation can be adopted in its fullest scope, even in regard to local affairs. India, a continent in itself, is inhabited by vast population of different races and different creeds; the rigour of religious institutions has kept even neighbours apart; the system of caste is still dominant and powerful. . . . One section may be numerically larger than the other, and the standard of enlightenment which one section of the community has reached may be far higher than that attained by the rest of the population. One community may be fully alive to the importance of securing representation on the local boards and the district councils, while the other may be wholly indifferent to such matters. . . . The system of representation by election means the representations of the views and interests of the majority of the population.'⁴

Two years later, in 1885, a national political organization, the

² R. C. Palit, *Speeches of Surendranath Banerjea* (Introduction).

³ Quoted in Mohammed Noman, *Muslim India*, p. 52.

⁴ Speech made in the Imperial Legislative Council on the Central Province Local Self-Government Bill. Quoted in Noman, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

Indian National Congress, came into existence, with the active encouragement of the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, who was anxious to divert violent opposition to the Government into constitutional channels. But the man who really conceived the idea and whose devoted work provided it with flesh and bones was A. O. Hume, a retired civilian. Of the seventy delegates attending the Congress, only two were Muslims: R. M. Sayani and A. M. Dharmasi. Both were graduates of Bombay University, attorneys of standing at the High Court of the Presidency and members of the Municipal Corporation.

Conservative opinion in Britain received the news of the birth of the Congress with considerable misgivings and hostility. The most outspoken representative of that opinion was *The Times*, which in a spirit of wishfulness said, commenting on the first Congress: 'No Mohammedan took any part in the proceedings. . . . That the entire Mohammedan population of India has steadily refused to have anything to do with them is a sufficiently ominous fact.'⁵ No meetings were held, and no resolutions were adopted, and yet *The Times* told its readers that the Muslim community had 'refused to have anything to do with' the Congress!

The editorial of *The Times* on the Congress betrayed why it had taken a hostile attitude. The Congress, in its main resolution, had demanded 'reform and expansion of the supreme and existing legislative councils, by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members', and that 'all budgets should be referred to these councils for consideration'. The reaction of *The Times* to this demand was: 'Even if the proposed changes were to stop short of the goal to which they obviously tend, they would certainly serve to weaken the vigour of the executive and to make the good government of the country a more difficult business than it has ever been. The Viceroy's council already includes some nominated native members. To throw it open to elected members and to give minorities a statutable right to be heard before a Parliamentary committee, would be an introduction of Home Rule for India in about as troublesome a form as could be devised. . . . But it was by force that India was won, and it is by force that India must be governed, in whatever hands the Government of the country may be vested. If we were to withdraw, it would be in favour not of

⁵ Reproduced in Appendix C of the Official Congress Report for 1885.

the most fluent tongue or of the most ready pen, but the strongest arm and the sharpest sword. It would, therefore, be well for the members of the late Congress to reconsider their position from this practical point of view.'

There was an obvious veiled hint in the last two sentences that if the British were at all to withdraw from India, the power would pass into the hands of Muslims, who, conservative opinion held, were entitled to receive it because they had been deprived of it. The comment of *The Times* on the second year's Congress (1886) made this clearer: 'The Mohammedan community appear to hold aloof from this kind of thing, on the ground that they prefer not to hamper the Government at a time when it is doing its best for the natives of India. This incidentally shows what the real aims and results of the "National Indian Congress" are considered to be by the natives of India themselves; at the same time, adding another to many proofs that we must look to our Mohammedan subjects for the most sensible and moderate estimate of our policy.' The editorial proceeded to observe: 'We have produced an extensive class of talkers, and equipped them with a great deal of second-hand knowledge of English history and literature. Such a Congress as that which sat last year in Bombay, or is now sitting in Calcutta, is composed of delegates from all these talking clubs who focus the valuable results of their perennial activity.'⁶

The Times was considered in British political circles as the most informed on Indian affairs, but in India its news coverage and editorial comments were regarded as tendentious and heavily coloured. The official report of the Congress session of 1887 recorded the view that the paper's Calcutta correspondent 'evinces little regard for facts in his messages to England'. This view was corroborated by *The Statesman* (Calcutta) which virtually gave the lie direct to *The Times* in its comment on the Congress of 1886. *The Statesman* said: 'The Mohammedan community at Madras have sent delegates to the Congress, and so have the Mohammedans of Bombay, the North-Western Provinces, Oudh and the chief towns and cities of Bengal.'

⁶ Quoted in *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Collected from Bombay Government Records, Vol. II, 1885-1920. Published in 1958, pp. 37-8.

At the Congress platform (1886) itself, to quote from the official Congress report, 'The Nawab Raza Ali Khan Bahadur of Lucknow, speaking in Urdu, proceeded indignantly and eloquently to deny that the Mohammedans were holding aloof from, or lacked sympathy with the Congress, concluding his speech amidst vociferous cheering with the following words: "The Association that has done us the honour of deputing us is largely composed of leading Mohammedans, Nawabs, Wasikedars, political pensioners, and scions of the once Royal House of Oudh, and I assure you that our Association and my brother Mohammedans, generally of Oudh, will utterly repudiate and condemn any unworthy attempt to create dissensions in our ranks, by unfounded statements as to our supposed want of sympathy with the present movement. Hindus or Mohammedans, Parsees or Sikhs, we are one people now, whatever our ancestors six or eight hundred years ago may have been, and our public interests are indivisible and identical".'

The Congress was thought of as a 'safety valve' by Lord Dufferin, but it was now growing into a national organization, and with Muslims, whom circumstances had kept away from political organizations in the past joining it, it was constituting a threat to the balance of power. Already a very energetic representative of the conservative opinion, in the person of Beck, had occupied a strategic position at Aligarh, the heart of Muslim political activity, and already Sir Syed had made up his mind that Muslims should have nothing to do with the Congress, and for that matter with any political activity. Sir Syed and his satellites completely ignored the Congress, and behaved as if nothing had happened.

In 1886, Aligarh's neutrality was changed to active opposition to the Congress, with the birth of the Mohammedan Educational Congress, (renamed the Muslim Educational Conference in 1890). Sir Syed told the first Educational Conference: 'I do not agree with those who believe that political discussions would be conducive to our national progress. I regard progress of education as the only means of national progress.' He regretted that but for the opposition of Muslims to the British, 'our young men' would be 'holding today important positions in the civil and military services'. At the next year's Educational Congress, which met at Lucknow, Sir Syed directed his attack against the reforms proposals of the Indian National Congress. 'You will, I am sure', he said,

‘ never like that commoners, even if they possess B.A. or M.A. degrees, should sit in the legislative councils, and exercise administrative authority over you. Imagine the Viceroy calling these men “ my colleagues ” or “ my honourable colleagues ”. The Government can never agree to this proposition. The Viceroy cannot invite them to dinners and state functions in which great dignitaries like Dukes and Earls participate.’

Similar, now, was his attitude to the Congress demand for the admission of Indians to the Civil Service: ‘ How can noble classes of Indians tolerate petty commoners whose origin they know very well, as their administrators. It is different with Englishmen, for we do not know at this distance from which class they come. Then, England is a fit place for competitive examination where the population is homogeneous; but India is inhabited by several nationalities. For another reason our country is not fit for the competitive examinations: there is marked disparity in the educational attainments of various people—Muslims are educationally backward; the Hindus of this province are backward compared to the Bengalis.’

He also said that the Congress was an organization of Bengalis. His mistake was pointed out to him in a letter (dated February 18, 1888) from Badruddin Tyebji, President of the 1887 Congress, who wrote: ‘ At the time when I wrote you I had not seen your speech at Lucknow. But I have since had an opportunity of reading it, and it is quite clear that at the time you delivered that speech, you were under the impression that the Congress was composed of Bengali *babus* alone. How you should have got this idea passes my comprehension; for surely you could not have imagined that the Hindus of the Madras and the Bombay presidencies had not taken an active part in it, even if you were unaware of the attitude of the educated Mussalmans of these presidencies towards the Congress. Be that as it may, the facts are that so far as Hindus are concerned they unanimously and as a body support the Congress no matter what province they belong to; and as to the Mussalmans, the presidencies of Bombay and Madras strongly support it, while in Bengal and North-West Provinces to judge from your speech there seems to be very considerable opposition to it.’⁷

Even in the North-West Provinces (which included Oudh), Sir

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3.

Syed's opposition did not prevail, and to the Congress of 1888, held at Allahabad in the teeth of official opposition these provinces sent more Muslims than several other provinces put together. Within four years, the number of Muslim delegates to the Congress had risen to 221 (the number of Hindus was 965 at the 1888 Congress). A Muslim delegate, Mohammed Hidayat Rasul, told the Congress: 'Now, can you say how so many able and distinguished delegates have come to be returned from Oudh and specially from Lucknow? Gentlemen, I will whisper it in your ears. The truth of it is all this good result is due to the kindness of our brethren in the Aligarh camp—the opposition of the Congress. I assure you that, if our hostile brethren had not made a grand show of opposition, the Congress would certainly not have been the success that it has been today.'

But Sir Syed's was a powerful personality and, during 1888, Tyebji and Hume constantly endeavoured to secure his conciliation with the Congress. Sir Syed gave Tyebji a stunning reply. (At just about that time, another honour had been conferred by the British Queen on Sir Syed.) He said: 'I do not understand what the words "National Congress" mean. Is it supposed that the different castes and creeds living in India belong to one nation, or can become a nation, and their aims and aspirations be one and the same? I think it is quite impossible, and when it is impossible there can be no such thing as a National Congress, nor can it be of equal benefit to all peoples. You regard the doings of the misnamed National Congress beneficial to India, but I am sorry to say that I regard them as not only injurious to our own community but also to India at large. I object to every Congress in any shape or form whatever which regards India as one nation.'⁸ Tyebji again wrote a persuasive letter, and again failed.

In August 1888, Sir Syed, with the help of the M.A.O. College Principal, Theodore Beck formed another organization, the United Indian Patriotic Association, whose membership was open to all communities. Muslim Nawabs, Hindu Rajas, titled gentlemen and some Englishmen entered the Association. Sir Syed was happy at this success, and wrote to Col. Graham, a high police officer and later his biographer: 'I have undertaken a heavy task against the so-called National Congress, and have formed an association.'⁹

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71. ⁹ Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

The aims of the Patriotic Association, as reported in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* dated August 28, 1888, were: ‘(a) to publish and circulate pamphlets and other papers for information of members of Parliament, English journals and the people of Great Britain, in which those mis-statements will be pointed out by which the supporters of the Indian National Congress have wrongly attempted to convince the English people that all the nations of India and the Indian chiefs and rulers agree with the aims and objects of the National Congress; (b) to inform members of Parliament and the newspapers of Great Britain and its people, by the same means, of the opinions of Mohammedans in general, of the Islamia Anukans, and those Hindus, and their societies which are opposed to the objects of the National Congress; (c) to strive to preserve peace in India and to strengthen the British rule; and to remove those bad feelings from the hearts of the Indian people, which the supporters of the Congress are stirring up throughout the country and by which great dissatisfaction is being raised among the people against the British Government.’

Beck was the honorary editor of the Patriotic Association, and in that capacity prepared articles and extracts for distribution in Britain and India. In one of his articles, he gave Muslims a stern warning, holding out fear of an impending mutiny: ‘The worst sufferers by the mutiny would be Mohammedans. As far as savagery goes, both sides would have a good fling. At such a period men become friends, and the innocent and guilty, the strong and the defenceless, share the same fate. The English nation, on whose benevolence at home the Congress-wallas lay stress would forget all about constitutions and elective councils, and cry only for vengeance. But the English would not lose their national existence, while the Mohammedans would be irretrievably ruined. This is why the Mohammedan leaders wish to keep their people from the whirlpool of political agitation. My revered chief, Sir Syed Ahmed, whose humble disciple in matters political I boast myself, has pointed out clearly. No one has even grappled with his arguments, but in place of reason, a shower of mud and abuse has been hurled at him. . . . The Bengali has made enormous progress under British rule, his political star is in ascendant; how can he put himself in the position of the Mohammedan whose greatness is in the past, and who sees ruin staring at him in the face? If, in spite of this,

he will disseminate his poisonous literature among Mohammedans, have not Mohammedan patriots a right to be angry? . . . This so-called self-government of the municipalities in which Mohammedans have been bound hand and foot and handed over to their rivals to be governed by them is a case in point. An order just issued by the Bengal Government that all minor appointments are to be given by competitive examinations—an order which will almost destroy the Mohammedan middle class which cannot for one generation at least acquire English education sufficient to compete with others—is another.¹⁰

Like *The Times*, Beck seldom argued his case rationally. He would not explain how the Congress agitation would lead to a mutiny; how Muslims 'have been bound hand and foot'; how opposition to competitive examinations would inspire Muslims to raise their educational standards; why the political association of Muslims with educated Bengalis would be ruinous to the former. He did not hesitate to indulge in palpable falsehoods. In the same article, he observed: 'Another Syed Ahmed, the great Wahabi, and Maulvi Ismail, his supporter, raised a great popular agitation, but urged their followers never to attack the British. They fought the Sikhs, but after that what took place? To every thoughtful Mohammedan the idea of another mutiny is as horrible, more horrible I believe, than to an Englishman, and to every Muslim lady more dreadful even than to an English lady. . . . If the passions of the people be stirred up about politics there is no reason why there should not be a mutiny. The soldiery will readily imbibe the sentiments, and then all will be up.' Beck cleverly concealed the fact that in the 'sixties and 'seventies, the Wahabis made numerous attacks on the British authority, and made numerous Muslims enemies of the British.

According to Maulvi Tufail Ahmed Malabari, who inherited a good deal of oral and written knowledge from his ancestors about the Aligarh movement, and who is the author of *Musalmanon ka Roshan Mustaqbil*, it was Beck who helped Sir Syed to formulate his opinions about the Congress, about politics, and about what should be the Muslim attitude towards competitive examinations. Some, who witnessed the Aligarh drama being enacted, held the same view. One of them is Wilayat Husain. He contributed an

¹⁰ *Source Material, op. cit.*, pp. 41-2.

article to the *Conference Gazette* (Aligarh) dated November 8, 1935, in which he said that after hearing Surendranath Banerjea's speech at Aligarh on the demand for the entry of Indians into the Civil Service, the reaction that Beck conveyed to his Muslim students was that if the competitive examination for the Civil Service was allowed to be held simultaneously in India as well, the only people to benefit from it would be Bengalis, and that the timid Bengalis would rule over the sturdy people of northern India; he asked the Rajputs and Pathans whether they would tolerate this. He asked with dismay what would happen if this storm, rising from Bengal, would reach northern India. Wilayat Husain further says that had not Beck, who took over the editorship of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* from Sir Syed, begun abusing Bengalis and their movement through the editorial columns, the relations between Aligarh and nationalism would not have become as bitter as they did. Again, according to Wilayat Husain, it was Beck who not only sponsored Muslim opposition to Charles Bradlaugh's Bill, presented before Parliament in 1889, seeking to introduce an element of democracy in India, but fraudulently obtained the signatures of Muslims on a memorial he had drafted for submission to Parliament. Batches of Aligarh students were sent round to various towns on a signature campaign; Beck himself accompanied one that proceeded to Delhi. He set down at the gates of the famous Jumma Mosque, with his students standing beside him to carry out his behest. It was a Friday, and Muslims returning from prayers were to be asked to sign the memorial (written in English). What should the students tell the prospective signatories? Few were capable of understanding Bradlaugh's Bill and its implications affecting the Muslims. The anti-cow slaughter movement, which some Hindus had recently started and which Muslims generally resented, suggested itself as a plausible excuse, and while asking for signatures, students, on the advice of Beck, said that they were petitioning the Government to uphold the right of Muslims to sacrifice cows. By this device, 20,735 signatures were obtained, and the memorial was presented to the British Government.

Beck devoted the best part of his energies to the promotion of the United Patriotic Association. In the name of Sir Syed, he carried on correspondence with Muslim organizations in other

provinces, persuading them to open the Association's branches. Landed aristocrats and title-holders in big cities of the country caused public meetings to be held and branches formed. Copies of resolutions denouncing the Congress and welcoming the formation of the Association were forwarded to Sir Syed. The *Aligarh Institute Gazette* scrupulously published the proceedings of these meetings and their resolutions. Here is a resolution lifted from the *Gazette* dated December 8, 1888; it was adopted by 'a great public meeting' organized by the Anjuman Nasar-ul-Islam, Nagpur: 'This meeting is of the opinion that the objects and measures of the so-called National Congress tend towards raising a spirit of disloyalty and discontent and are likely to be most detrimental (1) to India in general and (2) to the welfare and prosperity of Mohammedans in particular; that the demands of the Congress are not the demands of two hundred million British subjects; that its habitual assumption that, it has the right to speak in the name of the majority of the people of India is fictitious and the grievances which it alleges, imaginary; that should any Mohammedan of Nagpur join or associate himself in any way, with any Congress meeting to be held at Nagpur or allow himself to be appointed as a delegate to the Allahabad Congress, he will be considered as representing himself alone, and as a renegade from the Muslim community.' The resolution also said that a copy of the resolution should be sent to Sir Syed Ahmed 'honorary secretary of the United Patriotic Association'.

The Association also became a rallying point for Hindu landlords and aristocrats. For example, the public meeting at Jaunpur (U.P.) was presided over by the Hindu Raja of the place, and among the prominent participants were Muslim Government pensioners and others.¹¹

The Patriotic Association, though a docile body, met and held political discussions, and gave Beck an impression that it tended to develop into a conservative counterpart of the Congress. Therefore, in December 1893, with Sir Syed's support, he founded another organization, and named it the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India, with himself as its secretary. He himself said in his inaugural address that the Patriotic Association suffered from the blemish of growing into an agita-

¹¹ *Aligarh Institute Gazette* October 9, 1888.

tional body. Moreover, it was a cosmopolitan body, and what Muslims needed was a wholly Muslim organization. He said the new associations should affiliate no branches, and hold no public meetings, and should not engage itself in any agitational activity; it should have an executive council as its plenipotentiary functionary.¹² He told his audience that the past few years had witnessed the growth of two agitations in the country: one, the Indian National Congress; the other the movement against cow-slaughter. The former was directed against the English, and the latter against the Muslims. The object of the Congress was to secure control of the country from the British and hand it over to certain sections of the Hindus. It demanded arms to be given freely to the people, a reduction in military expenditure and the consequential weakening of the frontier defence. The Mussalmans could have no sympathy with these demands. The cow-protection movement of the Hindus aimed at weakening of Englishmen and Muslims so that they might be easily subjugated. The communal riots in Bombay and Azamgarh were a manifestation of this spirit. It was therefore imperative for the Muslims and the British to unite so that they might face Hindu agitators, and prevent the introduction of democratic form of government unsuited as it was to the needs and genius of the country.¹³

The objects of the Defence Association were: (1) to acquaint the British people in general and the Government in particular with the views of the Muslim India and to protect the political rights of the Muslims; (2) to support measures designed to strengthen British rule in India; (3) to prevent political agitation from spreading among Muslims; (4) to help the Government in maintaining peace and to foster a spirit of loyalty.

Beck was now bypassing even Sir Syed's conciliatory policy. For example, according to the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, Sir Syed had advised his co-religionists to refrain from cow-slaughter, arguing that it was foolish to antagonise Hindus, and that the friendship of Hindus was better than cow-sacrifice.

Beck drafted another petition for presentation to Parliament and got it signed by thousands of Muslims. It prayed for repudiation of the Congress demand for holding the Civil Service examina-

¹² Tufail Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

tion simultaneously in England and in India. The British Government had no intention of conceding the demand and thankfully accepted the Muslim proposal. The Government's decision was discussed at a meeting of the council of the Defence Association, and acknowledged with gratitude.

In 1895, Beck proceeded to England where he addressed the annual meeting of the London branch of the Association. A summary of his speech was published in the *Aligarh College Magazine* of March, April and June 1895. According to it, Beck said that (1) a friendship between the British people and the Muslims was possible, but not between Muslims and followers of other religions; for example, the followers of Shivaji and those of Guru Govind Singh would never agree with the Muslims in accepting Aurangzeb as their hero; (2) Muslims would never accept a system of government in which the Hindu majority would rule over them; the Muslims of Kashmir who were living under the yoke of Brahmin officers envied the good fortune of the Muslims who were living happily under the British rule; (3) Indians themselves did not like a democratic system. They preferred monarchy; (4) Muslim behaviour during and after the Revolt (of 1857) had warned the community against agitational politics of Hindus, and they were now wisely acting on the advice of Sir Syed—it was the advice of loyalty to the British; (5) Muslims were opposed to the holding of the competitive examinations in India, for they knew that this step would mean the replacement of many impartial British officers by anti-Muslim Hindus.

Sir Syed and Beck complemented and supplemented each other; but it would be underestimating Sir Syed's intelligence to suggest, as some Muslim writers have done, that in the later years of his life, he came very much under Beck's spell. It was Sir Syed's deep-rooted loyalty to the British which justified his vehement opposition to the Congress. The Congress demanded reduction in the army expenditure, and Sir Syed said it should be increased. He had a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Defence Association to this effect, protesting that British personnel in the army was inadequate and suggesting that it should be increased. The resolution (as reported in the *Aligarh College Magazine* of February 1897) actually urged the formation of a national army with increase in expenditure, but the mover (Sir Syed) lamented in his speech that

although he had in a long discussion suggested to Lord Dufferin that the army and the British element in it were both inadequate, the inadequacy was still continuing.

Men of the Aligarh school mainly represented the aristocratic and middle classes of Muslims, and the Congress did not interest them when it talked of the poverty and degradation of the peasantry, the exacting salt tax and forest laws, and the oppression of the poor by the bureaucracy. When the Congress deplored the economic exploitation of the British rulers of India, it had in mind, among other people, the starving weavers, who had been dislodged by British textile exports dumped in India with the aid of favourable duties. Muslim weavers were as miserable as Hindu; in many places the former were in a majority.

But the Congress had transcended the function it was expected to discharge. Even the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, who had encouraged its formation, had now changed his mind. Dufferin's hostility was discovered first of all among public men by Hume, who communicated the fact to Tyebji in a personal letter dated January 22, 1888: 'Lord Dufferin *now* is against us. In the first place he has become afraid. So long as we were a mere consultative body, purely native, whose views he could adopt when it suited him or ignore when they did not, he was strongly in favour of it.'¹⁴ In the same letter, Hume attempted to study casually what it was that had made Sir Syed so perverse to nationalism: 'I am by no means sure that he understands the game that most of the prominent men working with him are playing. But he is puffed up to a degree, and he has altogether ceased to be the man he was. . . . Only a few years ago he advocated the very things he now so vehemently opposes. . . . I do not believe that he is the wilful and shameless liar and a turncoat that his speeches and writings would make him appear. I believe that his popularity with European officials, and his KCSI and favour recently shown him by the Viceroy, and the adulation of that title and his immediate entourage have completely turned his head, and this is the view taken by some at any rate of his own personal following.' When some suggested that Sir Syed was turning anti-British over his son's differences with the Chief Judge of Allahabad High Court (the son was a Judge), he published a letter of protest in the *Pioneer* (repro-

¹⁴ *Source Material, op. cit.*, pp. 85-8.

duced in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*): ‘Those rumours . . . are injurious to my personal character and reputation . . . those rumours mix up public feelings of life-long loyalty and devotion to the British rule.’¹⁵

Sir Syed died in 1898, and Beck the next year.

Beck’s work was being watched with admiration in certain British quarters. Sir Arthur Strachey, an eminent member of Indian Civil Service, said in an obituary tribute: ‘An Englishman who was engaged in the consolidation of the empire has disappeared from the scene.’

¹⁵ *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, October 3, 1893.

CHAPTER VIII
MUSLIMS AND NATIONALISM
— TWO SCHOOLS — II*

ON THE other side was a different variety of Muslim leaders; some of them remained with the Congress in spite of the storm in the Aligarh atmosphere; and some withdrew from it, but did not become uncompromising foes. Ameer Ali and his associates in the Central Mohammedan Association belonged to the latter category. The Association, in fact, was one of the organizers of the first Congress. Ameer Ali had said: 'We are fully convinced that the aim of the forthcoming Congress is to promote measures which, it is considered, will tend to the amelioration of the condition of the people of India and they would greatly regret to do anything which would have even the appearance of withholding from such a worthy object any support which their cooperation might give.'

But the Association withdrew its support from the second Congress, and never returned to any in the future. The Association's executive committee explained the reason thus in a report in 1888:

The abstention of this association in 1886 from the 'National Congress' gave rise to considerable criticism in a part of the Hindu papers. It is necessary therefore to explain the reasons which weighed with this Association in adopting the policy of abstention which it has hitherto observed. The Association has much sympathy with some of the objects which the Congress has placed before itself, and great respect for the principal leaders of the movement. But it is firmly convinced that the unqualified adoption of the programme of the Congress will lead to the political extinction of the Mohammedans. This Association is willing to concede that the system of nomination by which the councils of the Government are recruited is not always happy in its results. But, bearing in mind how the Mohammedans are placed in this country, and how necessarily voting

* Extracts of Congress resolutions and speeches taken from official reports of the Congress.

must take place by nationalities and creeds, the Association cannot believe that the introduction of representative institutions in this country in their entirety will be to the advantage of the Mohammedans. The principle of representation must be carefully considered in connection with the rights of the minority. Nor can the Association consent to the introduction of any system which would result in the minority being utterly swamped in every department of state.

Nor must it be forgotten that the unequal political development of the two communities, coupled with the comparatively recent growth of English education among the Mohammedans, renders it absolutely necessary for this committee to be on its guard against any movement likely to jeopardise the interests of the Mussalman subjects of Her Majesty. The committee cannot deprecate too strongly the want of foresight displayed by so many of our co-religionists in endorsing in their entirety, the views and claims of the Congress. The committee believe that until the Mohammedans are on a par with the Hindus in political development and educational progress and the assertion and preservation of Mohammedan interests are included in the Congress programme, the consummation wished for by the Congressists will end in the absolute effacement of the Mohammedans as a community in this country.¹

But in spite of the hostility of Aligarh and the cautious attitude of the Central Mohammedan Association, the attendance of Muslims at Congress sessions was increasing year after year. The third Congress was presided over by Badruddin Tyebji. Tyebji was educated in London, joined the Middle Temple, and was called to the Bar in 1867; in 1895 he became a Judge of the Bombay High Court. He was the secretary of the Anjuman-i-Islam in 1880, and later its president. In 1882, he was nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council. He assumed presidentship of the Congress at a time when the two important representative schools of Muslims—Aligarh and Central Association—were arrayed against it. Naturally, therefore, he devoted a considerable portion of his presidential address to the Muslims. He said: ‘Gentlemen,

¹ *Report of the Committee of the Central National Mohammedan Association 1885-88, op. cit., pp. 21-2.*

it has been urged in derogation of our character, as a representative national gathering, that one great and important community—the Mussalman community—has kept aloof from the proceedings of the last two Congresses. Now, gentlemen, in the first place this is only partially true, and applies only to one particular part of India, and is moreover due to certain special, local and temporary causes (hear, hear and applause); and in the second place, no such reproach, can, I think, with any show of justice be urged against this present Congress, and gentlemen, I must honestly confess to you that one great motive, which has induced me in the present state of my health to undertake the grave responsibilities of presiding over your deliberations, has been an earnest desire on my part to prove, as far as in my power lies, that I, at least not merely in my individual capacity but as representing the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay, do not consider that there is anything whatever in the position of the relations of the different communities of India—be they Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis or Christians—which should induce the leaders of any one community to stand aloof from the others in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those great general rights, which are for the common benefit of us all, and which, I feel assured, have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon Government to be granted to us . . . I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Mussalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow countrymen of other races and creeds, for the common benefit of all. Gentlemen, this is the principle on which we, in the Bombay Presidency, have always acted, and from the number, the character, the position, and the attainments of Mussalman delegation from the Bombay Presidency and the Presidency of Madras, as well as from the North-West Province and the Punjab, I have not the smallest doubt that this is also the view held, with but few though perhaps important exceptions, by the leaders of the Mussalman communities throughout the whole of India.'

Tyebji's assessment of the growing popularity of the Congress among educated Muslims was correct. The first Congress was attended by only a few Muslims; at the second, there were 33 Muslims out of the 431 delegates; in 1889, the number rose to 258 in the total delegation numbering 1,889.

The 1889 Congress adopted a scheme of reforms which absolves

it of the charge, later made by some Muslims and by some British rulers on their behalf, that Muslim political interests could not be conjointly considered with Hindu interests. As we shall see in subsequent chapters it was the replacement of this scheme by another framed by the Government of India and the British Government which gave rise to the Muslim grievance of under-representation in the Legislative Councils. The scheme suggested:

(a) The Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils to consist respectively of members, not less than one-half of whom are to be elected, not more than one-fourth to be ex-officio and the rest to be nominated by Government;

(b) Revenue districts to constitute ordinarily territorial units for electoral purposes;

(c) All male British subjects over 21 years of age possessing certain qualifications to be voters;

(d) Voters in each district to elect representatives to one or more electoral bodies;

(e) All the representatives thus elected by all the districts, included in the jurisdiction of each electoral body, to elect members to the Imperial Legislature at the rate of one per every five millions of the total population of the electoral jurisdiction and to their own Provincial Legislature at the rate of one per million of said total population, in suchwise that whenever the Parsees, Christians, Mohammedans or Hindus are in a minority, the total number of Parsees, Christians, Mohammedans or Hindus, as the case may be, elected to the Provincial Legislature, shall not, so far may lie possible, bear a less proportion to the total number of members elected thereto, than the total number of Parsees, Christians, Hindus or Mohammedans, as the case may in such electoral jurisdiction bear to the total proportion. Members of both legislatures to possess qualifications and not to be subject to certain disqualifications, both of which will be settled later.

The amendments moved to this resolution, though not accepted, are worthy of notice, as they do represent the sentiments of the age. Hume wanted the 'minority clause' to be cut out. His argument was that 'Indians are Indians. Why there should be

majority or minority?’ But many did not support him. Hidayat Rasul, a Muslim of Oudh, proposed that although the Hindu population was a majority, the number of Hindu and Muslim members in a council should be equal. His own co-religionist, Hamid Ali Khan, Bar-at-Law (of Lucknow), opposed him arguing that no such question as ‘Hindus or Mohammedans’ should be raised. Another Muslim delegate, Wajid Ali Biwaji, said in an excited tone that ‘the number of Muslim members in the councils should be thrice that of the Hindus’. A fourth Muslim opposing these proposals said: ‘We have assembled here for one common object. On such an occasion the Mohammedans cannot call themselves Mohammedans, nor Hindus, Hindus, but rather forgetting all differences of creed, caste and colour, we should call ourselves Indians.’ And when Hidayat Rasul’s amendment was put to the vote, even the Muslim delegates voted against it.

The same attitude was emphasized at the next session (1890) of the Congress. A Muslim member, Syed Sarfuddin, while speaking on the reforms resolution, said that the argument that Muslims were a minority community and that their interests would be jeopardised by the reforms had had no relevance. ‘Look at the very city of Patna. There are twenty seats in the municipality, but in spite of the Hindus being in majority, they elect more Muslims. Out of the twenty municipal commissioners, thirteen are Muslims. In Bombay, Hindus are in overwhelming majority; still five Parsis, three Europeans, two Hindus and two Muslims represent the municipality.’

Nevertheless, it was not the Congress Muslims who came in contact with the British rulers but those who were opposed to the Congress. The principal Muslim organization, which represented again and again the Muslim case to the Viceroy, was the Central Mohammedan Association. A deputation of the Association waited on the Viceroy on November 12, 1887, at Karachi and drew his attention to the backward condition of the Muslims. And the Viceroy in his reply recognized ‘the undoubted fact that, owing to various circumstances and to historic forces over which they themselves have had no control, the Mohammedan community in many parts of India hardly finds itself in that satisfactory position to which it has a right to aspire’.² On March 24, 1888, a

² *Speeches Delivered in India by the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, p. 172.

deputation from the Association waited on the Viceroy at Government House, Calcutta, and presented a farewell address 'on behalf of the Mohammedan community'. Delegates from several parts of Bengal, Bihar, and the north were present. The address, which was read by Ameer Ali, sought the protection of the British Government for the Muslims of India, and the retiring Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, replied: 'The Mohammedans of India may rest assured that the Government will always view with the utmost sympathy and approval their endeavours to remove the peculiar impediments which hamper their efforts.'³

Again, a larger deputation, consisting of 120 members, waited on the new Viceroy, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and presented him an address of welcome (December 22, 1888). The address was read by the President of the Association, Prince Ferokh Shah, and dwelt upon the difficulties which the 'Mohammedans of India have had to encounter in their competition with other portions of the people of India'. The Viceroy's reply said: 'You have to some extent suffered, as you have pointed out, from the fact that your share of the national wealth is less than that to which your numerical strength would entitle you, and also from the want of a proper organisation, such as that to which other sections of the community have had recourse. It is, no doubt, owing to causes of this kind that you find yourselves less strongly represented than you might have wished in the public service of the country.'⁴

The proceedings between the Central Association and different Viceroys ignored the existence of the Congress, of its proceedings relating to the Muslims, and of those Muslims who were attending its sessions in increasing number, and who favoured evolution of a common Indian nationality. These proceedings led to a different analysis and a different result. Lord Dufferin, in his recommendations for the expansion of the Legislative Councils and the introduction into them of an Indian element, described (Vide his Minute annexed to the Government of India's Despatch of November 6, 1888) the population of India as 'composed of a large number of distinct nationalities, professing various religions, practising diverse rites, speaking different languages, while many

³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁴ *Speeches by His Excellency the Marquis of Lansdowne*, p. 28.

of them are still further separated from one another by discordant prejudices by conflicting social usages, and even antagonistic material interest.' These views were re-echoed during the debate in Parliament on the Indian Councils Bill, 1892. One of the speakers, Lord Kimberley, said: 'The notion of a Parliamentary representation of so vast a country—almost as large as Europe—containing so large a number of different races is one of the wildest imaginations that ever entered the minds of men.' He went on to emphasize the necessity of ascertaining the feelings of 'a most important body . . . the Mohammedans of India. If you were to be guided entirely by the Hindu popular opinion, you would find yourself in great difficulty.'

A dozen such speeches emphasized, without mentioning the Congress, that the best way to provide for Indian representation was by allotment of seats to different interests, communal and professional, and not the one suggested by the Congress, and supported by Muslims at the Congress platform. Yet, landed and commercial interests were allowed far greater representation under the Councils Act of 1892, leaving the Muslims again grumbling that they had been given much less than their proportions deserved.

CHAPTER IX
THE WIDENING GULF

AFTER THE deaths of Sir Syed and Beck, their policy and politics were kept alive by Beck's successor, Theodore Morrison, who had already been a professor at the Aligarh College and trained by his predecessor for political work. In fact, his training had begun much earlier, in London, where he had started a branch of the Patriotic Association, and subsequently became Beck's chief representative in England. Morrison began his career as Principal by establishing an employment bureau for securing jobs for Muslim students. This was in keeping with the tradition of the Aligarh College; the students must consider themselves as would-be Government servants and must therefore shun agitational politics. In 1897, among deputy collectors or Indian magistrates in U.P., there were 94 Muslims to 116 Hindus; eight out of 22 of the chief Civil Judges were Muslims—in both cases their numbers much exceeded their numerical proportion.¹ In Madhya Pradesh (then known as the Central Province), the Muslims had attained a favourable position, though in Bengal, where they were in a majority, they greatly lagged behind the Hindus. The reason was obvious: the vast majority of Bengali Muslims came from low-class Hindu converts and, like low-class Hindus, did not make any progress educationally.

Morrison faithfully continued to follow in the footsteps of Beck and Sir Syed, and would declare that democracy in India would reduce minorities to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water. While Morrison was preaching his sermon, the Hindi-Urdu controversy again raised its head. The story, briefly stated, is as follows:

On April 18, 1900, the U.P. Government published on the representation of some Hindus a resolution permitting Government offices and law courts to entertain petitions written in the Devanagari script also—hitherto only Urdu had been recognized. The order said that in future, court summons and Government

¹ I. W. Crooke (of the Bengal Civil Service), *The North-West Provinces of India* (1897).

announcements would be issued in both Urdu and Hindi, and that for ministerial appointments, a knowledge of both scripts would be compulsory. This resolution was interpreted by Muslims of the Aligarh school as reducing the status of Urdu. Protest meetings were held in many parts of the province to give vent to Muslim resentment. Hindus held separate meetings to express their gratefulness to the Government. For months together an angry controversy was carried on in the press, widening the gulf between Hindus and Muslims.

Incidentally, the controversy disturbed the still waters of Aligarh. In August, a meeting of Muslims was called at Lucknow, to protest against the Government resolution, and to demand its withdrawal. It was presided over by the secretary of the Aligarh College, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, who, in his speech, transcended Aligarh's traditional restraint, and displeased the Lieutenant-Governor. The Nawab was asked to choose between the secretaryship of the College and the politics of the Anjuman-e-Urdu, under whose auspices the anti-Hindi agitation was being conducted. He was advised by his friends to withdraw from the latter, and he readily did so. But quite a few Muslim leaders of Aligarh resented the Lieutenant-Governor's injunction, and asked each other why the Muslims should not have a political organization. Among those who supported the proposal were Mehdi Hasan and Waqar-ul-Mulk. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk opposed it on the authority of Sir Syed's directive that the Muslims were not to participate in politics. Morrison pleaded that the proposed move would mean 'going the Congress way', and would create differences among Muslims. Men of position would not join a political organization for fear of offending the Government. For 25 years, the Government had been giving Muslims preferential treatment, and a political association would injure Muslim interests rather than help them. They should leave their future in the hands of the Government and refrain from aping the Congress. Government servants helped Muslims privately; they would be depriving themselves of this privilege if they drifted into politics.

By this advocacy, Morrison terrified the Muslim leaders of Aligarh, and the projected move was abandoned.

But some could not reconcile themselves to the Hindi resolution, and again convened a meeting at Lucknow, at which it was repeat-

edly asserted that the rights of Muslims were being assailed. Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk's scheme for forming the Mohammedan Political Organization was accepted. The organization's objects were: (1) to represent respectfully the Muslim point of view to Government; (2) to make Muslims conscious that their welfare in India depended on British rule; (3) to prevent Muslims from joining the Congress demand for democratic institutions and simultaneous examination for the Indian Civil Service. The meeting appointed a committee to organize branches in various districts. Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk himself visited some of the districts, held meetings, and exhorted Muslims to take interest in politics. The first thing he did after his arrival was to meet the district magistrate. The organization could, however, never gather strength, and became defunct in five years.

In the meantime, the Congress had grown more popular among the Muslims, and the 1899 session, which assembled at Lucknow, was attended by the largest number of Muslim delegates, about 300 out of the total number of 789. Lucknow did not lack anti-Congress ammunition, and as the news spread that Lucknow would be the venue of the Congress, preparations were set afoot for anti-Congress demonstrations. Some Muslim loyalists pleaded with the Government to prohibit the meeting of the Congress in this city on the ground that it might import a 'plague' from the Deccan. They formed a committee under the leadership of one Mirza Mohammed Abbas, a local magnate, who was also once a member of the Statutory Civil Service. The committee did its utmost to dissuade Muslims from joining the Congress, and in order to effect its purpose, introduced the question of religion. Lucknow had been singularly free from religious disputes between Hindus and Moham-medans, and it must be attributed to the good sense of both the communities that they refused to depart from the path of unity and amity.

An anti-Congress demonstration was, however, held on the Rifah-i-Aam ground, with some 900 Muslims attending it. After speeches had been made, certain resolutions condemning the Congress and praying to the Government for more patronage in the public services for members of the Muslim nobility were passed in the name of the Lucknow public.³

³ *Official Report of the Congress* (Introduction).

The Muslims were thus vaguely divided into two schools of thought: there were those who, influenced by religious education and brought up in social aloofness from Hindus, reacted sharply to Hindu movements like the Arya Samaj, the cow-protection movement, Tilak's Ganapati Festival, and the pro-Hindi agitation. On the other side were those who steered clear of sentimentalism, and believed in the oneness of Hindus and Muslims as a political entity. The former were more vocal, more active, and basked in the sunshine of official favour. But what mainly stirred them to action was the belief that they were discharging the supreme duty they owed to Islam. As the Hindi movement, which secured the Government resolution of 1900, demanded equality of status with Urdu, so did the Arya Samaj want the same missionary right as Islam had, and so did Tilak's Ganapati Festival organizers ask for the same opportunities as Muslims had during Moharram.

Like The Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj was a challenge to Christian propaganda. Dayanand, its founder, argued that if the people reformed their rites and customs according to the Vedas, they would cease to suffer from an inferiority complex. As the years rolled by, the Arya Samaj became a platform for enthusiastic educated Hindus from amongst whom sprang up some Indian political leaders. One phase of the Arya Samaj movement antagonised the Muslims: it was the re-conversion or conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism. The argument for this was simple: if Islam or Christianity could admit followers of other faiths, why should not Hinduism? There was nothing in the Vedas to prevent it. The argument was reinforced by the historic fact that the Vedic religion was the oldest, and that all the other religions had been born thousands of years later. Books and pamphlets were produced to prove that all that was good in the new religions had been borrowed from the Vedic religion. The Arya Samajists had before them the example of zeal displayed by the Muslim and Christian missionaries in swelling the ranks of their co-religionists. The Hindu religion, having degenerated, suffered from many evils, like child marriage, resulting inevitably in child widows, prohibition of the marriage of widows and untouchability. Islam, free from these evils, afforded a sanctuary to Hindu sufferers. Thus, numerically the loss to Hinduism was a gain to Islam. Dayanand struck at the root, and his followers

went about preaching that widows should be remarried, that untouchability was taboo according to the Vedas, and that all classes of Hindus should mix freely and not object to dining together. But the Arya Samaj's programme of conversion did not bring any appreciable success, obviously because the rationalism of the Arya Samaj could not find a response in the prevailing Hindu conservatism; the converts were looked upon as new arrivals into the class of 'untouchables'. The programme, therefore, not only failed miserably but promoted considerable amount of animosity between Hindus and Muslims.

The Ganpati Festival, a private domestic festival of the Hindus, assumed a public and processional character in 1893 after the Hindus of Poona had withdrawn from the annual *tabut* procession as a protest against the attack of Muslims on Hindus. But in its aim and emphasis, the Ganpati Festival differed drastically from the *tabut*. It was developed as a medium of political propaganda, and when the preaching of nationalism was sedition, expediency dictated the placing of the propaganda under the special patronage of the most popular deity in India. Because of its political character, in two years, the Ganpati Festival grew into a grand national celebration with Muslims rubbing shoulders with Hindus in several towns. According to a report published in a Bombay weekly, *Rast Gofstar*, the celebrations at Sholapur (1896) 'exceeded in *éclat* and enthusiasm anything of the kind that was witnessed in preceding years, and the most noticeable feature was that local Mohammedans freely mixed with the Hindus in doing honour to Ganapati'. At Nasik, both Hindus and Muslims carried Ganapati for immersion, the man leading the procession being a Muslim. But at two places, the police caused some communal difference, though that did not result in any unhappy incident. At Nimbagaon (Poona district), Muslims were indifferent and some of them concurred with the Ganapati celebration, but the *chowkidar* aroused in them a sense of 'right' by imposing a ban on music accompanying the procession. In another village, Talegaon, the Superintendent of Police, who had been given extra powers by the District Magistrate, showed a similar zeal and disturbed the cordial relations between the two communities. But there remained an under-current of bitterness between a section of Muslims and Hindus over the separation of Hindus from *tabut* and the enthronement

of Ganapati on the public platform.³

Similarly, the Shivaji Festival, which also owed its birth to Tilak, and which was designed to spread political consciousness, drew some Muslims to it and embittered some others. The cause of the latter was taken up by the Anglo-Indian daily, *The Times of India* which condemned both Tilak and Shivaji, the latter for murdering Afzal Khan 'treacherously'. For several weeks, some correspondents carried on a controversy in the columns of the paper as to whether the blame weighed on the side of Shivaji or of Afzal Khan. For holding the views it did, the paper had the authority of British historians, who were challenged by a Maratha scholar, R. P. Karkaria, mainly on the basis of Muslim sources. This controversy helped to form the impression that Shivaji was a Hindu hero and that the Muslims should have nothing to do with the Shivaji celebrations. Even when the patriotic content of the celebrations had been vindicated by the conviction of Tilak for sedition in 1897, the antagonism did not die down, and communal papers like the *Rast Goftar* and the *Akhbar-e-Islam* 'rejoiced', to use their own expression over Tilak's incarceration. Shivaji was, no doubt, a Hindu, and Tilak's explanation was that if he were in Northern India he would have adopted Akbar as the common hero of Hindus and Muslims; in the Deccan Shivaji was the hero, and only through his name could the people be aroused.

The man who caused the greatest amount of anxiety to the British rulers in the 'nineties was Tilak, and the British propagandists avidly wished that, though Hindus were following him, Muslims should be withheld from his influence. They dubbed him a Hindu leader hostile to the Muslims. The first Briton to do so was Sir Valentine Chirol, the author of *Indian Unrest*, who referring to this period, said in his book: 'He (Tilak) not only convoked popular meetings in which his fiery eloquence denounced the Mohammedans as the sworn foes of Hindus, but he started an organisation known as the "Anti-Cow-Killing Society", which was intended and regarded as a direct provocation to the Mohammedans.' Now, this was a complete fabrication. The Government of India's own legal adviser, an Englishman named Montgomerie, later, in a confidential note, (which never saw the light of day)

³ *Nasik Vritt*, September 19, 1896.

vindicated Tilak of the charge of communalism. He said: 'Tilak had nothing to do with the inception of the anti-cow-killing movement nor is there any evidence to show that either before or after the Hindu-Mohammedan riots of 1893, he took any part in the management of the Anti-Cow-Killing Society or in furthering its aim. . . .' But, as if Chirol were an authority, dozens of books on the politics of this period, subsequently written by British and Muslim authors, referred to Tilak as a supporter of the cow movement and as a communal-minded Hindu leader. Even those whose aim was not propaganda, committed a grave error of history, depending on Chirol's 'pioneering' work.

That the Government had a hand in the mischievous propaganda perpetrated and perpetuated by Chirol is clear from Government records in which it is admitted that he was engaged to do propaganda for the Government, that he was allowed access to the Government's confidential files, and that he wrote *Indian Unrest* 'under the aegis of the Bombay Government' (to use the words of an Executive Councillor). From this clandestine activity of the Government, it does not seem unreasonable to draw the conclusion that some of the British rulers, if not all, instigated Hindu-Muslim differences; at any rate they encouraged them. There was some meaning in the simultaneous anti-Congress agitation among Muslims in Northern India, in the Bombay Presidency and in Bengal, without an organization and without an all-embracing leadership; there was some meaning in Dufferin thinking in terms of communal representation for Muslims in 1888, when Muslims from different parts of the country, participating in the Congress a few months before under the presidentship of an eminent Muslim, made no indication of such demand. There is some meaning also in Sir John Strachey declaring: 'The better classes of Mohammedans are a source to us of strength and not of weakness. They constitute a comparatively small but energetic minority of the population whose political interests are identical with ours.' It was a peculiar way of withholding Muslims from the main political current of India. How were Muslim interests identical with Britain and with British rulers? Between the two parties—the British and the Congress—Muslims had to choose one, and for many years the choice had been going in favour of the former. Persuasion from the Congress platform, however, continued until the

end of British rule, by which time Muslims had almost wholly deserted the Congress. In the first decade of the life of the Congress, the competition over the claim to Muslims was between those Muslim leaders who had had a long association of loyalty and profit with the Government and those who were independent in economic life. One of the latter was R. M. Sayani, who presided over the 1896 Congress, and who denied in his presidential address that Muslims were against the Congress. Sayani had been in the public life of Bombay for about three decades before he became Congress President. It was curious that men like him and Tyebji were with the Congress, and that those little known in the public life of Bombay said they were loyal to the British and that membership of the Congress would disturb that loyalty.

CHAPTER X
MUSLIM BENGAL

BENGAL, as it came under British rule, was a big administrative unit, and after that rule had been firmly established in India, it began to be felt that Bengal should be split up into two parts for administrative convenience. In 1874, Assam was separated, and put under a separate administration. Later, after the reforms of 1892, the Government proposed to separate Chittagong and tack it on to the province of Assam, but public opinion expressed itself strongly against the proposal and secured its cancellation. The Viceroy, Lord Curzon, however, re-opened the question and, linking communal urgency with administrative necessity, made up his mind to divide the province into Muslim Bengal and Hindu Bengal; the eastern part had a Muslim majority and the western part a Hindu majority. The partition scheme emerged unofficially from official secrecy in 1903. But to Curzon's dismay it was greeted by hundreds of protest meetings, at which both Hindus and Muslims expressed themselves against it. Among the notable Muslim opponents of the scheme was the Nawab of Dacca, Sir Salimullah.

Curzon construed the joint Hindu-Muslim demonstrations as a sign that the Muslims had not appreciated the value of his scheme, and thought that personal contact would win them over in its favour. In February, 1904, he went on a tour of eastern Bengal, held consultations with local Muslim notables at all stages of his journey, called Muslims together in large meetings, and delivered long addresses. He told them that his object in partitioning Bengal was not only to relieve the Bengal administration, but also to create a Muslim province, where Islam would be predominant and its followers in the ascendancy, and that it was with this in mind that he had decided to include the two remaining districts of the Dacca division in his scheme. In one of his speeches, he promised that the partition 'would invest the Mohammedans of Eastern Bengal with a unity which they had not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussalman Viceroys and kings'.

But before he could see his dream realized, he came to know that he would shortly have to resign. He resigned, and in hot

haste rushed the necessary legislation for the partition through the Legislative Council with only the official members attending it. For months together, leading Muslims were persuaded or obliged to fall in line with the Viceroy's wishes. Nawab Salimullah, who had condemned the Partition as a 'bestly arrangement', later changed his mind. The change was attributed to a loan of £ 100,000 which was advanced to him on a low rate of interest.¹ That may have been a coincidence, but the allegation fitted in with the Viceroy's scheme of things and the angry protests made against it.

Curzon enforced the partition legislation in October, 1905, appointed his trusted lieutenant, Bampfylde Fuller, as Lieutenant-Governor of the new province, and left India in November, handing over charge of the country to his successor, Lord Minto.

When Minto took over, the country was in the grip of unprecedented discontent and unrest; even the Congress seemed to be threatening to go over to the extremists. In distress, Minto asked whether there could be an alternative to the Congress—similar to the one which the Congress itself had provided in 1885 against the lurking dangers of organized violence. In a letter he wrote to the Secretary of State for India, Morley, on May 28, 1906, Minto said: 'As to the Congress . . . we must recognise them and be friends with the best of them; yet I am afraid there is much that is absolutely disloyal in the movement and that there is danger for the future . . . I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible counterpoise to Congress aims. I think we may find a solution in the Council of Princes or in an elaboration of that idea; a Privy Council not only of native rulers, but of a few other big men to meet say once a year for a week or a fortnight at Delhi for instance. Subjects for discussion and procedure would have to be very carefully thought out, but we should get different ideas from those of the Congress.'²

Morley's reply significantly suggested that he was worried about the Muslims: 'Everybody warns us that a new spirit is growing and spreading over India . . . You cannot go on governing in the same spirit; you have got to deal with the Congress Party

¹ Gurmuch Nihal Singh, *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development*, p. 319.

² Mary Minto, *India, Minto and Morley*, pp. 28-9.

and Congress principles whatever you may think of them. Be sure that before long the Mohammedans will throw in their lot with the Congressmen against you.³

Curzon's partition scheme was as earnestly disapproved of in official and unofficial quarters in London as it was in India, but the mounting nationalism, that was its consequence, suggested to the rulers that a political get-together of Hindus and Muslims must at all costs be prevented. Bengal's enthusiasm was overflowing into other provinces, and the Partition had gained for nationalist India what ten Congresses could not have done in a decade. There was a spate of protest meetings, demonstrations and processions all over Bengal and in several other provinces. British goods were boycotted, and Britain's economic life was threatened with ill consequences.

What worried the Government the more was that in spite of offers of Government posts and other inducements, the Partition had failed to secure the approval of many thoughtful Muslims. At the Congress of 1906, Nawabzada Khwaja Atikullah, brother of Salimullah, emphatically disagreeing with the scheme said: 'I may tell you at once that it is not correct that the Mussalmans of Eastern Bengal are in favour of the Partition of Bengal. The real fact is that it is only a few leading Mohammedans who for their own purpose supported the measure.' Ameer Ali's Mohammedan Association told the Government that 'no portion of the Bengali-speaking race should be separated from Bengal without the clearest necessity for such separation, and in the present case such necessity does not exist'.⁴ Sir Henry Cotton, a retired civilian of Bengal made a similar observation: 'the leaders of both sections of the community in Eastern Bengal are, for the most part, united in condemning partition, but that the ignorant and unruly masses of the Mohammedans have been roused to acts of violence by fanatic emissaries.'⁵

As a matter of fact, the unruly masses of the Mohammedans were indeed 'roused to acts of violence'. According to Nevinson, 'priestly Mullahs went through the country preaching the revival of Islam, and proclaiming to the villagers that the British Government was

³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴ Amvika Charan Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, p. 223.

⁵ Quoted in J. D. Rees, *The Real India*, p. 178.

on the Mohammedan side, that the law courts had been specially suspended for three months, and no penalty would be enacted for violence done to Hindus or for the loot of Hindu shops or for the abduction of Hindu widows. A red pamphlet was everywhere circulated, maintaining the same wild doctrines.⁶ Bampfylde Fuller jocularly remarked giving a broad hint in the process, that of his 'two wives, the Mohammedan one was the favourite'. Again, according to Nevinson, 'the Mohammedans genuinely believed that the British authorities were ready to forgive them for all excesses'.⁷

The riotous mood continued for several years. Once, in 1910, the metropolis itself was in the hands of a Muslim mob which plundered for three days and nights the jewellers of the city. People in the official circle exultantly cited these instances as a fore-taste of what might be in store for the Hindus if the strong hand of Government were to be withdrawn or even relaxed. A Muslim special magistrate, trying a batch of Muslim rioters, observed in his judgment that 'there was not the least provocation for rioting; the common object of the rioters was evidently to molest the Hindus'. In another case, he said: 'The evidence adduced on the side of the prosecution shows that on the date of the riot the accused (a Muslim) read over a notice to a crowd of Muslims and told them that the Government and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca have passed orders to the effect that nobody would be punished for plundering and oppressing the Hindus.' Another magistrate, (a European) said: 'Some Mussalmans proclaimed by beat of drum that the Government has permitted them to loot the Hindus.' In an abduction case, the same magistrate remarked that 'the outrage was due to an announcement that the Government had permitted the Mohammedans to marry Hindu widows in *Nika* form'.

In one case, known as the Comilla Rioting Case, the trying judge openly favoured the Muslims. He was censured by the High Court, which remarked in the judgment: 'The method of the learned judge in dealing with the testimony of the witnesses by dividing them into two classes—Hindus and Mohammedans—and accepting the evidence of one class and rejecting that of the other, is open to severe criticism. The learned judge ought to have directed his mind solely to the evidence which had been given before him, and to have

⁶ Nevinson, *The New Spirit in India*, p. 192.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

excluded from his consideration all preconceived sympathies with either section of the people.'

Sir Henry Cotton, for many years an officer of the Bengal Civil Service, and later a member of the British Parliament, in his *Indian and Home Memories* lays an open charge at the door of the British rulers: 'The Mohammedans of Eastern Bengal', he says 'are almost all descended from low-caste or aboriginal Hindoos who long ago embraced Islam in hope of social improvement or from hard necessity. There was never any cause for quarrel between Hindoos and Mohammedans as such . . . For the first time in history a religious feud was established between them by the Partition of the province. For the first time the principle was enunciated in official circles : Divide and Rule ! The Mohammedans were officially favoured in every possible way.'

The Partition, preceded by Curzon's utterances and followed by communal riots, impaired Hindu-Muslim relations for a long time to come. But there was not much repercussion of Bengal rioting in other parts of the country. Wherever the Muslims were not under the influence of a reactionary leadership, they attended political meetings, listened to exhortations for the boycott of British goods, and appreciated the appeal for Swadeshi, which meant encouragement to country-made goods; for Muslim manufacturers and weavers stood to gain by the Swadeshi agitation as much as the Hindus. In Maharashtra, Tilak, the most powerful exponent of Hindu-Muslim unity, exhorted Muslims to act in co-operation with the Hindus and do their duty by contributing their mite to the Swadeshi movement. Muslims in many places responded to his call. A meeting exclusively of Muslims was held at Dhulia in November. It was attended by leading Muslims and local traders, and presided over by a divine, Mulla Sheikh Chand. Twenty Swadeshi meetings had till then been held at Dhulia, but this was the first meeting of Mohammedans; it was brought to a close amidst cries of 'Bande Mataram' and 'Allah-o-Akbar'.

But the little co-operation between Hindus and Muslims over the Swadeshi movement here and there cannot blind one to the fact that politically the educated people of the two communities had been falling apart for several years before the Partition was announced and before the anti-Partition agitation deteriorated into communal rioting. Significantly, after the Lucknow Congress

of 1899 at which Tilak sought unsuccessfully to move a resolution condemning the administration of the Bombay Governor, Sandhurst, and at which Muslims were represented by a large number of delegates, the number of Muslims at Congress sessions began to decline. At the 1905 Congress, out of 756 delegates, there were only 17 Muslims.

Where were the Muslims going? The country did not have any other political, social or communal organization than the Congress. Aligarh's Mohammedan Political Organization was a still-born child, and did not throw out its echo even into the neighbourhood. The Hindi controversy was purely a local issue; it did not disturb, and was not talked of by Muslims in other parts of the country. There were no sympathetic outbursts of Bengal riots anywhere else. There was no Muslim leader or organization who could claim influence over Muslims and tell them that the raising of Hindi to the status of Urdu did not harm Urdu and that riots would secure no advantage for Muslims over Hindus. If Muslims wanted only Muslim leaders, they may remain leaderless. Yet, curiously enough, Muslims were gradually withdrawing from the Congress. Were they responding to the British design, as revealed by the Secretary of State Morley that the Muslims should be prevented from joining the Congress? They would not go to the Congress, but would they remain idle spectators in the midst of rapidly growing political consciousness? In a vacuum, there was always the fear of a return to the Congress. The alternative was a purely Muslim all-India organization—and they were given one in 1906.

of the people, certain reforms were about to be conceded in 1906, the late Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk was sent for, by telegram at Simla, from Bombay where he was then putting up with a friend. The result of the interview was that the Aga Khan who was on his way to Europe had to return from Aden. An address was, then, drawn up by Syed Bilgrami of Hyderabad (Deccan) on behalf of the Muslims of India asking for separate electorates. All this was manoeuvred from Simla.¹ Another nationalist Muslim, Maulana Mohammed Ali, later characterized (in his presidential address to the 1923 Congress) it as 'a command performance'.

Mohsin-ul-Mulk unreservedly belonged to the Aligarh school, and the Simla decision did not conflict with his own political notions. He perceived in it benevolence for the Muslims, and obtained in a short time the signatures of about 4,000 Muslims on a petition to be formally presented to the Viceroy. He then brought together 35 prominent Muslims from different parts of the country, the most prominent among them being the Aga Khan, who waited on the Viceroy on October 1, 1906. In the long address they presented to the Viceroy, they said :

Availing ourselves of the permission accorded to us, we, the undersigned nobles, jagirdars, taluqdars, lawyers, zamindars, merchants and others representing a large body of the Mohammedan subjects of His Majesty the King-Emperor in different parts of India, beg most respectfully to approach your Excellency with the following address for your favourable consideration.

The Mohammedans of India number, according to the census taken in the year 1901, over sixty-two millions or between one-fifth and one-fourth of the total population of His Majesty's Indian dominions, and if a reduction be made for the uncivilised portions of the community enumerated under the heads of animist and other minor religions, as well as for those classes who are ordinarily classified as Hindus but properly speaking are not Hindus at all, the proportion of Mohammedans to the Hindu majority becomes much larger. We, therefore, desire to submit that under any system of representation, extended or limited, a community in itself more numerous than the entire population

¹ Abdul Majid Khan, *The Communalism in India—Its Origin and Growth*, p. 23.

of any first class European power except Russia may justly lay claim to adequate recognition as an important factor in the State.

We venture, indeed, with your Excellency's permission to go a step further, and urge that the position accorded to the Mohammedan community, in any kind of representation, direct or indirect, and in all other ways affecting their status and influence should be commensurate, not merely with their numerical strength but also with their political importance and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the empire, and we also hope that your Excellency will in this connection be pleased to give due consideration to the position which they occupied in India a little more than a hundred years ago and of which the traditions have naturally not faded from their minds.

We hope your Excellency will pardon our stating at the outset that representative institutions of the European type are new to the Indian people ; many of the most thoughtful members of our community in fact consider that the greatest care, forethought and caution will be necessary if they are to be successfully adapted to the social, religious and political conditions obtaining in India, and that in the absence of such care and caution their adoption is likely, among other evils, to place our national interest at the mercy of an unsympathetic majority.

It is most unlikely that the name of any Mohammedan candidate will ever be submitted for the approval of Government by the electoral bodies as now constituted unless he is in sympathy with the majority in all matters of importance. Nor can we in fairness find fault with the desire of our non-Muslim fellow-subjects to take full advantage of their strength and vote only for members of their own community, or for persons who, if not Hindus, are expected to vote with the Hindu majority on whose goodwill they would have to depend for their future re-election.²

The address made the following demands: (1) employment of a due proportion of Mohammedans in Government service; (2) elimination of the competitive element in recruitment to the services; (3) Muslims should be given seats on the Bench of every High Court and Chief Court; (4) to the municipalities either community should be allowed severally to return its own representatives as is

² See Appendix B.

the practice in many towns in the Punjab; (5) for election to Legislative Councils, important Muslim landowners, lawyers, merchants, and representatives of other important interests, the Mohammedan members of district boards and municipalities and Mohammedan graduates of Universities of a certain standing, say five years, should be formed into electoral colleges.

The Viceroy made an equally long reply ; much of it related to the past of the Muslims, to Sir Syed's services, and to the Aligarh movement. The relevant sentences in the reply were: 'I make no attempt to indicate by what means the representation of communities can be obtained, but I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent . . . The Mohammedan community may rest assured that their rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded in any administrative reorganisation with which I am concerned.'³

It was a delicious development in the politics of the country, and a flash of jubilation ran across the official world in Simla. The overflowing joy ran into correspondence, typical of which is a letter an official sent in the evening to the Viceroy's wife, Mary Minto. It said: 'I must send your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today. A work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of sixty-two millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition.'⁴

Mary herself records in her *Journal* of October 1, 1906: 'This has been a very eventful day ; as someone said to me, "an epoch in Indian history". We are aware of the feelings of unrest that exist throughout India, and the dissatisfaction that prevails amongst people of all classes and creed. The agitators have been most anxious to foster this feeling and have naturally done their utmost to secure the co-operation of this vast community (Muslims). The younger generations were wavering, inclined to throw in their lot with the advanced agitators of the Congress, and a howl went up that the loyal Mohammedans were not to be supported, and that the agita-

³ See Appendix C.

⁴ Mary Minto, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-8.

tors were to obtain their demands through agitation.⁵

By a section of the press in Britain, the Simla success was hailed as a great achievement. The wisdom of Muslims was praised, and the Congress and Bengal agitators were ridiculed. *The Times* devoted, on the day the Simla drama was enacted, a few columns to the study of the Indian problem vis-à-vis the Muslims, and reiterated Beck's theory that India was not fit for democratic institutions. The next day, on October 2, 1906, *The Times* drew a comparison between the Bengal agitation and the Muslim statesmanship. Another paper abused the Hindus and the Congress and praised Muslims as a brave nation.

It was for the first time that Muslim aristocrats from various parts of the country had met at Simla, at the invitation of the Viceroy, and returned home full-fledged politicians undertaking to extend Aligarh politics to the whole of India. Nawab Salimullah Khan of Dacca formally proposed formation of a political organization under the name of the 'Muslim All-India Confederacy', and invited Muslim leaders to Dacca for a meeting on December 30, 1906. Dacca was a storm-centre of agitation against the partition of Bengal, and with the sharp Hindu-Muslim differences which Curzon had created and Lieutenant-Governor Fuller had nurtured, it was an ideal place for the first all-India Muslim gathering. Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk was chosen to preside over the meeting. On the appointed day, Dacca gave birth to the cherished Muslim organization. The first resolution, authorising its formation, christened it as the All-India Muslim League, the name 'Muslim All-India Confederacy' having been disfavoured by majority of the delegates.

It was a humble beginning, and it was after three months that the non-official world got a clearer picture of the League's aims and objects, from a speech Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk delivered at a students' gathering at Aligarh: 'God forbid, if the British rule disappears from India, Hindus will lord it over it ; and we will be in constant danger of our life, property and honour. The only way for the Muslims to escape this danger is to help in the continuance of the British rule. If the Muslims are heartily with the British, then that rule is bound to endure. Let the Muslims consider themselves as a British army ready to shed their blood and sacrifice their lives for the British Crown.'

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

He then explained how the League differed from the Congress, and Muslims from 'Hindu agitators': 'We are not to emulate the agitational politics of the Congress. If we have any demands to make they must be submitted to Government with due respect. But remember that it is your national duty to be loyal to the British rule. Wherever you are, whether in the football field or in the tennis lawn, you have to consider yourselves as soldiers of a British regiment. You have to defend the British Empire, and to give the enemy a fight in doing so. If you bear it in mind and act accordingly you will have done that and your name will be written in letters of gold in the British Indian history. The future generations will be grateful to you.'⁶

In 1907, the League met in Karachi for its annual session. A constitution was framed with the following as its objects: (1) to promote among Indian Muslims feelings of loyalty towards the British Government, and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intentions of the Government with regard to any of its measures; (2) to protect the political and other rights of Indian Muslims and to place their needs and aspirations before the Government in temperate language; (3) so far as possible and without prejudice to the objects mentioned above, to promote friendly feelings between Muslims and other communities of India. The constitution provided for a permanent president, and the choice fell on the Khojas' religious head, the Aga Khan, who enjoyed the complete confidence of the Government.

Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah, commonly known as the Aga Khan, played a noteworthy role in Muslim politics in the future also, and must be introduced to the reader. His grandfather, Aga Husain Ali Shah, was entrusted with the administration of the important district of Mehleti and Koom (in Persia) by the Persian King Fateh Ali Shah. In the fratricidal wars that ensued after the King's death, Aga Husain Ali Shah joined a rebellious army. He was imprisoned, but pardoned and set at liberty. In sheer despair, he left his native land, and forced his way to Sind, where he received a hearty reception from his Ismailia followers. His mind was not at ease in a foreign land, and he dreamed of going back and regaining his lost power. His followers financed his projects, but they all came to a sorry end. Adventurous man

⁶ Tufail Ahmed, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-4.

that he was, he tried his luck in India itself, and assisted Sir Charles Napier in putting down the Amirs of Sind. He rendered great help to the East India Company in the Afghan War of 1839-40. As a reward for these services, the British Government granted him a decent pension, and the hereditary title of 'His Highness' was conferred on him. But emotionally he was not yet able to detach himself from his native land, and tried once again to establish himself in the outlying Persian province of Bunpore; but at the instance of the Persian Government he was obliged to go and reside in Calcutta. Thence he went to Bangalore and Bombay. He died in 1881. His eldest son died in 1885, and Sultan Mohammed Shah, then aged ten, inherited as the head of a wealthy religious sect all the glory and wealth earned by his grandfather.⁷

The Aga Khan's preoccupations elsewhere left him little time for day-to-day work in his office as the President of the League, and therefore every annual session of the League appointed a working chairman. The working chairman of the 1908 session was Sir Ali Imam of Bihar. In his address, Sir Ali compared the safe humility of the League with the hazardous manners of the Congress. While the Congress wanted self-government of the colonial variety, the League was content to demand steady administrative reforms and satisfaction of the natural ambitions of Indians educated under a liberal system. 'Has not this ideal of self-government', he asked, 'however elevated, caused impatience, and has not this impatience carried the idealist off his feet, and has not this loss of equipoise created extremism, and has not extremism given birth to anarchism, bombs, secret societies and assassinations?' And what should the Congress do? 'Let the Congress announce that in practical politics, loyalty to the British administration is loyalty to India, and that reform in the existing administration is possible only with the maintenance of British control. As long as the leaders of the Indian National Congress will not give us a workable policy like the one indicated above, so long the All-India Muslim League has a sacred duty to perform. That duty is to save the community it represents from the political error of joining in an organisation that in the main, as Lord Morley says, cries for the moon.'

The resolution adopted at that year's session demanded: (1) ex-

⁷ Life Sketch of the Aga Khan taken from Wilfred Smith, *op. cit.*

tension of the principle of communal representation to local boards; (2) appointment of a Hindu and a Muslim on the Privy Council; (3) a share for Muslims in all state services. The Congress resolution against the partition of Bengal was repudiated.

Some nationalist Muslims individually deprecated the communal system of elections. Typical of their protests is an article in the *Hindustan Review* (April, 1909) by a barrister-at-law, Nawab Sadiq Ali Khan: 'The principles of class and religious representation is a most mischievous feature of the (reforms) scheme. It is not good for Mohammedans to be taught that their political interests are different from those of the Hindus. From a Mohammedan point too that principle is fraught with mischief.' He and others propagated this view through public meetings, but, they lacked representative character, with no 'all-India' organization behind them. Whoever inspired and sponsored the Muslim League, it was the only organization of the Muslims. The Congress with its dwindling Muslim membership was not acceptable to the British as a representative of all communities. The League itself did not grow into a mass organization, and for all practical purposes the Muslims remained without a political organization of their own. But whenever political settlements were made, Muslim leaders in the limelight made use of the League, presenting it as the sole representative of the Muslims.

CHAPTER XII
SEPARATE ELECTORATE: THE
BACKGROUND

THE YEARS between the Indian Councils Act of 1892 and that of 1909 were of extraordinary political activity causing tremendous anxiety to the rulers. Slowly and steadily, local agitations and manifestations of violence, beginning with B. G. Tilak's no-rent campaign in Maharashtra in 1896 on the constitutional side, and with the murder of two British officers in Poona in 1897 on the terrorist side, were spreading to other parts of India. The press was delivering severe blows at the British authority, and exhorting people to end British rule. An extremist section, getting impatient with the British, grew among Congress leaders in the closing years of the 19th century, and, by the time Curzon carried out his scheme of the Partition of Bengal in 1905, swelled its ranks so much that it became a formidable challenge to the Moderates, who wanted the British to stay and continue to rule in India. This section was exclusively Hindu, both in leadership and following.

A large number of persons were arrested and jailed for terrorist activities or for offensive writings in the press. A series of extraordinary laws were enacted to suppress the wave of political unrest. Among these were the Seditious Meetings Act, the Explosive Substance Act, the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act. Anyone found in possession of explosives and materials and implements that could be used in the manufacture of bombs was punishable with transportation for fourteen years, and in less extreme cases with rigorous imprisonment for five years. An attempt or intention to cause explosion was made punishable with seven years' imprisonment or 20 years' transportation. The Newspapers Act empowered Government to confiscate the printing press of any paper which contained 'any incitement to murder or any act of violence'. The magistrates were empowered to order confiscation of printing presses even before the accused were produced before them for hearing. In cases that the magistrates considered to be of emergency, they could even order attachment before any legal formality was gone through. The Criminal Law

(Amendment) Act provided for summary trial of terrorists and anarchists. So severe were the punishments awarded under these laws that even the Secretary of State, Morley, had to tell the Viceroy: 'We must keep order, but excess of severity is not the path to order. On the contrary, it is the path to the bomb.'¹

The Extremist agitation, led by Tilak, and mounting terrorism were making the Viceroy nervous. In the summer of 1907, he wrote to Morley: 'We all feel that we are mere sojourners in the land, only camping and on the march.' And Morley's reaction was: 'Your way of putting this helps me to realize how intensely artificial and unnatural is our mighty Raj, and it sets one wondering whether it can possibly last. It surely cannot, and our only business is to do what we can to make the next transition whatever it may turn out to be, something of an improvement.'²

Morley apparently meant that the Viceroy must soon choose between the Congress and the terrorists for appeasement. It was impossible and un-British to negotiate with the terrorists who would not be satisfied with anything short of complete British withdrawal. The Congress demand was too modest to be refused: it only wanted a further increase in the Indian membership of the Legislative Councils, and would not mind the Viceroy or the Governor retaining the power of veto to over-rule the Councils. In the new circumstances, the basically old policy again commended itself to Calcutta and London: Appease the Congress, but withhold the Muslims from making common cause with it. This is clear from Morley's letter to Minto.³

Political developments in India prepared the ground for the Indian Councils Bill, 1909. Speaking on the Bill, the British Prime Minister, Asquith, recognized in the Indian situation the warrant for a change. He said: 'But the fact remains that there are in India things which are inevitable, but which were not foreseen; such, for instance, as the spread of education, the great inter-communion between the East and the West, and the infiltration among the educated classes of the Indian people of ideas which 50 or 60 years ago were perfectly alien to them and which nobody ever imagined would exist. These have brought about a different state

¹ Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, pp. 269-70.

² Mary Minto, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

³ See pp. 92-3 of this book.

of things. Owing to a number of causes of this kind you cannot rest where you are. It is most desirable in the circumstances to give to the people of India the feeling that these Legislative Councils are not mere automatons, the wires of which are pulled by the official hierarchy. It is of very great importance from that point of view that the non-official element, should be in the ascendant, subject to proper safeguards.'

The 1909 Act enlarged all the Legislative Councils and gave them a substantial elected element, the provincial councils getting non-official majorities. The right of discussing questions of public importance was also conceded. The real power, however, remained completely in the hand of the Viceroy and the Governors. Nevertheless, the Act was a conspicuous improvement on that of 1892. But it released a tremendous amount of communal feeling which manifested itself even at the Congress platform, which had been scrupulously avoiding such manifestations in the past.

Ever since the growth of developments which led to the enactment of the Indian Councils Act of 1892, Muslim communalism had been growing slowly and steadily, and took a definite organized shape in 1906. Rightly did Muslims begin to entertain the fear that they could not get representation on the Councils even in proportion to their population, for the 1892 Councils gave them under-representation.

The Government of India took up the Muslim cause and addressed in August 1907, a letter to the provincial Governments saying: 'Under the system of election hitherto in force, Hindus largely predominate in all or almost all the electorates, with the result that comparatively few Mohammedan members have been elected and it has, however, been strongly urged that even the system of nomination (i.e., nomination of additional Muslim members by the Government) has frequently failed to secure the appointment of Mohammedans of the class by whom the community desires to be represented. The Government of India suggest, therefore, for the consideration of local Governments, the adoption of the following measures: Firstly, in addition to the small number of Mohammedans who may be able to secure election in the ordinary manner, it seems desirable in each of the Councils to assign a certain number of seats to be filled exclusively by Mohammedans. Secondly, for the purpose of filling the latter, or a proportion of

them, a special Mohammedan electorate might be constituted.'

The Government of India's despatch (No. 21 dated October 1, 1908) to the Secretary of State for India, made the following observation about the Muslim representation: 'We have carefully considered the proposals of local Governments on the subject and the large body of non-official opinions submitted. In our judgment these papers bear out to the fullest extent the conclusion that representation by classes and interests is the only practicable method of embodying the elective principle in the constitution of the Indian legislative councils.' Then, after quoting from the speeches made in the House of Lords and the House of Commons in 1892 during the discussion of the Councils Act of 1892, which affirmed representation by classes and interests, and dealing with the method employed to elect Indian representatives from different classes and interests, the despatch said: 'This electorate, however, while it has worked advantageously in the case of one class, can hardly be said to have afforded proportionate representation to the other interests concerned. Of the non-official members elected to the Imperial Council since 1893, 45 per cent have belonged to the professional middle class: the land holders have obtained 27 per cent of the seats and the Mohammedans only 12 per cent—the Indian mercantile community, a large and increasing important body have had no representation at all.' The despatch went on: 'All local Governments approve of the proposals for the special representation of Mohammedans which were made in our letter of the 24th August, 1907. These proposals are, as a rule, adversely criticised by the Hindus, who regard them as an attempt to set one religion against the other, and thus to create a counterpoise to the influence of the educated middle class. Some Hindus, however, recognise the expediency of giving special representation to the Mohammedan community, and the Bombay Presidency Association, while they object strongly to the creation of a special Mohammedan electorate, make provision in their scheme for the election of two members by the Mohammedan community. Notwithstanding their formal protest against the principle of religious representation, the Association doubtless realise that the Indian Mohammedans are much more than a religious body.'⁴

⁴ *Papers Relating to Constitutional Reforms in India, 1908.* (Government of India Report), pp. 8-13.

In vain were British rulers and Muslim leaders searching for adequate Muslim representation in the Legislative Council formed from time to time under the 1892 Act. Under that Act, the association of Indians with the law-making bodies was provided for, not on the basis of numerical strength of different 'classes and interests', but according to the importance of each class and each interest—the criterion of importance was one that suited the smooth continuance of the British rule. The main interests sought to be represented by the 1892 Act were landlords, Universities, commerce, and so on. In commerce and industry, Muslims were generally conspicuous by their absence; in Universities, they were few and far between; in the landed aristocracy, Hindus far outnumbered them. How could these interests be expected to elect persons who were not associated with them; obviously, Muslims not directly concerned with these interests could not be trusted to ventilate their grievances and requirements. The local bodies, which also constituted electoral colleges for the election of certain number of members for the Councils, were themselves elected on very restricted franchise based on property qualifications, and Muslims were generally poorer than Hindus.

The British rulers of India were not uninformed people; they kept themselves posted with every detail of Indian life; and it would be wrong to assume that the method of selection they were providing for and the interests they wished to be represented in the Councils would yield numerically an adequate representation to the Muslims. They never provided for numerical representation. Therefore, the grievance the Government of India recorded in their letter to the provincial Governments (quoted above) was the result of the provisions which the British Government had made in the Act and the Government of India in the regulations framed under that Act. But the grievance was attributed, by some Muslim leaders directly and by the British rulers indirectly, to the greed of the Hindus, and an assumption was allowed to prevail that Hindus would not elect an adequate number of Muslims, and that the representatives of the Muslims should be chosen through a separate electorate.

In the sphere of local bodies, where the electorate was not restricted to special classes and included the lower middle class of Hindus and Muslims, and in the constituencies where Muslim candidates

happened to be better educated and more popular than their Hindu rivals, they (Muslims) were elected even in predominantly Hindu constituencies. This phenomenon was more noticeable in U.P., where Muslim pupils in secondary schools were more numerous in relation to their population than Hindu pupils, and at that level of education, Muslims of that Province did not lag behind Hindus. The President of the 1911 Congress, Bishan Narayan Dhar (a barrister of Calcutta), collected figures to prove that considerations of religion did not divide voters. In his presidential address he said that 'in as many as 29 district boards out of 45, the proportion of Mohammedan members was greater than the proportion of Mohammedans to the total population'. According to him, of the 663 members of the district board, 445 were Hindus and 189 Muslims (exclusive of official members); and in the Municipal Boards, 562 were Hindus and 310 Muslims. While the 1909 Act was under preparation and 'opinion' seemed to be swinging in favour of a separate Muslim electorate, the Secretary of State for India, Morley, drew up a plan (in November 1908) providing for mixed electoral colleges to elect a certain number of Muslims according to the proportion of their population in the province which would be represented by these colleges. But the plan did not succeed. While speaking on the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill, 1909, Morley explained why he offered the plan for consideration to the Government of India and why it was abandoned. 'The political idea', he said 'at the bottom of this recommendation, which has found no little favour, was that such composite action would bring the two great communities more closely together, and this hope of promoting harmony was held by men of high Indian authority and experience who were among my advisers at the India Office. But the Mohammedans protested that the Hindus would elect a pro-Hindu Mohammedan upon it.'

Among the Mohammedans who 'protested', the most notable was Ameer Ali, who, on January 27, 1909, (while the Reform Bill was before Parliament) led a deputation to the Secretary of State for India on behalf of the Muslim League in London and also, as he claimed in his address, on behalf of the Indian Muslim League, and placed before him the 'views of the Mussalmans of India'. The points he made out were: (1) any injustice and any suspicion that the British were unjust to Mohammedans in India would

provoke a severe and injurious reaction in Constantinople; (2) unfairness had been caused to the Mohammedan community by reckoning in the census of Hindus a large multitude of lower castes who were not entitled to be there; (3) however ready the country may be for constitutional reforms, the interests of the two great communities of India must be considered and dealt with separately; (4) for the purpose of electing members to the provincial councils, electoral colleges should be composed exclusively of Mohammedans whose numbers and mode of grouping should be fixed by executive authority. In short, there should be 'adequate, real, and genuine Mohammedan representation'. Lord Morley sent away the deputation completely satisfied, saying 'the aim of the Government and yours is identical'.⁵

The Ameer Ali deputation also demanded that, if there was a Hindu on the Viceroy's Executive Council, there should be two Indian members and one should be a Mohammedan. The Secretary of State rejected this demand arguing that 'reference to the Hindu community or the Mohammedan community in respect to the position of the Viceroy's Executive is entirely wide of the mark'. But since the first solitary Indian member of the Viceroy's Council happened to be a Hindu, Muslim leaders naturally looked upon his appointment with envy, and would not be contented until a Muslim also sat with his Hindu compatriot in the Executive Council.

The electoral scheme as visualised by the rulers and subsequently incorporated in the regulations made under the Act of 1909, gave Muslims a separate electorate and also retained their right to vote in the general electorate. The non-communal general electorate was composed of certain big landlords, members of grouped municipalities and district boards, Universities and chambers of commerce, so that election was entirely indirect. On the other hand, the separate Mohammedan electorates operated by way of direct election in territorial constituencies with a franchise based in the main on certain property qualifications.

In this scheme, the order in which full Muslim representation was suggested to be ensured by the Congress leaders was reversed. They had proposed that the Muslims would first have an opportunity to secure representation for their community through the

⁵ Morley, *Indian Speeches*.

general electorate, and if they failed to secure the number of representatives fixed for them, they would make up the deficiency by special Muslim electorates to be provided for in electoral regulations. The difference between this and the Government scheme was that while it gave Muslims representation just in proportion to their population, the latter ensured the proportionate representation through communal electorates and also allowed them the privilege of contesting in the general electorates. Ostensibly this latter provision retained a semblance of a mixed electorate, but it created an apprehension in the minds of most Hindu leaders that after securing their proportionate number, the Muslims would prey upon the general seats which were regarded as the Hindu share.

The distribution of non-official elective seats under the 1892 Act had left Muslims murmuring; now, the Act of 1909 left Hindus unsatisfied.

Other features of the scheme which threatened to arouse Hindu communalism—as if to match the Muslim communalism which had been growing slowly for a quarter of a century—were: (1) With separate electorates Muslims got direct franchise also, which was denied to Hindus and other communities. This definitely conferred a superior position on Muslims, for direct franchise was the first step towards the evolution of representative institutions. Muslims who paid income tax on an income of Rs. 3,000 or more, or land revenue in the same amount, and those who were graduates of five years' standing, were made voters, while, as it was resentfully protested by Madan Mohan Malaviya in his presidential address to the 1909 Congress, non-Muslims, even if they paid a hundred times as much income tax or land revenue and were graduates of thirty years' standing, had no right of vote by virtue of property or educational qualification; (2) Muslims were in a minority in all provinces except the Punjab, East Bengal and Assam, and for this reason, it was argued on their behalf, they needed protection. The official recognition of this fact led Malaviya to ask why 'no such protection has been extended to the Hindu minorities in the two Hindu minority provinces'. 'The Hindu minorities in the said two provinces', he said, 'have been left out severely in the cold'; (3) While Muslims had been put on a higher rung, the Hindus had been pushed one step down in Bombay and Madras by taking away what had been offered by the Act of 1892. Electoral colleges of

municipal boards and district boards could, under that Act, elect an outsider also to the provincial councils, but the Act of 1909 restricted candidature for councils only to members of the boards. This recession seemed all the more irksome to Hindu leaders of the Congress when they saw the electoral advance Muslims had gained from the new scheme.

The 1909 Congress expressed 'its strong sense of disapproval of the creation of separate electorates on the basis of religion' and resolved that the regulations framed under the Act had 'caused widespread dissatisfaction throughout the country'.

Malaviya's presidential address was a noticeable departure from the common run of addresses of his predecessors in as much as it openly flung the aspersion at Muslims that they 'did not trouble themselves with any question of reform in the system of administration' until 1906, in which year a Muslim deputation waited on the Viceroy, as a forerunner of the Muslim League. Malaviya unequivocally meant that impending reforms in the Councils made Muslims conscious, and 'they suddenly developed an interest, and an excessive interest too, in politics'. Hindus called back to their minds all those political agitations—violent and constitutional—which had shaken British statesmen to the realization that peace in India would be difficult to maintain without a further instalment of reforms. They also recalled that prominent Muslim leaders and their British well-wishers had been constantly advising Muslims to hold aloof from politics. But human psychology being what it is, Muslims, whether they wanted or worked for political reforms or not, would not consent to be ignored, and therefore criticised the system of selection or election which did not secure them adequate representation in the 1892 Councils. To this factor must inevitably be ascribed, partly if not wholly, the growth of Muslim communalism between 1892 and 1909. These were stormy years in post-1857 India and often made British rulers nervous. There is, therefore, justification for the inference that some of those associated with the Indian administration thought of unduly placating Muslims as a counterpoise against the aggressive nationalism led and fed mainly, rather exclusively, by Hindus. An offer of a proportionately greater share to the non-agitating Muslims in the Councils was interpreted as an inducement to them to stay away from agitational politics, for they were already getting more than they could claim.

We get confirmation of the above inference from an account of Ramsay MacDonald (later Prime Minister of Britain) recorded in his book, *The Awakening of India*, two years after the Act of 1909 was passed. He said: 'Some of the far-seeing members of the Mohammedan community are already beginning to feel that they have made a mistake. Several spoke to me with bitterness about the way certain of their leaders had consented to play a game planned for them by Anglo-Indian officials, while in the minds of others who were still in favour of what had been done, a knowledge was dawning that there were dangers ahead and that they might have been better protected if they had not asked for so much.'⁶ At another place in the book he wrote: 'The Mohammedan leaders are inspired by certain Anglo-Indian officials; these officials have pulled wires at Simla and in London and sowed discord between the Hindu and the Mohammedan communities by showing the Muslim special favours. Whether this was done deliberately and diabolically on the principle of "Divide and Rule", or whether it was a mere blunder showing once again how very little some of our responsible officials understand India or can estimate the effects of their actions, the public cannot say, because the true explanation of Lord Minto's speeches and Lord Morley's counter-speeches and the contradictory dispatches is still a secret.'⁷

The prevalent belief that official mind was working, or at any rate wished, to divide Muslims from Hindus is confirmed by Lady Minto's diary, from which a relevant extract has been quoted earlier.

The electoral scheme of 1909 showed Muslims that they would get without agitation more than Hindus would get with agitation. The condemnation of the scheme on the Congress platform made up the Muslim mind that Muslim interests could best be promoted through communal solidarity, and not through collaboration with political agitators.

⁶ Ramsay MacDonald, *The Awakening in India*, p. 129.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-7.

CHAPTER XIII
INFLUENCE OF RELIGION

DEMOCRATIC RULE presupposes democratic education; preparing the mind for liberty, equality, the rights of citizenship, an electoral system, parliamentary procedure and functions, and secular behaviour. Educated Hindus had been assimilating democratic ideas under the Congress and under other inspirations, but the Muslims leadership had denied the Muslims these opportunities. Between this leadership and Islam's religious doctors, even educated Muslims complacently felt protected and denied themselves political enlightenment. The Congress never gave the faintest hint of Hindu bias, either through resolutions or through speeches, and kept itself scrupulously above religion. But by withholding Muslims from it, designing people were turning it into virtually a Hindu organization, and one inevitably witnessed the phenomenon of Hindus progressing politically, and Muslims lagging behind. Some Muslim leaders were conscious of this fact, and regretfully gave vent to their feelings. One of them was Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk. Once speaking on the 'Causes of the Decline of the Mohammedan Nation', he said that his community could 'hope for no progress so long as they merely glorified in the achievement of their ancestors and did not strive to emulate the Hindus in their eagerness to acquire the new knowledge'.

But a discordant speech like Mohsin-ul-Mulk's was usually not relished, and he himself had to descend to practical politics. In a speech he made later on, he observed: 'Gentlemen, remember and remember well that we can never secure any appreciable amount of success in our endeavours without the help of that revered and respected body of *ulema* (the learned of the old type). A large majority of our community does not listen to our voice, and we have no means of introducing enlightened ideas to the masses. But the voice of that body of men who hold sway over the hearts of the entire community, will be listened to by every Mussalman from Peshawar to Burmah and from Kashmir to Madras. Gentlemen, there can be no doubt that Mussalmans, however ignorant and imprudent they might be, have a heart which is full

of love for Islam and a temper which is influenced with religious fervour. And to them Islam is nothing but what is expounded by the *ulema*.⁷

Yet Congress leaders like Tilak, in spite of frustrations, never abandoned their efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity; official manoeuvres, the defiant attitude of Muslim leaders, and the uncompromising *fatwas* of the *ulema*, did not daunt them. Often, in his speeches, Tilak compared British rule to Muslim rule, holding the latter to have been more benevolent. Many Muslims from the rank-and-file listened to him, even entertained him, but being understandably unable to influence political decisions for their community, their attitude was never represented in the higher councils.

While the Muslim League was in the making at Simla, Tilak was exhorting Hindus and Muslims to take to Swadeshi. In Poona, which had been the storm-centre of Hindu orthodoxy, Muslims were coming forward to join hands with Hindus. Influenced by Tilak, a Muslim leader of Hyderabad, Kazi Saifuddin, addressed a mixed gathering of Hindus and Muslims, and told them that the two communities should act jointly in furtherance of the interests of India and in carrying on the Swadeshi agitation for the industrial regeneration of the country. Tilak's ardent nationalism inspired Muslims to participate in the Shivaji celebrations. Some Muslims spoke at Tilak's public meetings and vindicated his claim that Shivaji was as much a hero of Mohammedans as of Hindus. In support of Muslims joining the celebrations, the Muslim historian, Maulavi Abdul Karim's interpretation was invoked. It was that Shivaji was entitled to the respect of Mussalmans because he abstained from desecrating mosques or showing dishonour to the Koran in the territories conquered by him.¹

Again, it was the tendentious section of the Anglo-Indian and the British press which revived, in 1906, the old argument that Shivaji having treacherously assassinated Afzal Khan, the Muslims should hold aloof from the Shivaji festival.

One wades in vain through archives and through old newspapers to find whether the Ganesh Festival, the Shivaji celebration, or any other political movement bearing a Hindu name, estranged the Muslims to politics. On the other hand, there is conclusive proof,

¹ *Kesari*, June 19, 1906.

as has been discussed in the previous pages, that the ignorance of the *ulema* and the designs of others stunted the political growth of the Muslims.

During this period, the Indian Muslims produced some progressive religious commentators and thinkers, whose writings should have pushed Muslims into the political arena. But they themselves did not follow up their thoughts with deeds, and the Muslims were left groping.

One of them was Chiragh Ali, who wrote mostly in English and whose pen had much controversial force. He began life as a Government servant, and rose gradually and steadily. In his book, *Proposed Reform*, he endeavoured to show that 'Mohammedanism as taught by Mohammed possesses sufficient elasticity to enable it to adapt itself to the social and political revolutions going on around it'. He said that the Koran was not a barrier to political, social, or moral innovations. Another writer, Syed Mehdi Ali, also in the bureaucracy, rising from a small post to a handsome one—his reward for loyalty during the Revolt—declared in 1906 that the Sultan of Turkey was not to be considered Khalifa of the Indian Muslims. Khuda Bakhsh, in his *Essays: Indian and Islamic*, displayed tremendous courage in saying: 'It would be the merest affectation to contend that religious and social systems, bequeathed to us thirteen hundred years ago, should now be adopted in their entirety without the slightest change or alteration.' But, fearing lest his advice be misconstrued, he cautioned Muslims: 'We must, for the present, banish politics from the programme of our activity.'

This was the usual conclusion reached by most Muslim writers after they had dilated on reforms. Mohammed Shibli Nomani, a reputed writer, told his co-religionists that fidelity to the ruling power was a religious duty for a Muslim. Similar was the attitude of Chiragh Ali and Mehdi Ali. Soaked in Islamic thoughts and writing mainly on Islam, these writers made no contribution to the spread of political thought among Muslims. Even those saturated with European civilization, like Ameer Ali, confined themselves to a study of Islam. Ameer Ali wrote a brilliant history, reprinted again and again, of the ancient and noble Muslim Arab civilization. The section on Hinduism in his book is deprecatory. Even the illustrious Urdu poet, Mohammed Iqbal, despite his

evolutionary philosophy 'attached great importance to a static insistence on the finality of Islam as a social system never to be superseded'. While the Congress leaders spoke on democracy, secularism and politics, he, like others, delivered lectures on Islam. As Muslims, they should be as enthusiastic about Islam as they were; but as if in obedience to a commandment, they carefully avoided politics, although they believed that the Koran did not prohibit it, and although their conviction even dictated to them to transcend the limitations of the Koran.

The tallest among them, the Aga Khan, who headed the Muslim League for many years, could not separate religion from politics; even the founding of the Muslim University at Aligarh was an Islamic event which could 'arrest the decadence of Islam'.

Contented with religion and a little of communal politics, and enjoying leadership of the Muslims, Aligarh was leading a peaceful life. But in 1909, a non-political issue involved it in a controversy with the Lieutenant-Governor of U.P.; Aligarh was snubbed and the even tenor was disturbed. On February 22, the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Hewett, was on a visit to the Aligarh College and was presented with an address of welcome by the College trustees. Hewett in his reply expressed the view that there should not be more than sixty students in a class, and that a teacher should not ordinarily take more than four periods. Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk, who was then the secretary of the College, asked the English Principal to give him a time-table. The Nawab's demand was construed by the politician-Principal as interference in his work, and instead of complying with it, he sent in his resignation, forwarding a copy to the Lieutenant-Governor, who was the Patron of the College. The Principal then proceeded to Lucknow to represent his case personally to the Lieutenant-Governor. Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk, too, was summoned to Lucknow, by the Patron, who, asserting his authority as the Lieutenant-Governor, asked the Nawab to explain certain complaints made by the Principal. After hearing both the sides, Hewett upheld the stand taken by the Principal, and the Nawab was asked to append his signature to the judgment.

The self-respect of the Muslims was roused, and an agitational mood created. The trustees held a meeting and contended that the Lieutenant-Governor, as Patron, had no authority to interfere

in the affairs of the College. The protest was voiced at public meetings of Muslims in a number of towns in India, the copies of the proceedings being sent to the Lieutenant-Governor. The statesman in him yielded to this demonstration of protest, which he had never expected from loyal Muslim leaders. At his own suggestion, a deputation met him, and he withdrew his order. But he was left wondering what could possibly be the cause of this indignant agitation, the first of its kind among Muslims. Was it the Muslim League that had created a new spirit? It was a fact; organization is power. He, therefore, influenced the Aga Khan to shift the head office of the organization from Aligarh to Lucknow. It was a welcome development, and ended the European Principal's stewardship of Muslim politics.

There was now a refreshing departure in the League's politics. The League session of 1910, held at Nagpur, introduces us to a decade of national unity and unprecedented political awakening. We see Muslim leaders throwing away the shackles of British tutelage and taking long strides to catch up with the Congress. The change began with the working chairman's, Syed Nabiullah's address to the Nagpur session. He made an attack on bureaucracy and asserted that the Civil Service officers were instrumental in creating dissensions. He suggested that defence expenditure was much too high and that the army stationed on the Frontier should be reduced. The League stretched out its hand for Hindu-Muslim unity, and, at its instance, leaders of the two communities gathered in a conference at Allahabad in January 1911. Not much was achieved, but the ground was prepared for further conciliatory talks.

As if Fate had now ordained a break-up of the Anglo-Muslim alliance, several factors successively appeared to antagonise the Muslims. It was, however, vain to hope for the emergence of a unified nationalism from these developments or to interpret them as the undoing of the Simla mischief. Only in the dissolution of the League could one visualise the building of secular unity. But the League had come to stay as a communal organization, and would continue and gather strength as a champion of the Muslims.

The annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1911, imparted the same urgency to Muslim politics as the fact of Partition had

to nationalist politics. How could Muslims now reconcile themselves to the annulment when they had been told again and again by Curzon that Eastern Bengal had been created for their good ? And how could they forget that Hindu and Muslim blood had been shed to usher the new province into existence ? In spite of the Aga Khan's advice that the annulment would prove advantageous to the Muslims, the majority of Muslim leaders regarded it as a great injury to the Muslim cause. Nawab Salimullah, who presided over the League session held at Calcutta in March 1912, lamenting the announcement, said that while the new province practically gave Muslims no additional advantage, it created a gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims. It was not correct to say, he asserted, that the Partition was the result of Hindu-Muslim differences; the real difference arose from the refusal of Muslims to join Hindus in revolutionary activities against the British. In his presidential speech was to be found a definite desire for a rapprochement.

CHAPTER XIV

SHADOW OF TURKEY OVER INDIA*

THE BEGINNING of the Muslim League's transformation into a quasi-political body coincided with some uneasy developments in Muslim countries of the Middle East, causing no small amount of concern to Indian Muslims.

The Turkish Empire, ruled by a Muslim Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, who also enjoyed the unique position of the Khalifa (Caliph), was the pride of most Muslims of the world, especially those whose primary loyalty was to the Khalifa, and not to the nation of which they were citizens. But, paradoxically, while the Sultan commanded the unquestioned allegiance of foreign Muslims, in his own country his popularity was fast waning. With the army refusing to obey him, he was in constant fear of deposition. In July 1908, a revolutionary but constitutional party, dominated by the political principles of Western Europe, virtually dictated to the Sultan the terms on which he could continue as King. This party consisted of persons who had been driven from Turkey by the despotism of the Sultan; but new revolutionaries came up and desired the overthrow of the despotic, corrupt and inefficient government, and the creation in its place of a modern liberal system. Having lost control over the army also, the Sultan recognized the danger and ordered elections for a parliament. This revolution, almost bloodless, was received with great enthusiasm throughout the entire length and breadth of the Sultan's dominions in which resided men of several nationalities—Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians and Turks. The Sultan retained his throne, but it became evident that his position as the Khalifa was no more a bulwark to keep him in power.

But even after the real controlling influence in the realm had passed to the revolutionary Young Turks, discontent remained, and its cause was the Young Turks' failure to bring together the various races on the basis of liberty for all. While discontent was growing, and the Balkan States were aglow with indignation at

* The account of terrorist activities is based on the Sedition Committee Report, 1918.

the treatment being meted out to the members of their races resident in Macedonia, England began her occupation of Egypt, and Italy began the conquest of Tripoli in September 1911, in fulfilment of a wish Italy had nurtured for many years; that is, that Tripoli ought to belong to her. The dismemberment of Turkey had definitely begun. During the war in Tripoli, the Balkan States negotiated with each other with a view to united action against Turkey. 'Terrible persecution, even massacres of the Christians in Macedonia in which large numbers of Greeks, Bulgarians, and Serbians lost their lives, inflamed the people of those states with the desire to liberate their brothers in Macedonia.' Therefore, in October 1912, the four Balkan States, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, declared war on Turkey, and achieved overwhelming success within a short period. The war ended with the treaty of London (May 30, 1913), as a result of which the Sultan's dominions in Europe were diminished. But the Ottoman Empire was still extensive, including Asia Minor, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia; in all, over 700,000 square miles.

These events coincided with German preparations for a world war, and Germany naturally found in aggrieved Turkey a dependable ally. The Turkish Government was strongly pro-German. Its Minister of War, Enver Pasha, had been a military attache in Berlin, and had formed the most intimate relations with German military circles; the Turkish army was largely officered by Germans. The proof of Turkey's alliance with Germany was provided by the Turkish Government permitting two German warships to enter the Bosphorus, whence they sailed into the Black Sea and bombarded Russian ports. This incident was followed by the Russian, British, and French declarations of war on Turkey in November 1914. Unlike the Tripoli and Balkan wars, the new war was not forced on Turkey; but her desire to avenge herself on her enemies was natural.

These developments unfolded simultaneously with the growth of Muslim discontent against the British in India over the annulment of the Partition of Bengal and other matters. They stirred the more advanced Muslims to seek contact with the Turkish Nationalist leaders. They learnt from the Turks to read into the British foreign policy a purpose of deliberate hostility to Islam itself. They saw in the British occupation of Egypt, in the Anglo-

French agreement with regard to Persia, and in the Italian invasion of Tripoli, the gradual development of a scheme in which all the powers of Christendom were involved for the extinction of the temporal power of Islam, and with it inevitably, according to orthodox doctrine, of its spiritual authority. 'An astonishing wave of sympathy', to use Jawaharlal Nehru's words, 'for Turkey roused the Indian Muslims. All India felt that sympathy and anxiety, but in the case of Muslims this was keener and something almost personal.' Some Muslim leaders, with funds collected in India, themselves went to Constantinople and got into close personal touch with the Turkish nationalists.

The London Branch of the Muslim League was so stirred by these events that it appealed to the Muslims of India to cast in their lot with the Hindus, and to identify themselves with the political objectives of the Indian National Congress. But several of the prominent Muslim leaders of India did not agree that the developments in the Middle East warranted a change in the Muslim attitude towards the Congress. The topmost among them was Maulana Mohammed Ali, who, a decade later presided over an annual session of the Congress. His outspoken comment on the London Branch's suggestion was: 'Soft-headed and some self-advertising folk have gone about proclaiming that the Mussalmans should join the Congress because the Government had revoked the Partition of Bengal or because Persia and Turkey are in trouble. We are simply amused at this irresponsible fatuity. But when a responsible body like the London Branch of the All-India Muslim League talks of close co-operation between Hindus and Muslims because the Mussalmans of Tripoli and Persia have been the victims of European aggression, we realise for the first time that even sane and level-headed men can run off at a tangent and confuse the issues. What has the Muslim situation abroad to do with the condition of the Indian Mussalmans? Either their interests come actually into conflict with those of the Hindus, or they have been all along guilty of a great political meanness and hypocrisy. Has the Indian situation undergone a change?'¹

But in his regard for Turkey and hostility to the British, born of the Turkish episode, Mohammed Ali yielded to none, and brought out an English weekly, the *Comrade*, in 1912. With his faith already

¹ Quoted in Mahadeo Desai's *Maulana Azad*, p. 32.

shaken over the undoing of East Bengal, the Balkan War provoked more hostility, and he wrote passionately in his paper in favour of Turkey and the Islamic tradition she represented. Progressively his anti-British attitude stiffened, and the entry of Turkey into World War I completed the process. An article in *Comrade*, entitled 'The Choice of the Turks' put an end to the paper, which was stopped by the Government. Soon after this he was arrested and interned for the duration of the War and a year after.

Several other Muslim leaders also issued, during those years, weekly papers almost entirely devoted to the cause of Turkey. The most important of them was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who many years later was President of the Congress for several terms. Soaked in Islamic tradition and with many personal contacts with prominent Muslim leaders and reformers in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Iran, Azad was powerfully affected by political and cultural developments in these countries. His weekly, *Al-Hilal* put out material which the Government of India considered highly objectionable. A security was demanded from the paper under the Press Act, and ultimately its press was confiscated in 1914. Azad then brought out another weekly, but this too was closed in 1916, when he was interned by the Government and kept in detention for nearly four years.

In the terrorist movement of India also, Germany and Turkey found many allies. The Turco-German combination produced a peculiar attraction for Indians, both Hindus and Muslims. The celebrated Hindu revolutionary, Har Dayal, started an Indian Revolutionary Society in Berlin, with the object of establishing a republic in India with foreign aid. While he was in Britain and the USA, his co-workers and followers were all Hindus. He was a restless soul, impatient for the emancipation of his country; his Hinduism seems quite dominant from an article he contributed to the *Pratap* of Lahore (partly reproduced in *The Times of India* dated July 25, 1925) much after the end of the War. He observed in that article: 'I declare that the future of the Hindu race, of Hindustan and of the Punjab, rests on these four pillars: (1) Hindu Sangathan (consolidation); (2) Hindu Raj; (3) *Shuddhi* (purification by conversion to Hinduism) of Muslims; and (4) conquest and *shuddhi* of Afghanistan and the Frontiers . . . Afghanistan and the hilly regions of the frontier were formerly part of India, but

are at present under the domination of Islam . . . Just as there is Hindu religion in Nepal, so there must be Hindu institutions in Afghanistan and the frontier territory; otherwise it is useless to win Swaraj.'

Educated Hindus those days had developed considerable regard for Germany; it was in that country that the Hindu scriptures had received attention, and Sanskrit was studied with greater fondness than in India itself. On the other hand, Turkey obtained not regard but complete devotion to her cause from the Muslims of India. When a periodical journal, *Jahan-i-Islam* (the Muslim world) was started in Constantinople about May 1914, to instigate Indians against the British, a Punjabi Muslim, Abu Saiyad, offered to prepare the Urdu portion of the journal, which contained articles in Arabic, Urdu, and Hindi. Copies of the *Jahan-i-Islam* were freely obtainable in Lahore and Calcutta.

Turkey, like Germany, had been installing her pillars of influence in the British Empire before the World War had started. In 1913, one Ahmad Mullah Daud, a member of the trading community in Rangoon, was offered the office of Turkish Consul in Rangoon. He accepted it and held it at the outbreak of the War. In the last week of December 1914, Kasim Mansur, a Gujerati Muslim, sent a letter to his son in Rangoon, with which was forwarded an appeal to the Turkish Consul, Daud, from the Malaya States Guides—one of the two regiments in Singapore—informing him that the regiment was prepared to mutiny against the British Government. The letter was intercepted by the British authorities and the Malaya States Guides was transferred to another place. Yet the mutiny did take place, according to plan, in the Fifth Light Infantry of Singapore, if not in the Malaya States Guides. The Fifth Light Infantry, consisting entirely of Muslims largely from India, was due to leave for Hong Kong and a transport was standing by to embark them. As the battalion's ammunition was being loaded into lorries at the Alexandra Barracks, a shot was fired. An outbreak immediately followed. Those who showed signs of loyalty were shot down. The mutineers broke up into three parties; each was assigned an important job. A terrible massacre then followed. A number of British officers and a few Germans were killed. Another regiment which narrowly escaped mutiny was the 13th Baluchis of Bombay. Two hundred men of the Baluchis

were court-martialled. In October 1915, the Muslim Ghadar (Revolutionary) Party of Rangoon planned a rising on the occasion of the Bakr-Id, when English were to be killed 'instead of goats and cows'. The rising was, however, postponed. The Party was organized by Muslims who had gone to Turkey as members of the Red Crescent Society to afford medical relief to the Turkish Army in the Balkan war. After Turkey entered the World War, they came back and settled in Rangoon.

In February 1915, fifteen Muslim students of Lahore left their college and joined the Mujahidin, rebels, residing in what once was the Wahabis' Frontier colony. They were followed by a number of Muslims from different parts of the country, the outstanding among them being Obeidullah (a Sikh convert) and Mohammed Mian Ansari. They contacted some helpers in Hedjaz. In 1916, Ansari returned with a declaration of *jihād* from the hand of Ghalib Pash, then Turkish Military Governor of the Hedjaz. While on his way, he distributed copies of this document, known as the *Ghalibnama*, both in India and among the Frontier tribes.

That is how Indian Muslims abroad joined hands with Hindus in revolutionary activities during the war. Whatever the cause, they were active where Turkey, in one form or another, was in the picture. They were conspicuous by their absence in the revolutionary activities inside the country.

The new wave of enthusiasm did not leave even moderate Muslim leaders unaffected, and though the Muslim League did not go as far as many Muslim individuals had done, it transformed itself into a political organization at its annual session of 1913. Its object henceforth became 'the promotion among Indians of loyalty to the British Crown, the protection of the rights of Mohammedans, and without detriment to the foregoing object, the attainment of the system of self-government suitable to India'. The main resolution of the session stressed the necessity of Hindus and Muslims joining hands to work for national progress. The Congress delightfully responded to the gesture, and some Congress leaders attended the League session. As if the steam had thrown off the lid, several Muslim leaders at the session asked the League to go further than it had done in its resolution. Men like Shibli Nomani read poems deriding the word 'suitable' in the new constitution of the League—the same Nomani, who in 1908 had told

Muslims that 'fidelity to the ruling power was a religious duty for a Muslim.'

The expansion of the League's activities and its going the Congress way made it unsuitable to deserve the Aga Khan's association as its permanent president and financier, and he withdrew from it after 1913. There was no session of the League in 1914, but next year it resumed its activities and appointed, on the motion of M. A. Jinnah, a committee 'to draw up, in consultation with other communities a scheme of political reform'. The Congress and the League were now holding their annual sessions simultaneously and at one and the same place. The delegates of the one attended invariably the sessions of the other.

Sir Syed and Aligarh were undone. They were also undone in respect of their attitude of loyalty to the British rulers against the Sultan of Turkey and his Khilafat. The President of the 1915 session of the League, Mazhar-ul-Haq, sadly remarked: 'It is a sore point with us that the Government of our Caliph should be at war with the Government of our King-Emperor. We should all have been pleased to see our Brethren in the Faith fighting side by side with the soldiers of the British Empire. Whatever view one may take of the policy adopted by Islamic countries in the present war, Indian Muslims never desired, nor ever can desire, hostility between the British and Islamic Governments. That hostility should have come about is the greatest misfortune that could have befallen Muslims. It is the cherished desire of the followers of Islam that when peace comes—and pray God in that it may come soon—Muslim countries should be dealt with such a way that their dignity will not be compromised in the future.'

Contrast this sentiment and this prayer with the attitude of Sir Syed who, shortly before his death, preached loyalty to the British rulers of India, even if they 'were compelled to pursue an unfriendly policy towards Turkey'. As late as 1906, Syed Mehdi Ali (Mohsin-ul-Mulk) proclaimed that the Sultan of Turkey was not to be considered Khalifa of the Indian Muslims, and stressed religiously binding allegiance due to the British.

Many Hindus and other non-Muslims had the same feeling of sympathy towards Turkey, but their approach differed from the Muslims.² For the former, it was sympathy with a foreign

² Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India* (first edition), pp. 408-9.

country in distress; for the latter it was part of a religious duty and an expression of pan-Islamic urge. Such Muslims, as Jawaharlal Nehru says, 'searched for their national roots elsewhere. To some extent they found them in the Afghan and Moghul periods of India, but this was not quite enough to fill the vacuum. This search for cultural roots led Indian Moslems (that is some of them of the middle classes) to Islamic history and to the periods when Islam was a conquering and creative force in Baghdad, Spain, Constantinople, Central Asia, and elsewhere. The Moghul Emperors in India recognized no Khalifa or spiritual superior outside India. It was only after the complete collapse of the Moghul power early in the 19th century that the name of the Turkish Sultan began to be mentioned in Indian mosques. This practice was confirmed after the Mutiny.'

The loyalty to the Khilafat was revived by the Wahabis, whose struggle had a religious background. The post-Wahabi politics of the Muslims during the domination of the Aligarh school once again uprooted the Khilafat influence. In the second decade of the current century, the anti-British attitude of Muslims again revived it. It was a strange mixture of politics and the Khilafat.

CHAPTER XV
HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

THE CONGRESS and the Muslim League were now like brothers. Both pledged, at their annual sessions, loyalty to the British Crown, and both demanded the expansion of democratic institutions in India. By far the great majority of educated Muslims were with the League, but the Congress obstinately maintained its secular character, and some Muslims still attended its sessions as delegates. The Congress session of 1913, in which year the League had definitely set its foot on a wider road, was presided over by a Muslim, Nawab Syed Mohammed. He was a landlord and Khan Bahadur, and had been for seventeen years a member of the Provincial and Imperial Legislative Councils. He had been attending the Congress since 1894. Among the regular Muslim delegates at the Congress was M. A. Jinnah, the maker of Pakistan. They were friendly to the Muslim League, and did not dispute the League claim that so far as the Muslims were concerned, it alone could deliver the goods.

In 1916, the All-India Congress Committee and the representatives of the Muslim League met at Calcutta, and discussed the question of Muslim representation in Legislative Councils and the form of representative government to be demanded, and took some tentative decisions, which were placed next December at the annual sessions of the Congress and the League for ratification. The two bodies met simultaneously at Lucknow, and at their meetings there was a spirit of complete unity and understanding. This was on the basis not of the fusion of Hindus and Muslims into one political community, but of an agreement to recognize them as two distinct communities, and by proceeding on this basis to confront the British with a united demand for constitutional reforms. A scheme of communal representation and constitutional reforms was drawn up and adopted by the Congress and the League. It is known as the Lucknow Pact of 1916, and is a landmark in India's political history.

There were two parts of the scheme. One dealt with the Muslim question and the other with the reforms. The first part laid down:

Adequate provisions should be made for the representation of important minorities by election and the Mohammedans should be represented through special electorates on the Provincial Legislative Councils in the following proportions:

Punjab: one-half of the elected Indian members.

United Provinces: 30 per cent of the elected Indian members.

Bengal: 40 per cent of the elected Indian members.

Bihar: 25 per cent of the elected Indian members.

Central Provinces: 15 per cent of the elected Indian members.

Madras: 15 per cent of the elected Indian members.

Bombay: one-third of the elected Indian members.

Provided that no Mohammedan shall participate in any of the other elections to the Imperial or Provincial Legislative Councils, save and except those by electorates representing special interests.

Provided further that no Bill nor any clause thereof nor a resolution introduced by non-official members affecting one or the other community, which question is to be determined by the members of the community in the Legislative Council concerned, shall be proceeded with, if three-fourths of the members of that community in the particular Council, Imperial or Provincial, oppose the Bill or any clause thereof or the resolution.

The second part of the scheme of reforms demanded that in the reconstruction of the Empire, India should be raised from the status of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire as a self-governing dominion. The Provincial Legislative Councils should consist of four-fifths of elected and one-fifth of nominated members. Members of the Councils should be elected directly by the people on as broad a franchise as possible.

There was complete accord between the Congress and the Muslim League. The 1916 session of the League was presided over by M. A. Jinnah, who in his presidential address summed up the Indian problem thus: 'To put it briefly, we have a powerful and efficient bureaucracy of British officers responsible only to the British Parliament, governing, with methods known as benevolent despotism, a people that have grown fully conscious of their freedom. This is the Indian problem in a nutshell. The task of the British statesmanship is to find a prompt, peaceful, and enduring solution of this problem.'

But Jinnah uttered some significant words which became foundation for the edifice he built a quarter of a century later: 'We have a vast continent inhabited by 315 millions of people sprung from various racial stocks, inheriting various cultures, and professing a variety of religious creeds. This stupendous human group, thrown together under one physical and political environment, is still in various stages of intellectual and moral growth. All this means a great diversity of outlook, purpose, and endeavour.' Nevertheless, he emphasized that Indians were determined to prove their fitness for self-government; the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement was the sign of the birth of a united India. He entirely identified the political objectives of the Muslims with those of the Hindus. And he did not forget to emphasize that Muslims should be allowed to choose their own Caliph. He claimed that he himself and other leaders of the Muslim League were the chosen leaders of the seventy million Muslims of India.

The next year's League President, the Raja of Mahmudabad, spoke in almost the same strain, mixing up politics with the creed of Islam. He said: 'The interests of the country are paramount. We need not tarry to argue whether we are Muslims first or Indians first. The fact is we are both, and to us the question of precedence has no meaning. The League has inculcated in the Muslims a spirit of sacrifice for their country as much as for their religion.'

Despite the Lucknow Pact and all the cordiality that had prevailed between Hindu and Muslim political leaders since the new Muslim attitude, Muslims communalists were unprepared at all events to allow the development of any eventuality which might result in the evolution of a single political community in India. The Lucknow Pact conceded them considerably greater representation in all Muslim minority provinces than was warranted by their proportions. But in the Muslim majority province of Bengal, the percentage of seats allotted to the community under the Pact was short of the proportion, by about 14 per cent. This, as was pointed out by some Muslims and British authorities, was a glaring injustice to the Muslims of Bengal, and the Government of India, while accepting the proportions agreed upon in the Lucknow Pact, increased, in consultation with London, the number of Muslim seats in that province. In the case of the Punjab also, where the Muslims were allotted nine-tenths of the elective seats,

the Pact left behind what was capable of growing into a grievance in the future. On the other hand, the weightage, allowed in the Pact to the Muslims of Muslim-minority provinces, caused resentment to many Hindus, who made the Hindu Mahasabha the forum for voicing their protests. But, unlike the Muslim League, the Mahasabha suffered from a serious handicap: the virtual recognition of the League by the Congress as the sole representative of the Muslims, had reduced the Congress, for all practical purposes, to a communal organization mainly of Hindus. The Congress had done nothing to depart from secularism and to earn this characterization, but that was practically the position in which it found itself after the Lucknow Pact. Therefore, the Hindu Mahasabha, as a counterblast to the Muslim communalism represented by the Muslim League, did not grow, and the Congress continued to represent overwhelming sections of Hindus.

The series of startling developments in India during the decade between the Indian Councils Act of 1909, and the Government of India Act of 1919, compelled Delhi and London to take up the consideration of the Indian issue right in the midst of the War of 1914-18.

The terrorists had spread themselves over a large part of the country and, in spite of the reforms of 1909, every year reported a chain of conspiracies resulting in stray murders of officials, and manifestations of other forms of violence. The Hindu-Muslim compact and the Muslim League's decision to jump into politics had undone Minto's hope that the Muslims had been withheld from agitational politics. In Europe, in the USA, in the Middle East and in the Far East, many Indians had turned revolutionaries, (among them were some Muslims also) and were allying themselves with the enemies of the British to enlist their help for India's freedom struggle. The two Home Rule Leagues [Tilak's and (Mrs.) Annie Besant's] had started, just after the Lucknow Pact, their propaganda for self-government; the speakers condemned British rule, and exhorted their audiences to demand responsible government. Year after year, the Congress and the Muslim League reiterated the demand as embodied in the Lucknow Pact. Turkey's declining star was causing concern to Indian Muslims, and they were apprehensive of the British meting out disgraceful treatment to the country in which resided the crown of the Muslim world.

Apprehensions were expressed even at the meetings of the League; there were also cases of Muslim anger over Turkey bursting into violence against British officials. Powerful forces like Tilak had arrayed themselves against the war effort.

These developments brought forth the Secretary of State, Montagu's declaration (August 20, 1917) that 'the policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'. A year later, a scheme of reforms, called the Montford Report, was announced recommending direct election on a very limited franchise, a further increase in the elective element in the councils, the handing over of important departments of administration to Indian Ministers, and the incorporation with some modifications of the communal electorate as provided for in the Lucknow Pact. The substance of power was withheld, and responsible government was still a distant dream.

At this time, the Congress was passing into the hands of the Extremists led by Tilak; the Moderates, who had expelled the Extremists from the organization after Tilak's incarceration for six years, had decided to part company. The Extremists were for outright rejection of the reforms scheme, while the Moderates were for its unqualified acceptance. The Muslim League, at a mid-year session in 1918 not only accepted the scheme without any reservations, but its President even justified the British decision to delay the establishment of responsible government in India, by arguing that 'there are in India eighty races speaking as many different languages and following more than a hundred different forms of religion. Among them there is no unity and hardly any solidarity.' This attitude, though obviously hostile to the decisions solemnly formulated by the Congress and the League jointly in 1916, was not construed as a departure from the Pact, but only as an indication of wavering minds of different Muslim leaders. It was mended at the annual session of the League, which demanded the principle of self-determination, as adopted by the League of Nations, to be applied to India. This was identical to the Congress resolution which urged the early establishment of responsible government.

In 1919, Hindu-Muslim unity was demonstrated at many places during a protest movement. In January of that year, the Government of India had announced its intention to proceed with legislation of a new law: (1) to restrict residence of any person; (2) to require him to report periodically to the police; (3) to arrest without any cause shown and (4) to confine in non-penal custody. When the war was in its final stages, the Government of India began to have apprehensions as to how it would deal with the turbulent Indian situation when the extraordinary powers given by the Defence of India Act would automatically cease to be effective six months after the termination of the war. Hundreds of persons—Hindu terrorists and Muslims sympathetic to Turkey—had been in detention and the Government did not consider it safe to release them. It had therefore appointed a committee, named the Rowlatt Committee after its Chairman, a British Judge, to study the situation and recommend the draft of a new law. The Committee's recommendations, which were interpreted as a death-warrant to civil liberties, were announced in January 1919. They raised indignation in the country, and Gandhi became the voice of that spirit of protest. He published a pledge signed by himself and others of his way of thinking, calling upon his countrymen to take it. The pledge ran as follows:

Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Bill No. 1 of 1919 and the Criminal Law Emergency Bill No. 2 of 1919, are unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of an individual, on which the safety of India as a whole and the state itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the Committee, hereafter to be appointed, may think fit, and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property.

As the first step of his movement, he fixed March 30, 1919 (later changed to April 6), as a day of general closing of shops, suspension of all business activity, fasting, prayer and public meetings

all over the country. Both Hindus and Muslims responded to Gandhi's call, the Muslims inviting Hindu leaders to their mosques to address Muslim congregations. The protest day released tremendous forces; they became uncontrollable, and the terror-stricken Government met them with firing, killing thousands of people. Never before, since the Revolt of 1857, had Hindus and Muslims been joined together by common ties. Even such devices as the hanging of a slaughtered calf (a sight offensive to Hindus and arousing suspicion against a Muslim) and a pig (arousing similar suspicion against a Hindu) as were put up at a few places, could not break them. The authorities now accepted Hindu-Muslim unity as an accomplished fact, and the police only made a ludicrous exhibition of it by chaining Hindus and Muslims together in pairs.

Even Maulana Mohammed Ali, who had ridiculed the advice of the London Branch of the Muslim League to Indian Muslims to make common cause with the Hindus and the Congress, and who now saw with his own eyes the spectacle of Hindu-Muslim unity, had to accept it as a living reality, and attended the 1919 Congress, which assembled at Amritsar.

Gandhi was now the leader of Hindus, Muslims and all other communities. Virtually, he was greater than the Congress and the Muslim League, both of which were bypassed and overshadowed by his protest movement of April 1919. As we shall see in the next chapter, the Muslims reposed complete confidence in him and agreed to be led by him in the Khilafat movement, which again was the expression of Muslim resentment over the British treatment of Turkey after the War. By joining the Khilafat issue with his political movement of non-co-operation with the British, Gandhi brought even the wavering Muslim leaders into politics.

CHAPTER XVI
KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

AS HAS already been said, those Muslims who had exercised influence over their co-religionists by virtue of their deeper learning and devotion to Islam, had frankly expressed themselves in favour of Turkey during the war, and consequently suffered long terms of imprisonment. The religious emotions of educated Muslims had been roused to a high pitch, causing no small concern to the British rulers, who, several times in their speeches, tried to assuage Muslim feelings. Even the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, once declared: 'Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race.' When the war ended and indications came from the capitals of the victorious nations that Turkey would be saddled with humiliating terms, Indian Muslim leaders flung this 'solemn promise' at the British Government, and demanded that the Jazarat-ul-Arab, including Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine, with all the Holy Places situated therein, must always remain under the direct suzerainty of the Khalifa. Turkey had lost the war, and neither she nor anybody else on her behalf could dictate peace terms. Moreover, the propriety of the insistence for the integrity of the Turkish Empire was doubtful because it meant yoking to the chariot-wheel of the Empire even those races which, given free will, would get out of it, and which had been told that self-determination would be made the basis of the peace settlement. But the Indian Muslim leaders said they had pinned their faith to the British Prime Minister's promise, and if the promise was not kept, it would affect their loyalty to British rule. They very much feared that the promise would not be kept, and they set out to build an anti-British movement, if only to focus the attention of the victors on their demand and sentiments.

The atrocities in the Punjab, which came in the wake of the day of protest against the Rowlatt Bills, had exacerbated public feelings throughout the country; the official refusal to punish the guilty had antagonised Congressmen also to the point of developing the same bitterness as Muslims had over the possible

humiliation of Turkey. The Home Rule movement, during which the people had been educated in the principle of self-determination, had created an amount of political awakening which had not existed in India before. People were told that the British had declared this principle to be the aim for whose achievement they were fighting, and that the test of their sincerity was their application of it to India. Hopes were aroused that responsible self-government was near at hand, and when they were shattered with the presentation of the Rowlatt Bills, the firings, and the disappointing reforms, a wave of unrest ran across the length and breadth of the country. This situation was the climax of political agitation beginning, in the opening years of the current century, with the emergence of an extremist party in the Congress, and branching off, after the Partition of Bengal, into a terrorist movement. Until the Italian invasion of Tripoli, the Balkan war, and Turkey's alliance with Germany, this agitation was carried on almost exclusively by Hindus, who were inspired solely by nationalism. What one witnessed in 1919 on the political scene of India was on the one side this nationalism, injured and humiliated by the threat of suppression of civil liberties and by atrocious deeds, and on the other Muslim anger over Turkey, an anger which had, for some years, been intermingling with the urges of nationalism.

Such was the political atmosphere of the country when some Muslim leaders formed themselves, about the middle of 1919, into a Khilafat Conference. They asked the people to observe October 27, 1919 as Khilafat Day and called a joint conference of Muslims and Hindus at Delhi on November 23 to deliberate on the Khilafat question. During the war, Hindus and Muslims had demonstrated complete unity, which grew stronger in the post-war period, and therefore the readiness of Hindus to make common cause with Muslims over the Khilafat question was not surprising. The most prominent invitee to the Conference was Gandhi. He was chosen to preside over the Conference. The letter of invitation sent round to Hindus said, among other things, that not only the Khalifat question, but the question of cow-protection would also be discussed. All Hindus were not of one mind on the Khilafat question, as all men are never of one mind over any question. Broadly speaking, Hindus were divided into three classes. In one class were those who were prepared to join

hands with Muslims in their anti-British campaign on the condition that Muslims gave up cow-slaughter. Then, there were those who feared that in the zeal of their extra-territorial loyalty, Muslims might go so far as to invite Afghanistan to invade India, and usurp power with its help, a prospect which would establish Muslim rule once again. In the third group were those who would attach no conditions, and believed in the good faith of Muslims. Most of those among the last category were Congressmen, even the wavering among whom were converted to unconditional co-operation by Gandhi's powerful advocacy. He said: 'I submit that the Hindus may not open the *Goraksha* (cow-protection) question here. The test of friendship is assistance in adversity, and that too, unconditional assistance. Co-operation that needs consideration is a commercial contract and not friendship. Conditional co-operation is like adulterated cement which does not bind. It is the duty of the Hindus, if they see the justice of the Mohammedan cause, to render co-operation. If the Mohammedans feel themselves bound in honour to spare the Hindus' feelings and to stop cow-killing, they may do so, no matter whether the Hindus co-operate with them or not. Unconditional co-operation means the protection of the cow.'¹

Gandhi's noble way of dealing with the cow question was reciprocated with equal nobility by Maulana Abdul Bari, who while proposing a vote of thanks to him, said: 'Mahatma Gandhi may say anything as regards the bringing in of the *Goraksha* question. That does credit to him and to our Hindu brethren. But the Muslims' honour would be at stake if they forgot the co-operation of the Hindus. I for my part will say that we should stop cow-killing, irrespective of their co-operation, because we are children of the same soil. As a Maulvi I say that in voluntarily stopping cow-killing we shall not offend against the canons of our religion. Nothing has so helped the Hindu-Muslim unity as the Hindus' co-operation with us on the question of the Khilafat.'²

About the fear of Afghan invasion also, Gandhi put forward an equally strong argument: 'It is easy enough to understand and justify the Hindu caution. It is difficult to resist the Moham-

¹ From Gandhi's address to the All-India Khilafat Conference, *Young India*, December 10, 1919.

² Proceedings of the Khilafat Conference.

medan position. In my opinion, the best way to prevent India from becoming the battle-ground between the forces of Islam and those of the English is for Hindus to make non-co-operation a complete and immediate success, and I have little doubt that, if the Mohammedans remain true to their declared intention and are able to exercise self-restraint and make sacrifices, the Hindus will play the game and join them in the campaign of non-co-operation. I feel equally certain that Hindus will not assist Mohammedans in promoting or bringing about an armed conflict between the British Government and their allies, and Afghanistan. British forces are too well organised to admit of any successful invasion of the Indian frontier.'³

Gandhi was convinced of the justness of the Muslim cause. The analysis of the cause which convinced him was elaborated by him in an article in his journal, *Young India*, of June 2, 1920:

In my opinion, the Turkish claim is not only not immoral and unjust, but it is highly equitable, if only because Turkey wants to retain what is her own. And the Mohammedan manifesto has definitely declared that whatever guarantees may be necessary to be taken for the protection of the non-Muslim and non-Turkish races, should be taken so as to give the Christians theirs and the Arabs their self-government under the Turkish suzerainty.

I do not believe the Turk to be weak, incapable or cruel. He is certainly disorganised and probably without good generalship. The argument of weakness, incapacity and cruelty one often hears quoted in connection with those from whom power is sought to be taken away. About the alleged massacre, a proper commission has been asked for, but never granted. And in any case security can be taken against oppression.

I have already stated that, if I were not interested in the Indian Mohammedans, I would not interest myself in the welfare of the Turks any more than I am in that of the Austrians or the Poles. But I am bound as an Indian to share the sufferings and trials of fellow-Indians. If I deem the Mohammedan to be my brother, it is my duty to help him in his hour of peril to the best of my ability, if his cause commends itself to me as just.

³ *Young India*, June 9, 1920.

It is expedient to suffer for my Mohammedan brother to the utmost in a just cause and I should, therefore, travel with him along the whole road so long as the means employed by him are as honourable as his end. I cannot regulate the Mohammedan feeling. I must accept his statement that the Khilafat is with him a religious question in the sense that it binds him to reach the goal even at the cost of his own life.

The British Prime Minister had admitted the justice of the Muslim demand. I felt, therefore, bound to render what help I could in securing a due fulfilment of the Prime Minister's pledge. The pledge had been given in such clear terms that the examination of the Muslim demand on the merits was needed only to satisfy my own conscience.⁴

Ever since his arrival in India after his South African satyagraha campaigns, Gandhi was, to use his own words, 'seeking the friendship of good Mussalmans, and was eager to understand the Mussalman mind through contact with their purest and most patriotic representatives'. He 'therefore never needed any pressure to go with them, wherever they took me, in order to get into intimate touch with them'.⁵ To use his own words again, he 'had realised early enough in South Africa that there was no genuine friendship between the Hindus and the Mussalmans'. He had achieved a measure of success in attracting Muslims to his satyagraha movement, and his experiences there had convinced him 'that it would be on the question of Hindu-Muslim unity that my *ahimsa* (non-violence) would be put to its severest test'. He had had some contact with Maulana Mohammed Ali and his brother Maulana Shaukat Ali, but 'before closer touch could be established' they were imprisoned during the war for their views on Turkey. Gandhi's views were well-known, and after the imprisonment of the Ali brothers, he was 'invited by Muslim friends to attend the session of the Muslim League at Calcutta, where he addressed the Muslims on their duty to secure the brothers' release'. A little later he was invited to the Muslim College at Aligarh, where he made a speech and asked 'young men to be fakirs for the service of the mother-

⁴ Reproduced from Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*, (*An Autobiography*) Second Edition, pp. 540-1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 539.

land'. In those days he felt that if he were to become a true friend of the Muslims, he must render all possible help in securing the release of the Ali brothers, and a just settlement of the Khilafat question. In pursuance of this belief, he opened correspondence with the Government, justifying the demand for the release of Khilafat prisoners.⁶

Gandhi was a practical man. He saw that the Khilafat question had created an unprecedented awakening among the Muslims, an awakening which they were prepared to pour into nationalism and into a struggle which would eventually develop into a freedom movement. The obvious aim of any practical politician would be to establish Hindu-Muslim unity, which India had not known since the Revolt of 1857; the alternative of rejecting the Khilafat sentiment as a non-political religious affair and unworthy of association with the anti-British struggle whose ultimate aim was self-government, would mean creating schisms wider than ever known before. The way Muslim consciousness grew in a decade had suggested that so far as Muslims were concerned, religion could not only not be divorced from politics, but would in fact be one of the foundation stones on which political struggle could be founded. Hindus did not, as a rule, bring their religion into politics, but it would be wrong to believe that their attachment to religion had absolutely nothing to do with politics. The differences between the two religious systems, and the kind of divided interest in mundane and material affairs that they encouraged, affected politics in no small measure. The feasible course before prudent and practical politicians, therefore, was to admit Muslims into politics as Muslims, with all their love for the Turkish Empire and for the Khilafat, and with the passion with which they fought for the preservation of these. What had happened, briefly, was this: After the collapse of the Muslim power in India, Indian Muslims had begun to derive their temporal and spiritual inspiration from the Turkish Empire and its Khalifa. The Buddhist of China and South-East Asia knew that their Lord was born in India but never sought to glorify or emancipate India; they were exclusively concerned with national matters of the country in which they lived. Such was not the case with Indian Muslims. They did not organize themselves, even separately as they did over the

⁶ Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, *op. cit.*, pp. 539-40.

Turkish question, to campaign for political power. With this background before him, with his passion for Hindu-Muslim unity, and with his justification of the Khilafat question on its own merits, Gandhi saw, in the political situation as it presented itself in 1919, the fulfilment of his life's mission. He opened a new chapter in Indian history: it was the chapter with which began the combined attack of Hindus and Muslims on the British authority. Significantly, therefore, he told the first Khilafat Conference of Hindus and Muslims: 'The Mussalmans have adopted a very important resolution. If the peace terms are unfavourable to them—which may God forbid—they will stop all co-operation with Government. It is an inalienable right of the people thus to withhold co-operation. We are not bound to retain Government titles and honours or to continue in Government service. If Government should betray us in a great cause like the Khilafat we could not do otherwise than non-co-operate.'⁷

Paradoxically, Muslim divines (the *ulema*), who mostly quoted the Koran for regulating even the secular life, came in closer touch with the Congress than the English-educated Muslims, who had taken to a life of loyal co-operation with the British. The new developments stirred the *ulema*, and they organized themselves into the All-India Jamiat-ul-Ulema. They said: The *ulema* were accustomed to face tyrants for truth, and kept away from loyalist Muslim politics. But now that Muslim politics had taken a turn for the better, they would re-enter politics.⁸ They brought more vigour to the impending movement, and with the Congress, the Muslim League, the Khilafat Conference, and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema holding their annual sessions simultaneously at Amritsar in December 1919, it became clear that in spite of their separate organizations and institutions, Hindus and Muslims would present a joint national demand and fight for it.

The movement was preceded by an appeal to the British rulers to help its sponsors to avoid a conflict. On January 19, 1920, a Khilafat deputation waited on the Viceroy and, getting no satisfactory response from him, the Khilafat Conference sent another deputation to England to wait upon the Secretary of State for India and the Prime Minister. There, too, it met with failure,

⁷ Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, *op. cit.* pp. 590-1.

⁸ From the Urdu proceedings of the first Jamiat Conference.

as was expected. Lloyd George reaffirmed the position his Government had taken, that Turkey could not be treated on principles different from those to be applied to Christian countries; he asserted that while Turkey would be allowed to exercise temporal sway over Turkish lands, she would not be permitted to retain the lands which were not Turkish.

The deputation was still in London when the peace terms were published on May 14, 1920. The Muslim disappointment was complete, and the Khilafat Committee met at Bombay to consider the next step; it adopted Gandhi's non-co-operation programme which he had suggested as far back as March 10. He had said: 'England cannot expect a meek submission by us to an unjust usurpation of rights which to Muslims means a matter of life and death. We may therefore begin at the top as well as the bottom. Those who are holding offices of honour or emoluments ought to give them up. Those who belong to the menial service under Government should do likewise. Non-co-operation does not apply to service under private individuals. I cannot approve of the threat of ostracism against those who do not adopt the remedy of non-co-operation. It is a voluntary withdrawal alone that is a test of popular feeling and dissatisfaction. Advice to the soldiers to refuse to serve is premature. It is the last, not the first step. We should be entitled to take that step when the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the Premier leave us. Moreover, every step withdrawing the co-operation has to be taken with the greatest deliberation. We must proceed slowly so as to ensure retention of self-control under the fiercest heat.'

The concerned party, the Muslims, having gone in for non-co-operation, an all-parties conference was held at Allahabad on June 2. The conference appointed a committee consisting of Gandhi and some Muslim leaders to draw up a precise programme. The provincial Congress committees were also invited to express themselves on the projected movement. Meanwhile, Muslim leaders sent a message to the Viceroy saying that if the peace terms were not revised, they would be obliged 'as from the 1st of August next to withdraw co-operation from the Government and to ask our co-religionists and Hindu brethren to do likewise'. This was followed by a formal notice sent to the Viceroy by Gandhi. Naturally, there was no favourable response from the Viceroy,

who dismissed the non-co-operation scheme as 'the most foolish of all foolish schemes'. The movement began with a one-month tour of the country by Gandhi and the Ali brothers. They made contacts with local people, addressed public meetings, and exhorted their audiences to get ready for the Khilafat battle. New slogans were adopted and propagated by Gandhi through his journal, *Young India*. For the sake of precision, Gandhi's own account may be reproduced here from the journal dated September 8, 1920: 'During the Madras tour, at Bezwada I had occasion to remark upon the national crisis and suggested that it would be better to have cries about ideals than men. I asked the audience to replace "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai" and "Mohammed Ali Shoukat Ali ki jai" by "Hindu-Muslim ki jai". Brother Shaukat Ali, who followed, positively laid down the law. In spite of the Hindu-Muslim unity, he had observed that Hindus shouted "Bande Matram", the Muslims rang out with "Allaho Akbar", and vice versa. This, he rightly said, jarred on the ear and still showed that the people did not act with one mind. There should be therefore only three cries recognised. "Allaho Akbar" to be joyously sung out by Hindus and Muslims, showing that God alone was great and no other. The second should be "Bande Matram" (Hail Motherland) or "Bharat Mata ki jai" (Victory to Mother Hind). The third should be "Hindu-Musalman ki jai" without which there was no victory for India, and no true demonstration of the greatness of God. I do wish that the newspapers and public men would take up the Maulana's suggestion and lead the people only to use the three cries.'

The Khilafat agitation received a psychological impetus from the traditional *Hijrat* of 18,000 Muslims to Afghanistan. In the month of August so many followers of the Prophet, determined to shake off the dust of the 'impious' Raj, moved into *Darul-Islam*, that was Afghanistan. The *Hijrat* movement started in Sind and spread to the North-West Frontier Province. But the Afghan authorities declined to admit the emigrants, and they had to go back. Many lost their lives on the way. According to *India in 1920*, 'the road from Peshawar to Kabul was strewn with the graves of old men, women and children who had succumbed to the difficulties of the journey. The unhappy emigrants when they returned, found themselves homeless and penniless with their property in

the hands of those to whom they had sold it for a title of its value.'

According to *The Independent Hindustan* (September, 1920) published in San Francisco by Indian revolutionaries, the Afghanistan Government had offered facilities to Indian emigrants, but the embargo they placed had the effect of restricting the entry. The embargo placed, stated: 'Whosoever desires to immigrate into Afghanistan should either get himself registered as an Afghan national or obtain the permit to enter Afghanistan at Peshawar or at the Afghan Frontier outpost.' The Afghan *firman* then gave details of the facilities to be offered. This *firman*, if at all it was issued, was of little avail to thousands of those whose Islamic soul was in distress, and who were eager to get a roof in a *Darul-Islam*.

Relations between Afghanistan and the British at that time were delicate; neither would the Government of India take the risk of so many Indian subjects passing into a foreign territory, nor would Afghanistan risk by allowing them entry, an act of hostility. For nearly a century in the first youth of Afghan nationalism (from about the middle of the 18th century), the border country had been included in the boundaries of the Afghan kingdom. In 1919, when the Punjab was in revolt over the Rowlatt Bills and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had started a widespread agitation over the same issue in the North-West Frontier Province itself, the new Amir of Afghanistan, Amanullah, anxious to attract popularity and to consolidate his position, proclaimed an attack on the Frontier in the spring of 1919. The attack was repulsed, and about the time the Khilafat movement was to begin, in 1920, peace negotiations were taking place between the Afghan and British envoys at Mussoorie (in the district of Dehra Dun). So cautious were the British about avoiding Indian contacts with Afghans that the Provincial Government of U.P. demanded an undertaking from Jawaharlal Nehru, who had just entered public life and had gone to Mussoorie for a brief stay with his ailing mother and wife, that he would not have any dealings with the Afghan delegation.

Ignorant Muslims, who in their thousands launched upon a *Hijrat*, were apparently unaware of the delicate relations between the British and Afghanistan, and never believed that *Darul-Islam* would remain ever distant. It was a pity that the Muslim leaders,

who should have foreseen the consequences, did not come out with a warning, and were indifferent to the reckless course of the masses of their co-religionists, whose religious passions they had themselves aroused. *Hijrat* was not one of the items of the Khilafat and non-co-operation programme, and should have been stopped by the sponsors of the movement. But, apparently, since religious fervour was the background of the movement, any advice given against *Hijrat*, itself a known manifestation of religious fervour, would have been construed as irreligious.

While Gandhi and the Muslim leaders were touring the country, and *Hijrat* was in progress, the Provincial Congress Committees had met and conveyed their opinions about the non-co-operation movement, some favouring it and some opposing it. (It is worthy of note that in his two movements—the Rowlatt Bills protest and the non-co-operation movement of 1920—Gandhi took the decisions on his own, and therefore the movements were his, and not of the Congress.) The Provincial Congress Committees' opinions, the political situation in the country, and Gandhi's Khilafat and non-co-operation movements were considered by a special session of the Congress in September. A purely political organization, the Congress adopted a resolution in which it judiciously associated the establishment of Swarajya with the movements and supported them. The resolution, after briefly describing the Khilafat injustice and the Rowlatt wrongs, said: 'This Congress is of the opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two afore-mentioned wrongs, and that the only effectual means to vindicate honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya. This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi, until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established.'

There were powerful voices in the Congress against participation in the Khilafat movement, but ultimately the more powerful voice of Gandhi prevailed. Even the President of the annual Congress session (C. V. Jijaraghavachariar) which met at Nagpur in December, 1920, was sceptical of the movement. But the Nagpur Congress gave its consent to the movement, and also elaborated its scope. The Nagpur resolution asked for 'the least sacrifice', and advised:

'(a) surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies; (b) refusal to attend Government levees, *curbars*, and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour; (c) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and in place of such schools and colleges, the establishment of national schools and colleges in the various provinces; (d) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants, and the establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid for settlement of private disputes; (e) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia; (f) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils, and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election; and (g) boycott of foreign goods.'

The resolution disturbed the plan of many aspirants for the Councils, came as it did on the eve of the first election to the reformed Councils. All the nationalist candidates, who had announced their candidature and were carrying on their election campaigns in obedience of the Congress resolution adopted a year before at Amritsar, withdrew from the contest. Nearly eighty per cent of the voters refrained from voting, and from several places empty ballot boxes were returned.

As if the Congress resolution was addressed only to Hindus, and as if the Muslims needed a religious sanction, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema issued a *fatwa* advising the Muslims to boycott elections, Government schools and colleges, and law courts, and to renounce all titles and ranks conferred by the foreign Government. The *fatwa* was signed by 425 eminent doctors of Islamic law; later on, 470 more signatures were appended to it.

Among the Congress leaders who were opposed to the movement, but would not put any obstacles in its way, was M. A. Jinnah. He was then President of the Muslim League, and his attitude not to withhold Muslims of the League school from the non-co-operation movement is clear from his presidential address in which he said: 'Mr. Gandhi has placed his programme of non-co-operation supported by the authority of the Khilafat Conference before the country. It is now for you to consider whether or not

you approve of its principles and, approving of its principles, whether or not you approve of its details. The operation of this scheme will strike at the individual in each of you, and therefore it rests with you alone to measure your strength and to weigh the pros and the cons of the question before you arrive at a decision. But once you have decided to march, let there be no retreat under any circumstances.' (The audience said with a loud voice, 'no, no, never'.) Jinnah went on to say: 'In the meanwhile there sits in Olympian Simla a self-satisfied Viceroy who alternately offers his sympathies to us unfortunate Mussalmans, and regrets Mahatma Gandhi's "foolish of all foolish schemes" (cries of "shame, shame") being fortified with a charter from his Majesty's Government sent in a recent despatch from "Home". This is the "changed angle of vision" on which we heard such high-sounding phrases during the critical stages of the war when India's blood, India's gold, was sought and unfortunately given, given to break Turkey and buy the fetters of the Rowlatt legislation.'

But, as Jawaharlal Nehru says in his *Autobiography*, 'the new development in the Congress—non-co-operation and the new constitution which made it more of a popular and mass organisation—were thoroughly disapproved by him (Jinnah). He felt completely out of his elements in the *khadi*-clad crowd demanding speeches in Hindustani.'⁹ He left the Congress, and never returned to it. Out of the 14,582 delegates present at the 1920 Congress, 1,050 were Muslims.

A year had passed, many Hindus and Muslims had been arrested, but the 'mass movement' was yet to begin; the leaders had not yet given the signal for it. The All-India Khilafat Conference, on July 8, 1921, adopted a resolution which was a striking departure from all previous resolutions adopted by the Congress and other bodies. It said that 'it is in every way religiously unlawful for a Mussalman at the present moment to continue in the British army, to enter the army, or to induce others to join the army. And it is the duty of Mussalmans in general and of the Ulema in particular to see that these religious commandments are brought home to every Mussalman in the army.' The Conference also decided that if the British Government attacked Turkey, the Muslims of India would declare the independence of India and

⁹ Nehru, *An Autobiography* (1953 Reprint), pp. 67-8.

hoist the flag of the Indian republic at the next session of the Congress. Mohammed Ali, who presided over the Conference, made a very impassioned speech, which was characterized by Government as seditious and which provided Government with material for his prosecution. Those others prosecuted with him were his brother, Shaukat Ali, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, Jagatguru Shankaracharya of Sarda Peeth, Maulana Nisar Ahmed, Pir Ghulam Mujadid and Maulvi Husain Ahmed.

This happened in September, and on October 5, the Working Committee of the Congress passed a resolution virtually justifying the Khilafat Conference resolution, and asking the people to repeat the Mohammed Ali speech at public meetings, on October 16. This was done from thousands of public platforms in the country. The Working Committee also allowed Provincial Congress Committees to launch a civil disobedience movement provided individuals fulfilled certain conditions. The conditions were: (1) the civil resister must discard foreign cloth and don *khaddar*; (2) he must know spinning; (3) he must be a believer in non-violence and Hindu-Muslim unity; (4) he must work for the removal of untouchability.

The movement had yet to begin, but as a precautionary measure, the Government rounded up Congress leaders, arrested the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee *en bloc* (55 members), and enforced several restraining laws. On November 17, Bombay had a blood-bath. The occasion was the arrival of the Prince of Wales whose visit it had been decided to boycott. Thousands of excited people moved about in the streets, and for four days there were clashes, rioting and bloodshed in the city resulting in 53 dead and 400 injured. Volunteer organizations, whose membership was increasing by leaps and bounds, were declared illegal bodies by the Government, and several thousand young men were put in prison. This, incidentally, indicated future line of action to Gandhi, and at the 1921 annual Congress, he persuaded the delegates to adopt only one resolution and that was to suspend all activities of the Congress and to ask every person of the age of eighteen and over to join the National Volunteer Corps.

During the four years of unrest, the Congress grew ever more powerful, and became for the first time in its life a mass organization. Provincial Congress Committees took up economic causes,

and chose this movement to ventilate them. The Andhra Congress Committee decided in December 1921 upon a campaign for stopping payment of Government dues and, had Gandhi not stopped it ruling that the intended move was outside the scope of his movement, the no-rent campaign would have started not only in Andhra but in several other provinces. Khilafat, of course, was the starting point, but the movement grew into a full-fledged political struggle, reducing the Khilafat question to a mere symbol.

The movement was still growing in volume, when a tragedy of gruesome violence was enacted at Chauri Chaura, on February 5, 1922. Chauri Chaura is a village in the Gorakhpur district of U.P. The peasants of the village had taken out a procession. As was the fate of many processions those days, the Chauri Chaura procession was also fired upon by the police, but it did not disperse, and the ammunition of the police was exhausted. The policemen then withdrew to retire to the police station; but they were chased by the crowd who pushed them into the station premises, bolted the door and set fire to the building. There were 21 constables and one sub-inspector inside, and all of them perished in the flames. The event shocked Gandhi, who had prescribed observance of complete non-violence as the first condition of any action; at his instance, the Congress Working Committee abandoned the mass civil disobedience movement. Many Congressmen angrily protested against the abandonment, and some of them even suggested at the All-India Congress Committee session, which assembled at Delhi on February 24 and 25, that Gandhi should be censured. They did not succeed, but they did manage to amend the Working Committee's resolution, and they persuaded the All-India Congress Committee to permit only individual civil disobedience in respect of particular places and particular laws, under the authority of the Provincial Congress Committees, as well as the picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops.

Curiously enough, when the mass movement had been abandoned and there was no cause left for alarm, the Government arrested Gandhi on March 13, making three of his articles in *Young India* the basis for his prosecution. As C. F. Andrews remarked, 'from a worldly point of view, it was a diplomatic stroke, but it had no chivalry in it'. After Gandhi's arrest, the movement ended for all practical purposes.

The Turkish misfortune beginning with the Tripoli war, and reaching ruinous dimensions with the peace treaty of the World War, undoubtedly created peculiar conditions for a Hindu-Muslim political rapprochement, but it was Gandhi who demonstrated to the world that the rapprochement had been achieved. He dramatized it, so that all the world could see the achievement. But was Gandhi's movement nothing more than a drama, leaving behind only vivid recollections ?

CHAPTER XVII
BACK TO DIFFERENCES

THE NATIONALIST organizations and Muslim organizations had come together as two distinct parties, with Gandhi as the common link, but with the old background of communal politics; the adherence of Muslims to Pan-Islamic and other communal concepts and the pronounced antagonism to these of Hindus, were causes of future differences which began in the midst of the Khilafat and non-co-operation movement itself. Gandhi himself admitted the fact at a time (1921) when the movement was in full swing. He wrote in an article entitled 'Hindu-Muslim Unity': 'I know there is much distrust of one another as yet. Many Hindus distrust Mussalman honesty. They believe that Swaraj means Mussalman raj, for they argue that without the British, Mussalmans of India will aid Mussalman powers to build up a Mussalman empire in India. Mussalmans on the other hand fear that the Hindus being in an overwhelming majority will smother them.' Many Hindus were openly casting aspersions on Muslims that they had actually invited the Afghan Amir to invade India in 1919. Quite a few papers wrote a series of articles adducing evidence in support of the contention; it is difficult to say whether this evidence was real or based on bazaar gossip.

The Hindu fear was, in a way, confirmed by Maulana Mohammed Ali's address to the jury in the sessions court. Referring to the Afghan invasion, he said:

Islam does not permit the believer to pronounce an adverse judgement against another believer without more convincing proof; and we could not, of course, fight against Muslim brothers without making sure that they were guilty of wanton aggression, and did not take up arms in defence of their faith. Now our position is this. Without better proof of the Amir's malice or madness, we certainly do not want Indian soldiers, including the Mussalmans, to attack Afghanistan and effectively occupy it first, and then be a prey to more perplexity and perturbation afterwards.

But if, on the contrary, His Majesty the Amir has no quarrel with India and her people and if his motive must be attributed, as the Secretary of State has publicly said, to the unrest which exists throughout the Mohammedan world, an unrest with which he openly professed to be in cordial sympathy, that is to say, if impelled by the same religious motive that has forced Muslims to contemplate *Hijrat*, the alternative of the weak, which is all that is within our restricted means, His Majesty has been forced to contemplate *Jihad*, the alternative of those comparatively stronger, which he may have found within his means; if he has taken up the challenge of those who believe in force and yet more force, and he intends to try conclusions with those who require Mussalmans to wage war against the Khilafat and those engaged in *Jihad*; who are in wrongful occupation of the Jazirut-ul-Arab and the Holy Places; who aim at the weakening of Islam; discriminate against it; and deny to us full freedom to advocate its cause; then the clear law of Islam requires that in the first place, in no case whatever should a Mussalman render anyone any assistance against him; and in the next place if the *Jihad* approaches my region every Mussalman in that region must join the Mujahidin and assist them to the best of his or her power.

But the Hindu fear of Afghanistan did not start with Mohammed Ali's frank statement to the jury; it had been there ever since the Afghan invasion of 1919 and the attitude of Muslims to this, as expressed in private conversation. Gandhi had to take notice of the Hindu fear, and as a man who lived and died for Hindu-Muslim unity, he expressed himself on the topic of the day, in *Young India* of May 4, 1921, several months before Mohammed Ali made his address. Gandhi said: 'I would, in a sense, certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British Government. That is to say, I would openly tell my countrymen that it would be a crime to help a government which had lost the confidence of the nation to remain in power.' The invasion had been beaten back, and in 1921, the discussion about the attitude of people to a similar invasion in the future, was largely hypothetical; but one discerns in the statements of Mohammed Ali and of Gandhi a noticeable difference. The former would ask his Muslim

brethren, in the name of Islam, to 'join the Mujahidin and assist them to the best of his or her power', while the latter would ask his countrymen—obviously both Hindus and Muslims—to be neutral, not to 'help a government which had lost the confidence of the nation to remain in power'. The Government of India lost the confidence of the nation mainly because it gave the people Rowlatt laws instead of self-government, and ruthlessly crushed their spirit when they protested against those laws, and only distantly because it failed to influence the peace terms in favour of Turkey. Therefore, many Hindus dreaded the prospect of a Muslim power extending its rule to India, and were never prepared to reconcile themselves to let alone welcome, as Muslims would do, the prospect of co-operation with an Afghan invasion, directly, or indirectly by neutrality. Pro-Afghanistan feelings were definitely taking root in some sections of educated Muslims. At the 1921 annual session of the Muslim League, Raza Ali, much reputed in official circles, while opposing an unsuccessful resolution for the complete independence of India, asked who would be India's commander-in-chief; (he meant that no suitable Indian was available). Quick came the answer from one of the delegates: 'Enver Pasha', the Turkish Foreign Minister.

While these contradictory feelings were growing among Muslims and Hindus, there came upon them a violent tragedy, called the Mopla revolt, further widening the differences that had arisen over the different attitudes of the two communities towards Afghanistan. The vibrations of the Khilafat cry, travelling far in the south, had penetrated the hilly tracts of the Malabar Coast and inspired the Moplas to organize a violent revolt against the British authority. So determined was their attack that over a large slice of the Malabar territory, British rule was extinct for some days and a Khilafat kingdom, under the 'Khilafat King' Mohammed Haji was established. The end of the little Khilafat kingdom was hastened by the religious fanaticism of the Moplas, some of whom turned their swords against Hindus in the excitement of their victory. As Muslims, they could not forget that Hindus were *kafirs*, infidels.

On the Malabar Coast, between the high hills and the sea, are ranges and ranges of lesser hills and valleys covered for the most part with the most inaccessible jungle. Here, in the 9th century, certain Arabs had settled and married Dravidian and other Hindu

women, and produced a new community called Moplas. Muslim by faith, the Arabs had had trade relations with India for a long time. Moplas, a refractory lot, believed only in violence as a means of supplanting established authority. They had displayed their violence more than once in the 19th century. After the Khilafat call had been given, they began to collect and distribute arms and to organize themselves for a fight. It was on July 25, 1921, that the administration first learnt of this. A search was ordered. At Pukkotur, the search led to a riot in which the police were overpowered. Then, a force of 5,000 Moplas attacked Parapan-gadi; a British army officer and a police officer were murdered; the railway station was burnt, and a railway line torn up.

The next day, there was a pitched battle between a British detachment and the rebels; the British force found itself unequal to the task and, after losing two British officers and several men, the officer-in-command lost his initiative and confined himself to defensive fighting. More troops requisitioned from neighbouring areas were thrown into action, but they were beaten back by the rebels, who were triumphantly marching ahead. Troops were now sent for from the Himalayas and Burma; Gurkhas, Garhwalis and Kachins of the Burma Rifles, within whose breasts the call of Islam could find no responsive echo; moreover they were soldiers who thoroughly understood jungle warfare. A mountain battery, too, was hurried to the scene, but the jungle was often too dense for its use. 'To show how formidable the galvanised Moplas could be, the instance of the attack on Pandikkah post during one of the drives may be cited. Here the post was attacked at dawn on two fronts. They lost 67 killed inside and 150 outside, but of the small garrison one British officer and eight O.R. were killed and two Gurkha officers and 27 O.R. were wounded. On January 7, 1922, Mohammed Haji, the Khilafat King with 21 followers was captured, and shot by sentence of court martial, with six of his followers on the 20th. This was practically the end and by the close of January, the disturbance was over and a large number of rebels captured and brought before the special courts.'¹

The enormity of the Mopla rebellion can be assessed from these

¹ Lt-Gen. Sir George Mac Munn, *Turmoil and Tragedy in India in 1914 and After*.

figures: 'Of the rebels, 2,266 were killed in action, 1,615 wounded, 5,688 captured, and 38,256 surrendered.' Mopla prisoners were court-martialled and shot or executed. A ghastly chapter of reprisals was enacted in a goods train. About 70 (one version says 100) Moplas were packed into a goods wagon going from Calicut to Madras. South India's summer sun was scorching the iron wagon, and when the wagon was opened at the Podanoor railway station, it was found that 66 Moplas had died of suffocation, and others were in a precarious condition.

Now there remains to be narrated the Moplas' chastisement of Hindus. Illiterate Moplas, while revolting against the British, assumed the role of crusaders and laid their violent hand on Hindus, either brutally doing them to death or converting them to Islam by forced circumcision. They believed that this was the way to found the Khilafat rule. In their daily life they had grown inimical to Hindu landlords. As W. C. Smith says in his *Modern Islam in India*: 'The Moplas were bitter; bitterly anti-Hindu, bitterly anti-British, bitter against the world that gave them only misery. Their ardour was the ardour of an oppressed class rising against its enemies, the ardour of religious fanaticism destroying sin and establishing a kingdom of good.' The Congress had an inquiry made into the Mopla disturbances and, according to its findings, the revolt had nothing to do with the Khilafat movement. The findings concluded that the main targets of the rebels were Hindus, whose houses were looted and many of whom were converted to Islam; that some Muslims of the Khilafat school tried to pacify the rebellious crowd, but they were not listened to; when Congressmen appealed to them in the name of Gandhi, they said Gandhi was a *kafir* and they would never follow him; when they appealed to them in the name of the Ali brothers, they replied that they would not follow those who followed a *kafir*.

The Mopla revolt caused great consternation among Hindus, and also gave rise to misgivings about the Muslim leaders, who, Hindus complained, did not come out with a disavowal and condemnation of the Mopla attacks on Hindus. Understandably, Gandhi wished the Mopla affair to be isolated and not to affect the atmosphere of unity he had brought about in the rest of the country. He, therefore, told Hindus: 'The Hindus must have the courage and the faith to feel that they can protect their religion

in spite of such fanatical eruptions. A verbal disapproval by the Mussalmans of Mopla madness is not a test of Mussalman friendship. The Mussalmans must naturally feel the shame and humiliation of the Mopla conduct about forcible conversions and looting, and they must work away so silently and effectively that such a thing might become impossible even on the part of the most fanatical among them. My belief is that the Hindus as a body have received the Mopla madness with equanimity and that the cultured Mussalmans are sincerely sorry of the Mopla's perversion of the teaching of the Prophet.'

But a number of Hindu Congressmen grew sceptical and suspicious of their Muslim comrades, as is apparent from an account subsequently recorded by an Arya Samaj leader, Swami Shraddh-anand, in the *Liberator* of August 26, 1926: 'The first warning was sounded when the question of condemning the Moplas for their atrocities on Hindus came up in the Subjects Committee (of the Congress). The original resolution condemned the Moplas wholesale for the killing of Hindus and burning of Hindu homes and the forcible conversion to Islam. The Hindu members themselves proposed amendments till it was reduced to condemning only certain individuals who had been guilty of the above crimes. But some of the Muslim leaders could not bear this resolution and there was no wonder. But I was surprised, that an out-and-out nationalist like Maulana Hasrat Mohani, opposed the resolution on the ground that the Mopla country no longer remained *Darul-Aman* but became *Darul-Harb* and as they suspected the Hindus of collusion with the British enemies of the Moplas. Therefore, the Moplas were right in presenting the Koran or sword to Hindus. And if the Hindus became Mussalmans to save themselves from death, it was a voluntary change of faith and not forcible conversion. Well, even the harmless resolution condemning some of the Moplas was not unanimously passed but to be accepted by a majority of votes only. There were other indications also, showing that the Mussalmans considered the Congress to be existing on their sufferance and if there was the least attempt to ignore their idiosyncrasies the superficial unity would be scrapped asunder.'

Another factor conducive to Hindu-Muslim differences appeared in the communal riots in the year 1921-22, when the Mohurrum

celebrations were attended by serious disturbances both in Bengal and in the Punjab. Again, in 1922-23, there was a crop of communal riots. In March and April of 1923, there were riots of a serious nature in Amritsar, Multan and in other parts of the Punjab. In May, there were further riots in Amritsar and a disturbance in Sind. In June and July, there were communal outbreaks in Moradabad and Meerut as well in the Allahabad district, and a serious riot at Ajmere. In August and September, there were further outbreaks of a distressing nature at Amritsar, Panipat, Jubbulpore, Gonda, Agra and Rae Bareilly. Most serious of all was the disturbance which occurred at Saharanpur in connection with the Mohurrum festival. Later, riots occurred at Delhi, Nagpur, Lahore, Lucknow, Bhagalpur, Gulbarga, Shahjehanpur, and Kankinara also. In September 1924, a very serious riot took place in Kohat; 'about 155 persons were killed and wounded, house property to the estimated value of Rs. 9 lakhs was destroyed and a large quantity of goods were looted. The whole Hindu population evacuated the city of Kohat.' According to Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's account in *The History of the Indian National Congress*, 'after the shooting and carnage of the 9th and 10th September, a special train had to remove 4,000 Hindus, of whom 2,600 were living for two months on the charity of Rawalpindi, and 1,400 of other places'.

How rioting erupted so suddenly in so many big towns of the country, and whether they were engineered by somebody, has not been stated yet by anybody with any amount of authority and objectivity. It had been alleged times without number during the British rule that riots were engineered by the police under the inspiration of British officers, by arousing the religious susceptibilities of illiterate and semi-educated people of the two communities, whom the sight of beef in a temple and the sight of a murdered pig in a mosque was enough to infuriate. No positive proof is available of official instigation, but political people insisted that whenever Hindus and Muslims gave indications of coming nearer to each other, riots were engineered to keep them divided. Jinnah held that the police instigated the riots. In his evidence before the Joint Select Committee appointed by Parliament to examine the Government of India Reforms Bills, 1919, he said referring to communal riots: 'If you ask me very often these riots

are based on some misunderstanding, and it is because the police have taken one side or the other. I know very well that in the Indian States you hardly ever hear of any Hindu-Mohammedan riots, and I do not mind telling the Committee, without mentioning the name, that I happened to ask one of the ruling princes, "how do you account for this?", and he told me, "As soon as there is some trouble we have invariably traced it to the police, the police taking one side or the other, and the only remedy we have found is that as soon as we come to know we remove that police officer from that place, and there is an end of it".'

One lamentable result of the riots was that Hindus began to lose faith in the Hindu-Muslim unity so assiduously built up by Gandhi. His soul was in agony. After his premature release on February 5, 1924, (he was sentenced for six years), for reasons of health (he was operated upon for appendicitis on January 12), he found himself face to face with the undoing of his life's mission, which he had very nearly achieved. He undertook a twenty-one day fast in Mohammed Ali's house at Delhi. The leaders of the two communities were anxious to end the orgy of violence, and Gandhi's fast brought home to them the urgent necessity of meeting together to consider the situation. The leading Indians of all communities met in a conference from September 26 to October 2. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya gives the following account of the conference: 'The members of the conference pledged themselves to use their utmost endeavours to enforce the principles (of freedom of conscience and religion) and condemn any deviation from them even under provocation. A central national panchayat was appointed; it was composed of Gandhi as the chairman and convener, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Lajpat Rai, G. K. Nariman, Dr. S. K. Datta and Master Sunder Singh. The conference laid down certain fundamental rights relating to liberty of holding and expressing religious beliefs and following religious practice, sacredness of places of worship, cow-slaughter, and music before mosques, with a statement of the limitations they must be subject to. The press was warned to be careful in its writings, and the people were requested to offer their prayers during the last week of Gandhi's fast. October 8 was marked out for mass meetings for thanksgiving.'

The fast and the conference may have kept the disturbing elements in check for a while, but they did not prove a lasting remedy.

The communal organizations, which had disappeared before the rising sun of nationalism were again to be seen, gathering strength from the communal riots. Some of the nationalist leaders were now arraying themselves on the platforms of their respective communal organizations. The struggle against the British was now fast giving place to protection of Hindus from Muslims and vice versa. In Bengal and in the Punjab, communal riots engendered in Hindu leaders a feeling of insecurity, because in those provinces Hindus were in a minority. The most conspicuous manifestation of this feeling was the emergence of the Hindu Mahasabha, which, though it had been in existence for a number of years, was not able to make its presence felt. The first important session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held at Benares in 1923 under the presidency of Madan Mohan Malaviya. It passed resolutions calling upon Hindus to let the so-called untouchables use public wells, schools and temples. Provincial and local Hindu Sabhas began to be organized. The forcible conversion of Hindus and the atrocities committed by the Mopals and later in the Multan riots, 'in which places of worship were desecrated, many Hindus were killed and many Hindu houses were looted and burnt', brought home to Hindu leaders, like Shradhdhanand, the necessity of starting a reclamation movement for the conversion of Muslims to the Hindu fold. And the Shuddhi (reclamation) movement was born.

The Shuddhi movement was justified as an inevitable remedy to undo the wrongs Muslims had perpetrated on Hindus during the riots. Dr. Rajendra Prasad observes in his *India Divided*: 'The Shuddhi movement of Swami Shradhdhanand has come in for a great deal of criticism both from the nationalists and Mussalmans. Whatever one may have to say about its opportuneness at that particular moment, it is difficult to understand how Christians and Mussalmans can object to it on merits. They are constantly engaged in their proselytising mission and converting Hindus to their own faiths. If the Hindus on their side also start converting non-Hindus to their faith, it is no business of non-Hindus, specially if they are themselves engaged in the work of conversion, to object. The Hindus must have the same right of propagating their faith as others have. But men are not always guided by logic or by a sense of justice and fairness. And there was much bitterness among Mussalmans against the Shuddhi movement and against Swami

Shraddhanand personally as a result of which he fell a victim to a Muslim assassin some time later. Mussalmans on their side started the Tabligh and Tanzim movements.'

Individually, both Hindus and Muslims had been growing indifferent to all talks of unity, and some of them had seriously embarked on a programme of conversion, and consolidation of their respective communities. Their efforts did not produce any spectacular results; if these efforts had not been made, Hindu-Muslim relations would not have been impaired to the extent they were, in spite of communal riots. But most leaders, both Hindus and Muslims, retained their sense of proportion, and the organizations which had contributed to Hindu-Muslim unity remained uncontaminated. Opening the unity conference, Mohammed Ali prayed for the long life of Gandhi, and said that communal quarrels were petty in the extreme, and went very often under the name of religion, though they had nothing to do with religion. Muslim leaders continued to attend the Hindu Mahasabha sessions, and Hindu leaders the Muslim League sessions. At the All-India Khilafat Conference also, though Muslim interests in India and abroad dominated the discussions, political convictions were reiterated, giving proof of the fact that the riots had not affected the Khilafat leaders. Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, who presided over the Khilafat Conference, regretted that Muslims were not taking the same interest in the Congress as they used to until recently. He appealed to Muslims to join and support the Congress. He urged particular attention to be devoted to the production of *khaddar* and emphasized that this programme was not a counterpart of the *Sangathan* (Hindu consolidation) movement or Swaraj. The spirit of the Khilafat days still pervaded at the Khilafat conference. In a resolution moved by Mohammed Ali and adopted unanimously, he emphasized that the boycott of foreign cloth was indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj and made it obligatory on Muslims to universalise *khadi* and wear it. Speaking as a Muslim, he believed that its adoption was the only way to save Islam. He said that India lived in villages where peasants spent their meagre means to buy Manchester cloth. It was necessary that the educated people should take to *charkha* (spinning wheel) so that the uneducated might follow the lead and revert to the *charkha*.

But the Khilafat conference did not lose sight of communal affairs, and approved of a scheme of organizing *Tanzim*. Dr. Kitchlew observed in his presidential address that at a time when feelings between Hindus and Muslims were becoming strained, Madan Mohan Malaviya started the *Sangathan* movement and Muslims therefore organized a counter-movement. The real cause of trouble in the Punjab was economic, because the entire trade and the majority of services were in the hands of Hindus. He would make mosques the centre of learning and would insist on industrial schools for the uplift of his community. He asked that Muslim banks and co-operative banking societies be organized to finance the industrial schools. Significantly, he added that the Lucknow Pact, reputed as a charter of Hindu-Muslim unity, should be burnt.

The Muslim League annual meet of 1924 took the same line, and while asking Muslims to take to hand-spinning and to spread *Swadeshi*, also exhorted them to organize *Tanzim*. During the years of the Khilafat and non-co-operation movement, the Muslim League had ceased to exist for all practical purposes. In 1922, it seemed as if the very life was ebbing out of it; there was no annual session that year. The attendance at the annual session of 1923 was so poor that the open session had to be abandoned. But after the movement ended, it again emerged in 1924, and gave the impression that eventually it was the League that would dictate the course of Muslim politics. Jinnah, who had detached himself from the stormy politics of the previous three years, also appeared on the League platform, not as a communal Muslim, but as a nationalist, still holding that the Congress, though he had left it, was not a Hindu organization. And when a contrary version was put into his mouth by interested parties, he published a letter in *The Times of India* (October 3, 1925) in which he said: 'I wish again to correct the statement which is attributed to me and to which you have given currency more than once and now again repeated by your correspondent "Banker" in the second column of your issue of the 1st October that I denounced the Congress as a "Hindu institution". I publicly corrected this misleading report of my speech in your columns soon after it appeared; but it did not find a place in the columns of your paper and so may I now request you to publish this and oblige.' He remained with the current of nationalism up to 1919, in which year he, along with some others,

resigned his membership of the Central Legislative Council in protest against the Rowllat Bills. He also made it clear that he would not be interested in an extra-territorial affair like the Khilafat.

But as if there were no Khilafat movement and no Hindu-Muslim unity, and as if the recent riots dictated a departure from what had been agreed to in the Lucknow Pact in whose making he himself played a leading role, at the League session of 1924, he moved a resolution, which was adopted unanimously, demanding examination of the representation of the Muslim community in the Legislatures and other elective bodies, and a proper share in the public services *de novo*. He hoped that because of his resolution he should not be dubbed a communalist. He assured his audience that he was a nationalist as ever, and was still against communal representation. But unfortunately, he said, his Muslim compatriots were not prepared to go as far as he did. He significantly remarked: 'The fact was that there was a large number of Muslims who wanted representation separately in the Legislatures and in the services. This feeling led to communal differences. They were talking of communal unity, but where was the unity?' The object of his resolution, Jinnah further said, was 'to organize the Muslim community, not with a view to quarrel with the Hindu community, but with a view to unite and co-operate with it for their motherland. He was sure once they had organized themselves they would join hands with the Hindu Mahasabha and declare to the world that Hindus and Mohammedans are brothers.'

Jinnah would not go back to the Congress, and he now believed that the two communities could grow under two separate communal organizations, and bypass the Congress which claimed to be a secular organization. League leaders believed that no amount of non-co-operation movement, Hindu-Muslim unity, and evolution of nationalism, would put Muslims on a par with Hindus in the services and education. In his speech in the Legislative Assembly on the Report of the Royal Commission (popularly known as the Lee Commission) on Superior Civil Services in India, Jinnah demanded a 'fair share' for Muslims. Raza Ali, in his presidential address to the League session of 1924, also emphasized this point, saying that no Muslim had yet been appointed to the Indian Civil Service as a result of the supplementary examination in India, and that the number of successful Muslim candidates in England

was so small as to be almost negligible. He said it was high time to take steps to do justice to Muslims.

The year 1924 was a paradoxical year in Indian politics: unity was being eagerly looked for, but what was slowly creeping back was disunity. At the meetings of one another's communal organizations, Hindu leaders were patiently listening to the communal speeches of Muslims, and Muslim leaders of Hindus. At the annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha were present Gandhi, Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali, but the president in his address was justifying the Shuddhi movement. His argument was that for centuries Muslims had been converting Hindus and the majority of Muslims in India were converts; Christian missions were also carrying on a campaign of conversion. He, therefore, suggested that a Hindu mission for conversion had become a very pressing necessity in the situation prevailing in the country.

Riots, which had resulted in far greater loss to Hindu life and property than to Muslim, and which were interpreted as a deliberate and planned attack of the Muslim community on the Hindu community, had upset a number of top Hindu leaders. Two examples will show the state of their minds. Lajpat Rai, in a letter he wrote to the Bengal Congress leader, C. R. Das, expressed the uneasiness of his mind thus: 'There is one point more which has been troubling me very much of late and one which I want you to think carefully, and that is the question of Hindu-Mohammedan unity. I have devoted most of my time during the last six months to the study of Muslim history and Muslim law and I am inclined to think, it is neither possible nor practicable. Assuming and admitting the sincerity of the Mohammedan leaders in the non-co-operation movement, I think their religion provides an effective bar to anything of the kind. You remember the conversation, I reported to you in Calcutta, which I had with Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Kitchlew. There is no finer Mohammedan in Hindustan than Hakim Saheb, but can any other Muslim leader over-ride the Koran? I can only hope that my reading of Islamic Law is incorrect, and nothing would relieve me more than to be convinced that it is so. But if it is right then it comes to this that although we can unite against the British we cannot do so to rule Hindustan on democratic lines. What is then the remedy? I am not afraid of seven crores in Hindustan, but I think the seven crores of Hindus-

tan plus the armed hosts of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Turkey will be irresistible. I do honestly and sincerely believe in the necessity or desirability of Hindu-Muslim unity. I am also fully prepared to trust the Muslim leaders, but what about the injunctions of the Koran and Hadis? The leaders cannot over-ride them. Are we then doomed? I hope not. I hope your learned mind and wise head will find some way out of this difficulty.’²

In 1924, the poet Rabindranath Tagore, expressed his views on the Hindu-Muslim question to the representative of a Bengali paper; these views were translated in an article, ‘Through Indian Eyes’, in *The Times of India* of April 18, 1924, thus: ‘... another very important factor which, according to the poet, was making it almost impossible for Hindu-Mohammedan unity to become an accomplished fact was that the Mohammedans could not confine their patriotism to any one country... The poet said that he had very frankly asked many Mohammedans whether, in the event of any Mohammedan power invading India, they would stand side by side with their Hindu neighbours to defend their common land. He could not be satisfied with the reply he got from them. He said that he could definitely state that even such men as Mr. Mohammed Ali had declared that under no circumstances was it permissible for any Mohammedan whatever his country might be, to stand against any other Mohammedan.’

These fears were being echoed here and there, and as if by design, were finding their confirmation in Muslim oratory, a typical example of which is given below. At a public meeting at Lahore, early in 1925, Dr. Kitchlew, who, until recently, had been a one hundred per cent nationalist, made an angry speech in the course of which he said: ‘The Congress was lifeless till the Khilafat Committee put life in it. When the Khilafat Committee joined it, it did in one year what the Hindu Congress had not done in forty years. The Congress also did the work of uplifting the seven crores of untouchables. This was purely a work for the Hindus, and yet the money of the Congress was spent on it. Mine and my Mussalman brethren’s money was spent on it like water. But the brave Mussalmans did not mind. Then why should the Hindus quarrel with us when we Mussalmans take up the Tanzim work and spend

² Quoted in Indra Prakash’s *Life of Savarkar*.

on it money that belongs neither to the Hindus nor to the Congress? If we remove British rule from this country and establish Swaraj, and if the Afghans or other Muslims invade India, then we Muslims will oppose them and sacrifice all our sons in order to save the country from the invasion. But one thing I shall declare plainly. Listen, my dear Hindu brothers, listen very attentively! If you put obstacles in the path of our Tanzim movement, and do not give us our rights, we shall make common cause with Afghanistan or some other Mussalman power and establish our rule in this country.’³

Within a year, from his presidency of the Congress in December 1923, the transformation of Mohammed Ali was also complete. In his presidential address, he had spoken of Gandhi in these eulogistic terms: ‘The political conditions of India just before the advent of the Mahatma resembled those of Judea on the eve of the advent of the Jesus, and the prescription that he offered to those in search of a remedy for the ills of India was the same that Jesus had dispensed before in Judea. Self-purification through suffering; a moral preparation for the responsibilities of government; self-discipline as the condition precedent of Swaraj—this was Mahatma’s creed and conviction; and those of us, who have been privileged to have lived in the glorious year that culminated in the Congress session at Ahmedabad, have seen what a remarkable and rapid change he wrought in the thoughts, feelings and actions of such large masses of mankind.’

A year later, the same Mohammed Ali made this thundering statement at Aligarh and Ajmere: ‘However pure Mr. Gandhi’s character may be, he must appear to me from the point of view of religion inferior to any Mussalman, even though he be without character.’⁴ Many were wonder-struck when they saw this statement published in the press; many others dismissed it as a press fabrication. And when, some time later, Mohammed Ali happened to address a public meeting at Lucknow, a straight question was put to him, and he eloquently accepted the statement attributed to him saying, ‘Yes, according to my religion and creed, I do hold an adulterous and a fallen Mussalman to be better than Mr. Gandhi’.

Everywhere, public speeches made from Muslim platforms were

³ *The Times of India*, March 14, 1925.

⁴ *Ibid.*, March 21, 1925.

repudiating and regretting the 'so-called Hindu-Muslim' unity. On May 2, 1925, a Bengal Muslim Conference was convened at Faridpur, under the presidentship of A. K. Fazlul Huq, an ex-Minister of Bengal. He warned his audience that as India was advancing towards self-government more powers would be monopolised by Hindus, and called upon his co-religionists to organize themselves in good time to start an association on the lines of the Hindu Mahasabha and to cover the whole of Bengal with a network of branches. He asked Muslims to be trained in physical culture.

The President of the 1925 session of the Muslim League, Sir Abdur Rahim, made a blatant communal speech which caused no small amount of excitement in the country. Sir Abdur Rahim said that the 'League was now more necessary to Muslims than ever because of Hindu attacks on their community. Hindus had by their provocative and aggressive conduct made it clearer than ever that Muslims could not entrust their fate to them and must adopt every possible measure of self-defence. Some Hindu leaders had even spoken of driving Muslims out of India as Spaniards had expelled the Moors.' He also pointed out that Hindus could never establish self-government without Muslim help. He asserted that some Hindus were actively engaged in conspiracies with foreign societies which had as their object the stirring up of trouble in India. He said that no Mohammedan had joined the Indian revolutionaries; he condemned non-co-operation and said that the services of Englishmen were necessary for the welfare of India.

As if attacks on one community by leaders of the other were providing life-blood to the communal organizations, these were becoming stronger and more vociferous as the days passed. At a Hindu Mahasabha meeting held at Calcutta on April 11, 1925, the President, Lajpat Rai, laid down the following as the aims of the Mahasabha: (1) to organize Hindu Sabhas throughout the country; (2) to provide relief to Hindu victims of communal disturbances; (3) to reconvert Hindus who had been converted forcibly to Islam; (4) to organize gymnasiums; (5) to organize Seva Samitis, i.e. associations for social service; (6) to popularise the Hindi language; (7) to celebrate Hindu festivals in a manner which may conduce to the promotion of brotherly feelings among different sections of Hindus; (8) to promote good feelings with Mohammedans

and Christians; (9) to represent the communal interest of the Hindus in all political controversies.

While communal riots had struck a heavy blow at Hindu-Muslim unity, Turkey, which had really provided the bond, was undergoing revolutionary changes. After a few years of struggle, the Young Turks Movement succeeded in capturing power, and compelled Sultan Abdul Hamid to abandon the throne and also the Khilafat. In 1923, Mustafa Kamal the ruler of Turkey, abolished the Sultanate and proclaimed Turkey a republic, but he retained the office of Khalifa out of deference to the religious susceptibilities of the people. It was, however, enacted that the responsibilities of the office of Khilafat would in future be purely spiritual. On the flight of Sultan Abdul Hamid, the Khilafat was vested in his nephew, Abdul Majid Effendi. 'But when certain leading Indian Muslims addressed a letter to the new Government pleading that the Caliph should be accorded better treatment than he was receiving, Mustafa Kamal seized upon the incident as an excuse for abolishing the Caliphate on the ground that its existence would lead to foreign interference in Turkish affairs.'⁵

This news, which reached India on March 10, 1924, unnerved the Khilafat leaders, who, in their excitement, appointed a deputation to go to Turkey. But the deputationists were refused passports. As Jawaharlal Nehru observes in his *Discovery of India*, Kamal's 'lack of religion, his abolition of the Sultanate and Khilafat, the building up of a secular state, and his disbandment of religious orders, destroyed the dream structure that had gradually grown up in the Indian Muslim mind ever since the days of the Mutiny'.⁶ The Khilafat movement, to quote Nehru again, 'had its centre elsewhere, and when the core itself was eliminated by the Ataturk, the superstructure collapsed, leaving the Muslim masses bewildered and disinclined to any political action'.⁷

What was the Khilafat Conference, which had collected enormous funds in the name of Turkey, to do now? It had come into existence solely to ventilate the Turkish grievance, and the happenings in Turkey were still disturbing its sleep. At its meetings in 1924 and 1925, it gravely deliberated upon the Khilafat, and

⁵ Stephen King-Hall, *Our Own Times*, 1913-1938, p. 180.

⁶ Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (First Edition), p. 416.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 417.

decided that the Muslims of the world should re-establish the Khilafat at some other place. It still believed in Congress politics, though some of its members gave vent to communal feelings.

But most Muslim leaders and the mass of the Muslims, having abandoned the Khilafat issue as a hopeless adventure, were returning to the pre-Turkish days in Indian politics, and the return was facilitated, perhaps forced, by communal riots. The Khilafat Conference and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema were wavering between Muslim communalism and nationalism, inclining more towards the latter—a factor which made them unacceptable to most Muslims. But the return to pre-Turkish days could not undo the political education of a decade, and in the mid-'twenties Muslims, too, talked of self-government, but of a self-government in which benefits should be judiciously divided between the Hindu community and the Muslim community. The Muslim League now took the stage on behalf of the Muslims, and began to propagate in favour of a 'due share' for Muslims in the future administrative set-up.

But Gandhi did not abandon hopes of unity being realized again; he initiated a discussion in Bombay in November 1924. The discussion produced an all-parties conference, with the representatives of the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Justice Party, the Liberal Federation, Indian Christians, and others participating. The conference appointed a committee to study the Indian situation and make positive suggestions for unity. In January 1925, the committee appointed a representative sub-committee consisting of 40 members; (a) to frame such recommendations as would enable all parties to join the Congress; (b) to frame a scheme for the representation of all communities, races and sub-divisions on the legislative and other elective bodies; (c) to frame a scheme of Swaraj. The sub-committee was split up into two smaller committees. While the first of these committees, required to frame a report on the constitution, submitted its report, the other, whose job was to frame a scheme of communal representation, met only once and adjourned *sine die* without coming to any conclusion, because Lajpat Rai and other representatives of Hindus would not attend the committee's meetings. The attempt ended with Lajpat Rai's article in the *Leader* of Allahabad, in which he declined to accept the

view that a Hindu majority in some provinces and a Muslim majority in others was the only way to Hindu-Muslim unity.

Gandhi was undone. His comrades of the movement had degenerated into watch-dogs of narrow communal interests. Muslims were fast leaving the Congress, and since the Hindu Mahasabha never grew to be a match for the Muslim League, Muslims thought of the Congress as a Hindu organization, and of the League as a Muslim organization. The Congress still had within its fold a number of Muslim divines and others whose outlook was secular, but to the mass of Muslims, it was a Hindu organization.

CHAPTER XVIII

REJECTION OF THE LUCKNOW PACT

WHEN THE Hindu-Muslim agreement over representation of the two communities in the Legislatures—reduced to the formality of a Pact at the annual sessions of the Congress and the Muslim League at Lucknow in 1916—was subjected some years later to more careful scrutiny by Muslim leaders, particularly those of Bengal, it was discovered, to the great discomfiture of politically-conscious sections of the Muslims, that the Pact, while undoubtedly giving over-representation to the Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces, had reduced even the Muslim majority provinces—Bengal and the Punjab—to Hindu majority provinces in the allotment of seats in the Legislative Councils. Those who framed and agreed on the Pact were not oblivious of the Muslim populations of Bengal and the Punjab, and of the under-representation they were providing for the Muslims of the two provinces; the complacency which drove them to this conclusion was that the Muslims of Bengal and the Punjab were more educationally backward than their co-religionists elsewhere. The first to draw pointed attention to the 'injustice' were official agencies. The Government of India's Fifth Despatch on Indian Constitutional Reforms (Franchise), dated April 23, 1919, said that, while Muslims of the Central Provinces had been given in the Pact a representation equal to 349 per cent of their population; those of Bihar and Orissa to 238 per cent; of Madras to 231 per cent; of the United Provinces to 214 per cent; and of Bombay to 163 per cent; those of the Muslim majority province of the Punjab had been reduced to 91 per cent of their population, and of Bengal to 76 per cent.

But such were the regulations under which the seats on the Legislative Councils were filled, that actually Muslim representation in the Bengal Council was further reduced to 30 per cent and in the Punjab to 40 per cent. The Lucknow Pact, of course, more than vindicated itself by securing for the Muslims 46 per cent of the quota of seats filled by general Indian constituencies (in case of the Muslims by communal electorate) in Bengal. This percentage was reduced to 40.5 by the disproportionate election

of non-Muslims (which included Europeans) by special constituencies like that of commerce. It was further reduced to 30 when to the figure of elected members was added other special interests by nomination; the nominated members were both official and non-official, and the power to nominate vested in the Governor. Muslim proprietorship in commerce was practically non-existent, and non-Muslim commercial interests would not choose Muslims to represent them. Similarly, in the Punjab, the general election secured to the Muslims 50 per cent of the general elective seats, vindicating the Lucknow Pact. But the election from commercial and special constituencies reduced the percentage to 48.5, and in the total strength of the Council, the percentage further dropped to 40. In Hindu majority provinces also, nowhere could the Muslims reach the targets fixed for them in the Lucknow Pact. There, too, the Muslim representation in the general seats exceeded the the Pact provision, but the other modes of representation brought it down. Nevertheless, in the Hindu majority provinces Muslim representation remained in excess of the proportion of the Muslim population.

It would be wrong to blame the Hindus for disturbing the arrangement of the Lucknow Pact, and an eminent Muslim leader like Jinnah absolved them of any responsibility, which is clear from the following excerpt from a summary of the proceedings of the Reforms Enquiry Committee (1924). In his evidence before the Committee, Barkat Ali, appearing on behalf of the Punjab Muslim League, said he 'was a party to the conclusion of the Congress-League Pact at Lucknow. The objection put forward by Muslims in the Punjab was that although the compact granted them 50 per cent representation in the Punjab, they actually did not get it, because special constituencies returned Hindus from the constituencies of landlords, University and industrial interests.' Jinnah suggested: 'But that is not the fault of the Hindus. Your grievance is against the Rules.' Barkat Ali replied: 'That is so.'

But Jinnah himself was convinced that events had outpaced the Pact, and that it must be revised. He told the All-Parties Conference Committee, which came into being in the wake of the communal riots in 1924 (already referred to in previous pages), how peculiar circumstances of the situation then obtaining had persuaded Muslims to agree to their under-representation in Bengal

and the Punjab. The circumstances were these: It was suggested by some of the authors of the Pact that Muslims, being in a majority in Bengal and the Punjab, should agree to joint electorates in these two provinces. But the Muslim leaders pleaded that in a restricted franchise their community's voting strength would be considerably less than that of the Hindu community, and they could not expect to get even ten or fifteen per cent of the seats. When such were the prospects, 40 per cent seemed to be a satisfactory offer in the case of Bengal and 50 per cent in the case of the Punjab. But the actual Muslim representation in the Councils created among Muslim leaders of these two provinces an awareness which questioned the propriety of the Lucknow Pact and demanded its abrogation so far as the Muslim majority provinces were concerned. Jinnah also wanted only this part of the Pact to be revised, and the rest to stay. But the Punjab Hindu leader, Lajpat Rai, would not agree to a fresh arrangement which might be harmful to the Hindus. It was forgotten in the heat of controversy that the Pact was devised in order to pave the way for the forging of a joint Hindu-Muslim demand for political reforms, and that it would lose its authority the moment the Muslims repudiated it. Therefore, the withdrawal of Hindu leaders from the proposed revision only postponed the date of a fresh settlement and irritated the Muslim leaders.

No more were the annual sessions of the Muslim League attended by Hindu leaders, and those of the Hindu Mahasabha by Muslims.

At the 1926 annual session of the Muslim League, a grievance was ventilated in a resolution about the plight of Muslims in the Punjab Legislative Council. The mover, Din Mohammed, said that in spite of half the seats having been allotted to Muslims under the Pact, the Hindus managed, along with the Sikhs, to form a majority. There were two Ministers in charge of the 'transferred' departments (under the 1919 Act, portfolios were divided into two parts: 'reserved' and 'transferred'; the former were held by official members of the Executive Council and the latter by elected Indians), but none was a Muslim. Din Mohammed demanded the appointment of a third, a Muslim. Here again, the anger was directed against the Hindus, though the lapse was the British Governor's. Leading Muslims talked to each other in a porten-

tous mood about how clever the Hindus were in managing to seize power.

Leading Muslims of Bengal were not only rejecting the Lucknow Pact, but were also expressing themselves in strong terms against political reforms. A. K. Fazlul Huq, a former Minister of the Bengal Government, said in a memorandum he submitted to the Reforms Enquiry Committee (1924): 'It is evident that under the conditions prevailing in a modern province, those alone would get into power under a system of representative government who are ahead of the rest in education and all other matters which determine the selection of those in whose hands authority is to be vested. If, therefore, responsible government were introduced in this country without proper limitations and safeguards, the transference of power to popular control would mean the domination of one particular community over other less advanced communities. . . . Dyarchy with all its faults is, therefore, an essential and indispensable first step towards the attainment of full responsible governments by the people of India. . . . Proper safeguards must be provided in the constitution itself for the adequate representation of various communities. . . . Responsible government is possible only with a sufficiently well-educated electorate. This essential condition is wanting in India.'

Another Bengal ex-Minister, A. K. Ghuznavi, doubted India's suitability for democratic institutions. In his evidence before the Committee, he observed: 'Democratic government has hitherto flourished where there is homogeneity in religious beliefs, and in social customs, and where there is absence of any pronounced racial rivalries. These conditions are wanting in India.'

A third ex-Minister, Nawab Bahadur Syed Nawab Ali Khan Chowdhury, suggested to the Committee that a revision of the arrangement of communal representation was necessary: 'Communal representation being recognised as a necessity, the gross injustice that has been done to the Mohammedans of Bengal by definitely assigning them to the position of a minority in the Council while they form a majority of the population, must be remedied at once.'

The Muslim desperation and frustration in Bengal was aggravated by an event of the previous year. A few Hindu Congress leaders of Bengal, headed by C. R. Das, were reciprocally reacting

to the Muslim grievance over the Lucknow Pact, and acknowledged the soundness of the complaint that the Muslim community's majority in the province was neither reflected in the Legislative Council, nor in the public services. They drew up a Hindu-Muslim Pact for Bengal, and had it adopted at a meeting of the province's Swaraj Party on December 16-17, 1923. The Pact said :

It is resolved that in order to establish real foundation of self-government in this province, it is necessary to bring about a pact between the Hindus and the Mohammedans of Bengal dealing with the rights of each community when the foundation of self-government is secured.

Be it resolved that: Representation in the Bengal Legislative Council be on the population basis with separate electorates subject to such adjustment as may be necessary in the All-India Hindu-Muslim Pact (the Lucknow Pact) and by the Khilafat and the Congress. Representation to local bodies to be in the proportion of 60 to 40 (this may be further considered) in every district—60 to the community which is in majority, and 40 to the minority. Thus, in a district where the Mohammedans are in a majority they will get 60 per cent. Similarly, where the Hindus are in a majority, they are to get 60 per cent and the Mohammedans 40 per cent. The question as to whether there should be separate or mixed electorates is postponed for the present to ascertain the views of both communities. Fifty-five per cent of the Government posts should go to the Mohammedans to be worked out in the following manner: Fixing of tests of different classes of appointments. The Mohammedans satisfying the least test should be preferred till the above percentage is attained; and after that according to the proportion of 55 and 45, the former to the Mohammedans, and the latter to the non-Mohammedans, subject to this that for the intervening years a small percentage of posts, say 20 per cent, should go to the Hindus.

The Bengal Pact was subjected to acrimonious criticism in the Hindu-owned press and by a number of nationalist Hindu leaders. It also failed to receive Congress recognition. But Muslims received it with acclamation, and had a resolution moved in the provincial

Legislative Council proposing to give immediate effect to the Pact, by reserving 80 per cent of Government jobs for Muslims until their number in each branch of service became 55 per cent of the whole cadre. Das, the author of the Pact, himself opposed the resolution taking his stand on the opening paragraph of the Pact, which would ensure 'the rights of each community when the foundation of self-government is secured'. The emphasis in Das's opposition was on his belief that the provisions of the Pact were meant to come into operation only upon the attainment of Swaraj.

The Bengal Pact was the most disturbing element in contemporary Hindu-Muslim relations, which had worsened after the Lucknow Pact. Celebrated Muslim writers like Khuda Bakhsh, who began their lives as unrelenting critics of political upheavals and with learned commentaries on Islam, and were converted, in the wake of Hindu-Muslim unity culminating in the Khilafat movement, to warm nationalism, were now speedily walking back to their starting-point. Until 1912, Khuda Bakhsh called for governmental repression of Indian 'sedition'; a decade later, he speaks sympathetically of 'political combination, strikes, non-co-operation; uses phrases like '... the only way to bringing the bureaucracy to its knees'; idolises Gandhi as 'the spirit of justice, honour, righteousness'; and, in the latter half of the 'twenties, describes the Lucknow Pact as 'sublime folly', denounces the Congress as a 'wanderer in rapturous dreams of unreality', and concludes his despair thus: 'It is idle... to look to Swaraj for the cure of our present ills. And equally idle... to look to it for a reign of righteousness... It will divide Indian humanity into two great unequal halves—Heaven for one and Hell for the other.'¹

In this gloomy atmosphere, made gloomier by communal riots which were continuing unabated, the Muslim League did not lose sight of the ultimate political destiny of the country, and coolly formulated its demands in the light of prevalent Muslim opinion. The resolutions adopted by the Muslim League in 1925 asked for the appointment of a Royal Commission to examine how India's demand for full responsible government should be met, and presented the Muslim demand thus: provision should be made for (1) 'adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority in any province

¹ Khuda Bakhsh, *Islamic Regeneration*, p. 270.

to a minority or even to an equality'; and (2) separate electorate, 'provided that it shall be open to any community at any time to abandon its separate election in favour of joint electorate; territorial redistribution that might at any time be necessary shall not in any way affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province'.

The Muslim League's demand for partial revision of the Lucknow Pact—that part of the Pact which related to the Punjab and Bengal—aroused Hindu opposition to the rest of it which gave the Muslims representation in excess of the proportion of their population in the Hindu majority provinces. The Muslim League's insistence on retaining the excess, added to the Hindu deprecation of this part of the Pact. Apart from the justification or otherwise of the weightage to minorities, the provision relating to the Punjab and Bengal could by no means be considered a permanent arrangement. With the expanding franchise, the demand for a major share for the majority community was bound to grow; it would have grown, it might be suggested, even if there were no Hindu-Muslim estrangement. Therefore, the insistence of Hindu leaders on the retention of the Pact arrangement regarding the Punjab and Bengal was untenable, and was at best a demonstration of their regret over the concession they had agreed to make to Muslims in the Hindu majority provinces. It was this attitude which brought forth Hindu opposition to the Muslim demand of an extension of reforms to the North-West Frontier Province (which did not have a Legislative Council yet) and produced a counter-demand that the Frontier Province should again be joined to the Punjab.

CHAPTER XIX
MORE MUSLIM PROVINCES

THE PROSPECT of self-government becoming a reality in the near future brought to educated Muslims a vision of the amount of power and influence they could share in the country. It was a vision wholly different from the one presented by the Lucknow Pact, which gave a Hindu majority to all provincial Legislatures. The Muslims were now thinking of the North-West Frontier Province, which was overwhelmingly a Muslim-majority province, but did not yet have a Legislature, and had been denied all reforms ever since the arrival in India of the Indian Councils Act of 1892. They were thinking of Sind, which, if separated from Bombay, would give the Muslims another majority province.

Ever since the Punjab was conquered by the British in 1849, the North-West Frontier Province had been, for administrative purposes, a part of the Punjab, and remained so until 1901 when Curzon made it into a separate province. This tract of country, 40,000 square miles in area, ethnographically and geographically part of the Afghan heritage, had been a problem to the British for over a century. Crime was rife along the border, especially on the Waziristan side. As late as 1919-20, for example, there were 611 raids with '293 British subjects killed, 392 wounded, 461 kidnapped and property valued at nearly £ 200,000 looted'. The British had to exercise considerable vigilance to keep the tribes under control.

This was mainly the reason for the North-West Frontier Province remaining a centrally-governed territory. But it was not impervious to the political unrest in India. The vibrations of Gandhi's protest movement over the Rowlatt Bills were felt in the distant Frontier also, and there rose a Pathan leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who organized the Pathans and started a widespread agitation. His movement was rapidly gaining momentum when he was arrested in 1920; he was soon set at liberty. But he had acquired an outstanding influence which he again displayed during the Khilafat movement.

In 1923, the Government of India appointed a committee to

examine and recommend whether the Frontier Province should be amalgamated with the Punjab or remain a separate unit. The appointment coincided with the period of most bitter Hindu-Muslim controversies, and from the opinions expressed on the question, it was concluded that 'broadly speaking the Hindu elements in the population of the Punjab and of the North-West Frontier Province favoured amalgamation, while Muslim opinion was generally desirous' of continuance of the existing position. An alarming trend—alarming to Hindus—among the Muslims was given expression to by an important Muslim leader, Sardar Mohammed Gul Khan, in his evidence before the committee. Mohammed Gul Khan was the President of the Islamia Anjuman of Dera Ismail Khan. He was asked a question by a member of the committee: 'The idea at the back of your Anjuman is a Pan-Islamic idea, that Islam is a League of Nations, and as such amalgamating this province with the Punjab will be detrimental, will be prejudicial to that idea. That is the dominant idea at the back of those who think with you. Is it so?' Mohammed Gul Khan gave this answer: 'It is so. Their idea is that the Hindu-Muslim unity will never become a fact. I would much rather see the separation of Hindus and Mohammedans, 23 crores of Hindus to the South, and eight crores of Muslims to the North. Give the whole portion from Raskumari to Agra to Hindus, and from Agra to Peshawar to Mohammedans. I mean transmigration from one place to the other. This is an idea of exchange.'

Next year, at a session of the Muslim League held at Bombay, Mohammed Ali also suggested that the Muslims of the Frontier Province should have the right of self-determination to choose between an affiliation with India or with Kabul. He also quoted a certain Englishman who had said that if a straight line were drawn from Constantinople to Delhi, it would disclose a Muslim corridor right up to Saharanpur.

These utterances were recalled with consternation at the eighth session of the Hindu Mahasabha, held at Calcutta on April 11, 1925, under the presidentship of Lajpat Rai, who added that, on the other hand, Muslim leaders were advising Hindus not to get obsessed by the fear of the Indian Muslims making common cause with Muslim power beyond the Frontier.

In March next year (1926), the Frontier was discussed in the

Central Legislative Assembly. The discussion was started by a Muslim Leaguer, Syed Murtaza, who was a member of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly, with the motion of a resolution recommending to the Governor-General that the provision of the Government of India Act, 1919, relating to the Legislative Councils and the appointment of Ministers, should be extended to the North-West Frontier Province. On that day (March 8), the Swarajists had staged a walk-out and Syed Murtaza had joined in it, but he returned to the Assembly saying that he was a Muslim first and a Swarajist afterwards; he sought to satisfy both his conscience and his colleagues by asserting that the Muslim Leaguer in him was present in the house while the Swarajist was outside it.

Murtaza's resolution received a mixed reception, but left no shadow of doubt that Hindus were antagonistic to Muslim aspirations. Support for the resolution undoubtedly came from the Bengal Congress leader, B. C. Pal, who said that the Hindus of the Frontier should accommodate themselves to the Muslim majority in the same way as Muslims were doing in Hindu majority provinces, but other Hindu members like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir Hari Singh Gaur and Diwan Bahadur Rangachariar, opposed the resolution, suggesting that the question should be left to the Royal Commission which was to be appointed in the near future.

The splitting of nationalist members into different groups in the Assembly had reduced the Congress to insignificance, and imparted to the Hindu Mahasabha a representative capacity. Therefore, inside the Assembly, one witnessed the spectacle, very rare in later years, of the Muslim League speaking for the Muslims, and the Hindu Mahasabha for the Hindus. The climax of the year's controversy was reached at the sessions of the League and the Mahasabha, with the former demanding a legislative council for the N-WFP, and the latter firmly opposing 'the proposed scheme to convert the administration of that province into a separate province under the Government of India Act' and asserting that 'it should continue to remain under the direct administration of the central Government'.

But two years later, Hindus and the Hindu Mahasabha dramatically changed their attitude towards the N-WFP. In March, 1928, again, another Muslim member of the Swaraj Party, Sarfaraz Husain

Khan, while speaking on the budget, formally pleaded the Frontier's case for a Legislative Council. The Government spokesman, Sir Denys Bray, opposed it, and among the excuses he put forward, one was the Hindu objection to it. But, surprisingly, the prominent Hindu Mahasabha leader, Lajpat Rai, rose at once to declare that he was not opposed to raising the political status of the Frontier Province. Lajpat Rai gave the lead, and no Hindu member stood up to support continuance of the existing status of the Province. The reversal in the attitude of the Hindu members was ratified at the annual session of the Mahasabha a month later. It shifted the vehemence of its opposition to other demands of the Muslims, one of which was the separation of Sind from Bombay, making it into a full-fledged province.

On several occasions in the past, the amalgamation of Sind with the Punjab had been considered purely for administrative reasons, but the proposals never materialised, and this Muslim stronghold, since the earliest contact of India with the Arab world, continued to remain a part of the Bombay Presidency. Financially, it could not stand as a separate administrative unit, and, therefore, separation was never considered a workable proposition. But the Muslim insistence on a separate Sind, even if it were to be maintained with central subvention, happened to coincide with the universal anxiety that the communal question, which was holding up progress towards self-government, must be settled somehow. The 1926 Congress devoted considerable discussion to the problem and asked its Working Committee 'to devise measures for the removal of the deplorable differences between Hindus and Muslims'. Muslim leaders evinced a similar anxiety, and frequently conferred in groups to search for a solution. In sheer desperation, Sir Sankara Nair, a noted statesman of the period, moved in the Council of State (March 16, 1927) a resolution proposing postponement of all efforts for responsible government until the Hindus and the Muslims agreed to dispense with separate electorates. He said that reforms that deepened distrust and exacerbated feelings were not worth having. There was a lively debate on the resolution and, though it was withdrawn, it stirred up politicians. Four days later, thirty prominent Muslim leaders, belonging to various groups, met in a conference at Delhi, with the determination to produce a workable alternative to the Lucknow Pact. The con-

ference unanimously agreed to the institution of a joint electorate with reservation of seats on the condition that: (1) Sind should be separated from Bombay, and constituted as a separate province; (2) reforms should be introduced in the N-WFP and Baluchistan; (3) in the Punjab and Bengal, the proportion of representation should be in accordance with the population; (4) in the Central Legislature, the Mohammedans should not be less than a third of the total strength. The conference also said that in the Muslim-majority provinces, Muslims should make the same concessions with regard to the proportion of seats reserved for the Hindus as Hindus would make in the Muslim-minority provinces. The conference was presided over by Jinnah.

These demands were considered and fully endorsed two months later (May 1927) by the All-India Congress Committee, and ratified by the plenary session of the Congress in December. The Congress also included in the resolution it adopted other Muslim demands made in previous years from time to time, namely: '(1) that in the future constitution, liberty of conscience shall be guaranteed, and no legislature, central or provincial, shall have power to make any laws interfering with liberty of conscience, which means liberty of belief and worship, freedom of religious observances and associations, and freedom to carry on religious education and propaganda with regard to the feelings of others and without interference with similar rights of others; (2) no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding inter-communal matters shall be moved, discussed or passed in any legislature, central or provincial, if a three-fourths majority of the members of either community affected thereby in that legislature oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such bill, resolution, motion or amendment.'

The 1927 Congress was presided over by a leading Muslim, Dr. M. A. Ansari. Mohammed Ali still claimed at the Congress platform, the 'Hindus trust the Mussalmans, and the Mussalmans trust the Hindus', but they 'cannot trust the British Government'. At the Congress platform, he exhorted the audience to boycott the Simon Commission (a statutory commission on constitutional reforms, discussed in the next chapter), and at the Muslim League platform, chided his Muslim friends who counselled co-operation with the Commission, dubbing them British henchmen. But com-

munal organizations were becoming popular, and the Congress, as Dr. Ansari said in his presidential address, was 'being relegated in many provinces to a secondary position'.

Surely enough, the opposition to the Congress resolution agreeing to Muslim demands came from the Hindu Mahasabha, which at its annual session (April 1928)—the same session at which it had agreed on a Legislature for the N-WFP—expressed itself in favour of a joint electorate without any reservation for a majority community, and with reservation for minority communities for a 'short period', if they insisted on reservation. The Mahasabha's stand on Sind, seemingly secular, provided no practical solution. The resolution on Sind said that 'administrative, financial and similar other considerations' should be the deciding factors for constituting that territory as a separate province, and not the consideration that a particular community 'shall be in majority'—a consideration which 'is fraught with danger to the growth of sound nationalism in the country, and will divide India into Hindu India and Muslim India'. Rightly did the Mahasabha visualise the future, and the Congress acceptance of a communal proposal could only be justified as a practical approach to what appeared as an insoluble tangle. In the peculiar atmosphere prevalent in the country at that time, a secular approach was almost unanimously deplored as Hindu opposition to Muslim aspirations. A similar attitude met another resolution of the Mahasabha which opposed communal representation in the public services, and pleaded that the basis of selection should be 'merit and competency ascertained through open competitive tests'. Hindu Mahasabha leaders accused the Congress of forming an alliance with Muslim communalism whose representatives, they said, were staying in the Congress only to influence its decisions on communal questions.

The Congress, the only secular organization in the country, was in the most unenviable position. It was a mute witness to the awful communal rioting which had enveloped the whole of India, excepting the south. The riots, which began in 1921-22, continued year after year in the U.P., Bombay, Bengal, the Central Province, Bihar and Orissa, the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province and Delhi, and were showing no sign of abatement. Never was the Arya Samaj more active than in the 'twenties: its membership was swelling by thousands every year, and many were offering

themselves for missionary work; public meetings under the auspices of the Arya Samaj all over the country, for *Shuddhi*, *Sangathan*, and propagating the message of the Samaj, were a common feature of social life; literary works were being produced to establish the superiority of the Vedic religion over all others; and in their religious zeal, some writers made scurrilous attacks on the Prophet Mohammed—typical of such attacks were the two publications, *Rangila Rasul* and *Risala Vartman*, which provoked more rioting, more incendiarism, and more murders. Muslims, similarly, were going ahead with their *Tabligh*, and Muslim missionaries were intensifying their conversion activities among the depressed classes of Hindus, mostly the so-called untouchables. Hindu and Muslim festivals, like Holi and Divali, Mohurrum and Id produced every year a crop of riots, every riot creating ever more bitterness even among leading Hindus and Muslims. There were riots, there was religious fanaticism, there were communal organizations flourishing on them; there was Pan-Islamism and the Hindu fear of it; there were nationalist leaders often giving vent in the heat of controversy to rank communalism; there were people lending attentive ears to communal harangues; there were Congress leaders devoting themselves to the building up of the Hindu Mahasabha more than to the building up of the Congress; there were Muslims who would denounce the Congress and set a barrier before all political progress if Muslim demands, as formulated by their communal organization, were not conceded. Through all these, the Congress had to steer cautiously, wisely and practically. The All-India Congress Committee formulated tangible proposals regarding religious conversions and music before Muslim mosques, which were often the cause of communal clashes. It said that every individual or group was at liberty to convert or reconvert by argument or persuasion, but not by force. It also said that Hindus were 'at liberty to take processions and play music before any mosque at any time for religious or social purposes, but there should be no stoppage of the processions nor special demonstrations in front of mosques'. Muslim Congressmen like the Ali brothers concurred with these proposals. These remedies, however, had no effect on the communal health of the country.

No careful observer watching the growth of Muslim politics, which owed its birth to communalism, could fail to see that Muslim

demands could not be dismissed on secular grounds, and that, therefore, the Congress acceptance of them stood vindicated. The Lucknow Pact itself was a concession to communalism; the Khilafat movement, was a concession to Pan-Islamism, made for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity. The demand for Sind was conceded for the same reasons, even though the aspiration which backed it was communal.

The Muslim leaders said they saw communalism disguised in the Hindu Mahasabha's seemingly secular resolution in which it denied reservation in the Legislature to a majority community. They pointed out that the Mahasabha had in view the Punjab and Bengal, where the Muslims, in spite of reservation, had been reduced in the Legislatures to the position of a minority; and that if adequate reservations were not made for Muslims in these two Muslim-majority provinces, the Hindus and Sikhs, much wealthier and better educated, would combine to maintain their majority and Muslim minority in the future legislature of the Punjab, and resourceful Hindus would do the same in Bengal.

If communal aggrandisement was at the back of the Muslim demand for the separation of Sind, there was no less communalism in the Hindu resistance to it. The Hindu minority, which held the financial and commercial reins of Sind, and which was indifferent to the separation of that territory from Bombay in 1915, now grew apprehensive, obviously because of strained Hindu-Muslim relations, of the prospect of the self-government establishing Muslim-majority rule. It was this fear which had come upon the five per cent Hindu minority of the N-WFP, who had to leave their homes during the communal riots and make for safer places either in that Province or outside it, in the Punjab. In the Kohat riots, Hindus complained of their women being abducted by Muslim hooligans.

After the communal organizations had spent their fury, the North-West Frontier Province was given a Legislative Council in 1932, and Sind was established as a separate province by the Government of India Act, 1935.

CHAPTER XX

'LEAVING JINNAH HIGH AND DRY'

THE GENERAL elections to the Provincial and Central Legislatures, held in November 1926, indicated that none of the political and communal organizations could claim to speak for the majority of Indian voters; indeed, that none of them could claim to speak for either the majority of Hindu or of Muslim voters. The franchise, under the 1919 Reforms Act, covered barely four per cent of the population, but it would be wrong to presume that the organizations were more popular among the masses than among those who constituted the voters; in fact, the latter had a better idea of the organizations than the masses. The Swaraj Party, which contested the 1926 elections with the full authority of the Congress, lost a considerable amount of the ground it had gained in the elections of 1923. With communal riots vitiating the mentality of the mass of the Hindu voters, the Khilafat movement was regretfully characterized as a fiasco, and attention was beginning to rest on the Hindu Mahasabha. The Congress, the Muslim League, and the All-India Khilafat Conference, still groped for Hindu-Muslim unity, but voters were influenced either by communal considerations or by independent candidates. Understandably, therefore, the Swaraj Party swept the polls in Madras, which was free from communal rioting, but suffered crushing defeats in the Punjab and U.P., where Hindus and Muslims were breaking each other's heads in the streets. Muslims, too, were a scattered lot in the legislatures, providing no claim to any Muslim organization to represent them.

There was no division of Hindus and Muslims in the Central Assembly into communal groups. The Swaraj Party represented Congress secularism, with a few Muslims clinging to it. Jinnah had his own group with two Hindus and a few Muslims. But nearly all Hindus not belonging to the Swaraj Party formed themselves into a Nationalist Party under the leadership of Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lajpat Rai, the top Mahasabhites. The majority of Muslim members sat aloof in an unorganized group. In U.P., those inclined towards responsive co-operation with the

Government and those who belonged to Hindu orthodoxy came together in a loose coalition calling themselves the Independent Congress Party; this was a misnomer because the Congress had expressed itself against responsive co-operation. In the Punjab, the majority of Hindu candidates for the November election had rallied round Lajpat Rai, and presented themselves as Hindu Mahasabhis. On many occasions, elected members, sinking their differences, combined to defeat the Government, and they joined up also on the demand for self-government.

The Legislatures reflected almost truly the conditions outside of them. There were Hindus and Muslims carrying on the Congress as a joint concern; there were Hindus consolidating themselves through the Hindu Mahasabha to protect themselves from the 'Muslim onslaught'; there were Muslims going back to the banner of the Muslim League, and looking upon it as the protector of their communal interests; there were Muslims who would not go whole hog with the League in its anti-British attitude; there were Muslims who would, under certain conditions, agree to go in for joint electorates, though by far the majority of the Muslims would never abandon the system of separate electorates. But all these diverse shades of opinions in India joined together in the main political demand, and agreed that future reforms should be settled and drawn up at a round-table conference, the British representatives sitting on one side and the Indians on the other. Any shrewd observer of the political situation at that time could foresee that, in spite of the virtual undoing of the Hindu-Muslim unity forged during the Khilafat movement, communal riots, and the consolidation and conversion movements, an agreement on Muslim representation in the legislatures was bound to lead to a Hindu-Muslim settlement. He could also foresee that even if they did not reach agreement, that would not lead to any postponement of the demand all were making on the British.

The British Government came out on November 8, 1927, with an announcement, appointing a statutory commission, headed by Sir John Simon, to examine the constitutional questions of India. The appointment of a commission had been provided for in the 1919 Act, to take place after ten years of the working of the Act, but in view of the mounting agitation, the appointment was postponed by two years. The impatience for Swaraj however, and

the Central Assembly's resolution demanding the holding of a round-table conference, had made the provision stale, and therefore the announcement was received in India with indignation. The commission consisted of seven members, all Englishmen; and this aspect of it added to the resentment. According to a British author, no act of the British since the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy received such wholesale condemnation. It was denounced by the entire Indian-owned press and almost all political leaders, as an insult to India's national self-respect. The Congress of the year, held at Madras under the presidentship of M. A. Ansari, called upon the Indian people to boycott the Commission at every stage and in every form, to organize mass demonstrations throughout the country on the day of the arrival of the members of the Commission, and later in every place at the time of its visit, and to carry on vigorous propaganda to make the boycott effective. The elected members of the legislatures were asked to refuse all help to the Commission and not to attend legislatures except for the purpose of boycott or of throwing out a ministry.

Progressive sections of the Muslim League headed by Jinnah fell in line with the Congress programme; others not only declined to have anything to do with it, but on the contrary offered to accord active co-operation to the Commission. The annual session of the Muslim League was to assemble at Lahore, but the Jinnahites feared that the predominance of loyalist elements in Lahore would upset their scheme, and they persuaded the League executive to shift the venue to Calcutta. Sir Mohammed Shafi, who was for co-operation with the Commission, and who had been elected president for the year, disputed the legality of the executive's decision, and refused to go to Calcutta. Finally, two sessions of the League were held, one at Lahore and the other at Calcutta. The Calcutta session, of which Jinnah was the President, 'emphatically' declared that 'the Statutory Commission is unacceptable to the people of India. It, therefore, resolves that the Mussalmans throughout the country should have nothing to do with the Commission at any stage or in any form'. The session authorised the Council of the League to appoint a committee to join the Congress and other political parties in the work of drafting the constitution and suggesting necessary safeguards. The Lahore session appealed to the Muslims to co-operate with the Commission, for doing so would

be in the best interests of the Muslims. The oldest protagonist of separate electorates, Ameer Ali, sent an urgent warning from London to Lahore that the contemplated boycott would prejudice the interests of India, especially of the minorities. Lahore seemed to be staging the drama prepared for it in London. The Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, had sent out to the Viceroy a prescription of *Divide et Impera*: 'We have always relied on the non-boycotting Muslim, on the depressed community, on the business interests and on many others, to break down the attitude of boycott. You and Simon must be the judges whether or not it is expedient in these directions to try to make a breach in the wall of antagonism, even in the course of the present visit.'¹ In another letter to the Viceroy he said: 'I should advise Simon to see at all stages important people who are not boycotting the Commission, particularly Muslims and the depressed classes. I should widely advertise all his interviews with representative Muslims. The whole policy is now obvious. It is to terrify the immense Hindu population by the apprehension that the Commission, having been got hold of by the Muslims, may present a report altogether destructive of the Hindu position, thereby securing a solid Muslim support and leaving Jinnah high and dry.'²

Simon, who had knowledge of the reactions to his Commission, advised the Viceroy soon after landing in India that the Commission would take the form of a joint, free conference between the seven Englishmen and seven Indians to be appointed by the members of the Central Legislature. But the proposal was turned down contemptuously by Indian leaders, and on the motion of Lajpat Rai, the Central Assembly also adopted a resolution to this effect. Nevertheless, the Viceroy appointed a committee of seven members—three from the Council of State and four from the Assembly—to sit in 'joint, free conference' with the Commission for the purpose of scrutinising and elucidating the Commission's work 'from the Indian side, on free and equal terms'.

Three of the members of the Committee were Muslims, and two of them breathed communal fire in their minute of dissent to the Committee's report. They put a peculiar interpretation on history since Plassey to show how luckily the British and the Muslims

¹ Birkenhead, *The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 254.

² Extracts from letters reproduced in Birkenhead, *The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 255.

had escaped Hindu onslaughts several times in the past. They said:

There is hardly any doubt that the rising of a new spirit among the Hindus would have wiped out the British settlements in Calcutta, but the sublime breathing of history determined the rhythm of their epoch. Ahmed Shah Abdali, the King of Afghanistan, invaded India in response to the urgent appeal of the Muslims. He met the overweening arrogance of the Marathas at Panipat. It was a deadly struggle between Hindu ambitions and Muslim religious enthusiasm. The Hindu power and pride was shattered on the field of Panipat . . . The British after this had an easy time to deal successfully with the fragments of the Hindu confederacy.

Nearly a century later another abortive attempt was made by the Hindus to rouse the Muslims against the British, but the British triumphed during the Indian Mutiny, and the implacable spirit manifested by the notorious Nana Saheb and others remained quiescent for nearly 60 years.

In 1920, the British had again to cope with the rising tide of Hindu ambitions. The Hindu tactics on this occasion were similar to those employed during the Mutiny. By clever manoeuvring, they won some credulous Muslims whom they made to fight their battles. The result was that, as in the Mutiny so in the years 1921-22, the duped Muslims had to bear the brunt of the fight. Eighty per cent of those sent to jail were Muslims.

These two members, Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan, csi, and Dr. Abdullah Al-M'amun Suhrawardy, belonged to the Lahore school of the Muslim League, and brought in absolutely irrelevant matter in their minute of dissent to suggest how risky it was for Muslims again to join hands with the Hindus in the boycott of the Commission. They affirmed Ameer Ali's advice and the Lahore League's resolution stoutly opposing any proposal for a joint electorate, asserting: 'During our tour in India, not a single Muslim body or witness has asked for a joint electorate; on the contrary, there is a strange concensus of opinion in favour of separate electorates.'

The Muslims of the Muslim League were, as we have seen above, divided between two schools: on the one side, were those who were for conditional joint electorate and non-co-operation with the Com-

mission; on the other were those who were for co-operation and separate electorates at all costs. Which school would ultimately triumph, it was no easy task to prophesy; and yet Lord Olivier, as if wishfully and with faith in current influences, hazarded this opinion in May, 1928: 'The conflict between the Muslim community and the Hindu parties with regard to the basis of representation is crucial. Mr. Jinnah has endeavoured to establish a compromise with the Hindus for the sake of being able to present a united reform programme, on the basis of having a common electoral roll, with a reservation of a certain number of seats for Muslims proportional to the number of the local Muslim community. The majority of Muslims stand out absolutely for separate electoral rolls, directly electing their own communal representatives proportional in number to their population.'³

The fragments of evidence left by those directly or indirectly associated with the Government of India, suggest that the division in the ranks of political parties was officially encouraged with a view to minimising the chances of their rallying on common ground. Lord Birkenhead had, in another letter, advised the Viceroy: 'I should like to receive your advice, if at any time you discern an opportunity for making this (the Commission) a useful bargaining counter or for further disintegrating the Swarajist Party . . . If such an acceleration affords you any bargaining value, use it to the full, and with the knowledge you will be supported by the Government.'⁴ Hindu communalism on the one hand and Muslim communalism on the other had disintegrated the Swaraj Party; whether officials had aided the process of disintegration or not in the past, Birkenhead would now wish them to do so.'

³ Quoted in *Indian Quarterly Register* (July-Dec. 1928), pp. 73-4.

⁴ Birkenhead, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

UNTOUCHABLES BETWEEN HINDUS
AND MUSLIMS

WHENEVER Muslim zeal to swell their numbers was provoked, Muslim missionaries visited the lower classes of Hindus, commonly known as 'untouchables', and held out before these unfortunate people the fraternity and equality which Islam promised, unlike anything they could receive under Hinduism. In the *Shuddhi* (conversion and reconversion to Hinduism) movement of the 'twenties, Muslims for the first time saw a danger to their traditional conversion campaign. Hindus had for centuries continued to murmur against proselytisation, but had never adopted any effective preventive steps, with the result that decade after decade Hindus had been losing and Muslims gaining in the percentage of population. Most converted Muslims being Hindu 'untouchables', enthusiastic preachers of Islam among Muslim politicians considered the 'untouchables' as a free pasture, belonging neither to Hindus nor to Muslims, but nearer to Islam; for Islam raised the 'untouchables' to a status of equality which thousands of years of neighbourhood with caste Hindus had denied them. Hindus were the inhabitants of Hind (India), and it was only after the arrival of Islam and Christianity that they began to be regarded as followers of the religion of the land, which was called Hinduism. Only the emigrants and converts were non-Hindus, and all the rest passed as Hindus. But when religions—Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Hinduism—became the bases of representation in Legislatures, Muslim leaders represented to British statesmen that it would be unjust to the 'untouchables' to leave their fate in the hands of Hindu representatives; that 'untouchables'—the so-called Hindus—were safer in the fold of Islam than in the Hindu fold, and that to reckon them as Hindus would militate against the proportional representation of Muslims as against Hindus, who, without the 'untouchables', did not far outnumber the Muslims.

The first Muslim leader to raise the question to a political level was Ameer Ali, who, in his speech introducing the Muslim League deputation in London to the Secretary of State for India, Morley, said in January 1909:

We form a nationality as important as any other, and our wishes, sentiments and interests should, we conceive, form as important factors in the consideration of policy and measures as those of any other. If the vast masses of low caste people who are nominally Hindus were excluded from the Hindu figures, certainly the disparity which now appears between the Hindu and Mohammedan populations would not strike as so great or so disproportionate. These tribes and communities, nominally Hindu for the purposes of census, have nothing in common with the real Hindu, to whom their touch, often their very shadow, is pollution. They can never rise out of the degraded state in which they live, and have lived for centuries. Save the British official, they have no representative or protector. Some of them have made desperate efforts to break the shackles that have bound them for ages, but they have been thrust back to their thralldom by, among other things, the judicial recognition of ancient usages. In the great reforms about to be introduced they will have no lot or place, nor are your Lordship's benevolent intentions ever likely to reach their ears. They have remained, and will remain for many decades, may be centuries, the degraded castes of India. But it would be disastrous if by placing all power and influence in the hands of privileged classes their emancipation should be made difficult in the future. To include these communities, however, in the Hindu population, and then to compare it with the Mohammedan population, does not appear to us just.¹

The reforms of 1919, limited in scope, did not concede direct elections to the Hindus, and restricted recognition of religious minorities to the Muslims. But Ameer Ali's pleading for the depressed classes of Hindus, while not yielding immediate results, remained as an important item in the register of pending issues. It should have aroused Hindus to the realization of their negligence of the depressed classes, but it did not; in fact it could not, for the mass of the caste Hindus, even those of lower castes, would not allow themselves to be polluted by the touch of the 'untouchables'. And Muslims rightly taunted them, asking how these advocates of a joint electorate and adult franchise would allow into a polling

¹ Indian Central Committee. Supplementary Note by Dr. Abdullah Al-M'amun Suhrawardy. Appendix III, 1930, p. 81.

booth 'untouchables' who should not cast their shadows over caste Hindus. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, politician, author, and the greatest 'untouchable' of the 20th century to leave the Hindu fold with hundreds of thousands of his brethren, feared, while maintaining his preference for a joint electorate in his evidence before the Indian Central Committee (1928) that the caste Hindus would either refuse the 'untouchables' admission into a polling booth or boycott a polling booth 'polluted' by the presence of an 'untouchable'. In the 'twenties, the depressed classes became a topic of discussion, now and then figuring in the British Parliament also. The *Report of the Franchise Committee* (Vol. I, pp. 124-6) included a note prepared by an English civilian of Madras, graphically depicting how people of the depressed classes were treated by high-caste Hindus, and making out a case for their separate representation. He said:

Even the use of a public street in a municipal town is sometimes prohibited to the 'polluting caste' by public notices. The Pariah is commonly excluded from the schools used by the higher castes. The exclusion of the Pariah does not stop short at education. It extends even to religion, and he is excluded from temples, which sometimes have notice boards put up at the gate proclaiming the fact that no Pariah could be admitted into its sacred precincts. The position of the low castes prior to British occupation was avowedly one of slavery. In the 18th century, sale deeds of land, after enumerating fields, waters, wells, homesteads, etc. often mentioned the slaves attached to the soil as items of the property transferred. In 1819, four low caste slaves were sold in public auction in satisfaction of revenue arrears. In 1843, the Government of India had to pass an Act laying down that no right arising out of an alleged property in the person and services of another as a slave should be enforced in Company courts. To this day, the low caste labourer in some districts is referred to in current phrases as a slave. The Pariah is effectively kept in a servile position by the higher caste though no longer nominally a slave. The higher castes, by (a) setting up a claim to the ownership of the labourer's house site and often of the hut in which he lives, and by (b) permanently advancing loans to these people, have kept them in a state of quasi-servi-

tude. The advance continues from father to son and the labourer binds himself to work for the employer till the advance is paid off. His own remedy to escape from this quasi-servitude is to emigrate from India.

The conversion of a Hindu 'untouchable' threw up the glaring difference between his condition as a Hindu and as a Muslim. As a Hindu, he was not allowed access to a public well; as a Muslim he used it by right, and if any Hindu questioned that right, a crowd of the Prophet's followers would accompany him to enforce it. It was the force of simple logic which was sending into the pale of Islam thousands of Hindus, in spite of the Hindu Mahasabha's new-fangled concern for 'untouchables' and the direction to Hindus to accord them equality, and in spite of the widespread Shuddhi movement. Dr. Abdullah Al-M'amun Suhrawardy, a member of the Indian Central Committee (1928), correctly summed up the phenomenon and its effect on Hindus in his supplementary note to the committee's report:

The process of proselytisation, acquiring fresh strength, vigour and stimulus with the fall of Muslim rule in India, goes on unabated and is ceaselessly at work. Islam claims every year converts from Hinduism by the thousands, and the new converts to Islam, along with the descendants of the earlier converts are amongst its most zealous followers and adherents. For, escaping from the tyranny of caste and social customs of Hinduism and finding refuge in the broad bosom of the brotherhood of Islam, they are more antagonistic to the idea and sentiments of the Hindus and further apart from them than even the original Muslims and their descendants. They flock by the thousands to Mecca, the centre and cradle of Islam, towards which the faithful turn five times a day in prayer when alive, and towards which their faces are turned when dead, and, cast into the fiery furnace of the discipline of the annual pilgrimage, they return to India purged and purified, and, adopting the manners and customs of Arabia, become as distinct from the Hindus as the Hindus are from the Chinese and the Jews.

These excerpts show that until the 'twenties, Muslims had been

taking the lead in championing the cause of the Hindu depressed classes, and showing to the world that the conversion of an 'untouchable' was wholly different from the conversion of a man who, in his former faith, enjoyed all social rights and human liberties, and therefore the 'untouchable' not only became a Muslim, but a different national with his face turned towards Mecca. In the competition for the 'untouchables' between Muslim leaders and the Hindu Mahasabha (which may be considered as including all other movements like the Arya Samaj, the Shuddhi Sabha, etc.), the Muslims were winning all along the line; or they were upgrading the 'untouchables' by conversion, or by advocating their case for representation in the Legislatures before British statesmen. In the central committee, it was a Muslim member, Dr. Suhrawardy, who evinced interest in seeking statutory provision for separate representation for the depressed classes in the Legislatures. Besides the religious satisfaction and political gain which Muslims got from the conversion of 'untouchables', they had reason to be sympathetic towards them, because their assimilation by Islam had, while upgrading them, made Muslims themselves untouchable in a way in the social outlook of Hindus; Hindus would not dine with them, and would not eat any cooked food prepared or touched by them. As has already been stated, by far the majority of the Muslims were at one time or another Hindu 'untouchables', and even in their new religion, were economically at the lowest ladder. In the economic life of the country, they ranked with the 'untouchables' still in the Hindu fold. Educationally, too, they were backward. Therefore the temptation for the combination of the two, in a Legislature or out of it, as against resourceful and educated caste Hindus, was understandable. If Muslim leaders were not motivated by unblemished sympathy for the 'untouchables', this temptation might be a plausible excuse for the concern of Muslim leaders for them. Whatever the motive, they indeed were the pioneers to focus attention on the plight of the depressed classes. So immense was the effect of this concern that prominent Hindu leaders encouraged, by personal example, the inter-dining of caste Hindus and 'untouchables'; never before had India witnessed the phenomenon of their sitting down to eat together. But the multitude of the Hindu population remained as conservative and as offensive to the 'untouchables' as ever, and separate electorates for the depressed classes

would have become a reality had not Gandhi staked his life to induce their leaders to remain part of the Hindu electorate. Gandhi made the removal of untouchability a prominent item of his constructive programme, and gradually the Congress itself became the exponent and spokesman of the 'untouchables', to whom Gandhi gave the sacred name of Harijans, 'men of God'. That was the end of the Muslim interest in the 'untouchables'.

CHAPTER XXII

THE NEHRU REPORT: WHAT IT MISSED

IN MAY 1927, the All-India Congress—at the same meeting at which it endorsed the thirty Muslim leaders' substitute for the Lucknow Pact—asked its Working Committee 'to frame a Swaraj constitution based on a declaration of rights for India in consultation with the elected members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures and other political parties'. By the time the annual session of the Congress came round in December, the idea had spread and had been discussed in the country; a number of organizations and individuals had submitted their suggestions to the Working Committee. The Congress, therefore, took the next step, and called an all-parties' conference. Even labour, commercial, social, cultural, religious and parochial organizations were requested to send their representatives to the conference. The presence of communal organizations besides the political ones, was inevitable, and among the prominent invitees were the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Khilafat Conference. The Muslim League (the Jinnah group which met for its annual session at Calcutta) welcomed the Congress move, and appointed a delegation 'to confer with the Working Committee of the Congress and such other organisations as the League council may think proper for the purpose of drafting a constitution for India in which the interests of the Muslim community will be safeguarded'.

But at the very first session of the All-Parties Conference, which lasted from February 12 to 22, 1928, the League grew fearful of losing rather than gaining something from the joint deliberations. Hindu Mahasabhites and Sikhs pressed their own communal claims which appeared to encroach upon the concession the Congress had already made to the Muslims. The Conference was not taking anything for granted, and was going over the whole field of constitutional reforms, including minority claims, *de novo*. Before the idea for the conference was born, there were mainly three participants in the country's political discussions: the Congress, the Muslim League, and the Hindu Mahasabha. Now there were over seventy organizations overshadowing the Muslim League,

and putting forward their own claims. The depressed classes, Christians, Sikhs, Marathas, all seemed as anxious as the Muslims to safeguard their interests in the future constitution. To the Hindu Mahasabha's pronounced hostility to the League claims, the Sikh representatives vigorously added their own. After speeches had been made betraying the same tenacity and dictation to which Muslim leaders had become accustomed since 1906, the Conference adopted resolutions which suggested that the Muslim leaders' substitute to the Lucknow Pact was not the last word. The League delegation was alarmed and reported the new trends to the League Council, which at a hurriedly-convened meeting, asked the delegation to 'press the representatives of various organisations to accept the League proposals' and instructed it to make it a condition of proceeding further with the framing of the constitution.

The Hindu and Sikh delegations were no less vehement in their pressure to convert the Leaguers to their point of view; and there was a deadlock. On the last day of the first session, the Conference appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru to examine and report what should be the provisions in the constitution with regard to the legislatures, franchise, fundamental rights, rights of labour and peasants, and the princely states. The Muslim League was represented on the Committee, but its representatives never attended the meetings of the Committee. They did attend the second session of the Conference which began on March 8, but they left it on March 11, never to return. On that fateful day, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh representatives made it unequivocally clear that they had no intention of deviating from the positions they had taken up. Cleverly enough, the conveners of the Conference devised a way out of the impasse, and appointed two committees, one to enquire into the financial aspect of the separation of Sind, and the other to consider the feasibility of proportional representation. The League delegation declined to work on the committees, and they never submitted any report.

For its third session, the Conference met on May 19, with the communal tangle remaining unresolved. Once again the conference appointed another committee of eight members, to examine 'the communal problem in its relation to the constitution'. The League was out of the conference, and the Muslims were represented by Sir Ali Imam and Shuaib Quaraishi, both of the Congress school.

Ill-health cut out Sir Ali, leaving Quraishi the only Muslim on the committee. The labour representative, N. M. Joshi, did not make his appearance at any sitting. Out of the six remaining members, four represented non-Muslim communal interests, i.e. the Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikh League and the depressed classes. It was hoping against hope that this committee would produce a better solution which might be acceptable to the League and induce it to return to the Conference. The committee did valuable work, examining population figures of the Punjab and Bengal district-wise, and trying to produce a pattern which should have eventually led to the evolution of a secular system of elections. But it failed to achieve the purpose for which it was appointed.

The Hindu Mahasabha's obstinacy in not yielding reservation to the Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal, under any condition, was matched by the obstinacy of the Muslim organizations to have it. There was a clearly perceptible difference in the two attitudes: Muslims said they wanted a foolproof arrangement to ensure them a representation in the provincial legislatures just in proportion to their populations. They said they did not wish to encroach on the representation of Hindus and Sikhs, and even suggested that the opposition to their demand betrayed the anxiety of Hindus to maintain the numerical lead in the legislatures of even the Muslim-majority provinces—the lead which they obtained on account of the faulty system of representation under the 1919 Act. The Hindu Mahasabha justified its stand by arguing that the two provinces of Bengal and the Punjab were ideally suited for an experiment in pure democratic elections—joint electorate without any reservation for any community. The Mahasabha contended that all non-Muslims in the Punjab numbered about 45 per cent and in Bengal a little more, and that therefore the two communities should not be afraid of each other. Muslims countered this argument by reference to the voters' list in which Hindus outnumbered Muslims, who, being poorer, were not qualified to be voters in the same proportion as were Hindus. The Mahasabha's answer, with which the Nehru Committee and the All-Parties Conference and the All-Parties Convention agreed, was that the constitution they were preparing would provide for adult franchise; Muslims said they did not believe adult franchise would really be conceded by the British. What, therefore, remained was

the Muslim suspicion that the Hindus of the Punjab and Bengal would manoeuvre the electoral system in such a way as to maintain Hindu majorities in the Provincial Legislatures.

The experts of the Conference then devoted considerable time to studying the district-wise population figures of the Punjab and Bengal in order to understand how the two communities were distributed and whether adult franchise without reservation would ensure their proportionate representation. They reached an affirmative conclusion. The Nehru Committee therefore made the following provisions for representation:

- (1) There shall be joint mixed electorates throughout India;
- (2) There shall be no reservation of seats for the House of Representatives (central legislature) except for the Muslims in provinces where they are in a minority, and non-Muslims in the North-West Frontier Province. Such reservation will be in strict proportion to the Muslim population in every province where they are in a minority and in proportion to the non-Muslim population in North-West Frontier Province. The Muslims or non-Muslims, where reservation is allowed to them, shall have the right to contest additional seats;
- (3): (a) There shall be no reservation of seats for any community in the Punjab and Bengal; (b) In other provinces than the Punjab and Bengal there will be reservation of seats for Muslim minorities on population basis with the right to contest additional seats; (c) In the North-West Frontier Province, there shall be similar reservation of seats for non-Muslims with the right to contest other seats;
- (4) Reservation of seats where allowed shall be for a fixed period of ten years;
- (5) Sind shall be separated from Bombay and constituted into a separate province after such enquiry about the financial position as may be considered necessary;
- (6) The N-WFP and other newly formed provinces shall have the same form of government as in other provinces.

The arguments which led the Conference to reject reservation for the Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal were:

In the Punjab, we have a Muslim zone in the north and north-west of the province, where the Muslims are overwhelmingly

strong and where no other community can encroach on their preserve. We find also a smaller area in the south, the Hindu zone, where the Hindus and the Sikhs are equally strong. Between the two, there is a third area where the Muslims are predominant, but not overwhelmingly so. This analysis leads us to the conclusion that Muslims are bound to capture over 47 per cent of the total seats in the Punjab from their special zone alone, whilst the Hindus and the Sikhs will jointly capture nearly 30 per cent. The remaining 23 per cent of the seats will lie in either a predominantly Muslim area or in districts where the Muslims are the strongest single community. Allowing for every contingency, we cannot conceive of Muslims not capturing enough seats in this area to give them a clear majority in the provincial legislature.

In Bengal from the overwhelming Muslim zone alone, not taking into consideration the predominantly Muslim zone, Muslims are assured of over 60 per cent seats in the legislature. The Hindu minority, although it is a very big minority, is highly likely to suffer in numbers in an open general election without reservation.

The conference had its recommendations examined by chosen representatives of the principal communities in the Muslim-majority provinces, and drew up separate agreements, with the common consent of all, about each province. But the Muslim League made a mockery of it, saying that the Muslims chosen to represent the Muslim community did not really represent it. Invitations were sent the Muslim League leaders also, but they were sticking to their boycott of the Conference. On the other hand, the framers of the Nehru Report had reason to be satisfied over the agreements because they were ratified by the Provincial Muslim Leagues of the Punjab and Bengal, as also by the Punjab Provincial Khilafat Committee.

But the League, at the all-India level, was a house divided. The so-called Shafi League would not co-operate with the conference on any terms; the other half of the League, whose leader was Jinnah, would extend co-operation on its own terms. Like the Nawabs under the later Mughals, the Provincial Leagues were going their own way. Standing on the top of a divided house, Jinnah was pre-

tending to represent the entire Muslim community of India, and arrogated to himself the right to dictate terms on behalf of the community. He was far from the fulfilment of his ambition, but he stood resolutely, rightly holding out the temptation that among the Muslim organizations, he and his followers alone were prepared for negotiations with the Congress or the Conference; and that they alone were prepared to consider joint electorate on certain conditions; others would not surrender their claim for distinct separate electorate.

Therefore, the democratic soundness of the electoral proposals and the belief that they would prove more gainful to the Muslim community were of little value when the main body of Muslim politicians would not consent to them. The Nehru Committee did not lose sight of the Congress resolution which had accepted the thirty Muslim leaders' formula. It explained its departure from that resolution thus: 'Muslims were insistent on the reservation of seats for the Muslim majorities in the Punjab and Bengal, and the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikh League were equally strongly opposed to this.' And 'when we find that the view of the Madras Congress and the Muslim League is diametrically opposed to that of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikh League, we must respectfully express our inability to accept either in its entirety'.

Muslims were wondering why Hindus and Sikhs were stubbornly opposing reservation for the Muslims of the Punjab and Bengal, even on a population basis, when they believed that a joint electorate without reservation would get Muslims higher representation. Why were the Hindu and Sikh leaders, Muslim critics asked, not willing to give the Punjab and Bengal Muslims reservation, which, according to them would give Muslims a lesser numbers of seats? Was there a hidden motive? Muslims said that adult franchise, which had been made by the Conference the basis of its recommendations about representation, was beyond the pale of practical politics. Their reason was that the 1919 reforms enfranchised only about four per cent of the population; from this, a jump to adult franchise was merely day-dreaming. They said that the property qualifications for voters had reduced the Muslim majorities of the Punjab and Bengal to minorities in the voters' registers. They reminded the Muslim community that they must guard against the mistakes of the 1919 Act, which gave Hindus higher representation in the Legis-

lative Councils of the Punjab and Bengal. They said that by dextrous devices, Hindus and Sikhs were trying to retain their majorities in the Councils. But the Nehru Committee and the All-Parties Conference were in a dilemma: if they accepted the thirty Muslim leaders' formula as an established and unalterable fact, they would have been faced with the boycott by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikh League; and of what advantage would this boycott have been when the Muslim formula represented, at best, only the Jinnah group of the League. In fact, the Conference would have broken up if Congress leaders, whose organization had accepted the formula, had stuck to it, because the delegates were overwhelmingly against it. At this distance of time, when it is easy to be wise after the event, it seems that it would have been wiser to risk the breaking of the Conference, than to adopt a substitute whose dialectical content was not assuring to Muslims, and which had the stamp of the Hindu Mahasabha.

CHAPTER XXIII

MUSLIM REACTION TO THE NEHRU REPORT—I

SOON AFTER the publication of the Nehru Report, Muslim leaders believing, or induced to believe, in separate electorates at all cost, set about rallying their followers back to the pre-1909 attitude which demanded recognition of the Muslims as a distinctly separate entity in the social and political life of the country. An unhappy exchange of attacks between Mohammed Ali and some others, who all happened to be Hindus, on the second day of the All-Parties Convention (December 23, 1928), convened to consider the Nehru Report, sent him also into their camp, and once again revived his Islamic zeal. Mohammed Ali left the Convention and never returned to it; never returned to the Congress on whose behalf he had been attending the Convention. He had opposed J. M. Sen Gupta's resolution ratifying the Nehru Committee's recommendation of Dominion Status for India. In the course of his much interrupted speech, Mohammed Ali reminded the Convention that the resolution ran counter to the previous year's Congress resolution which demanded complete independence. He described the departure from the Congress creed as the policy of a coward and not of a fighter. This brought forth indignant protests, and shouts of 'withdraw, withdraw', were flung at Mohammed Ali, who was trying to explain in vain that he had not called Sen Gupta a coward but wanted him with his creed of independence not to become a coward.

Mohammed Ali proceeded to say: 'I don't ask for Dominion Status under the British or Hindus or Mussalmans or Turkey or Afghanistan. But I want freedom for myself and my country.' Again there was an interruption when a delegate from Madras, T. Prakasam, asked him: 'Did you not petition the Viceroy?', and Mohammed Ali retorted, 'No, I have not taken even the oath of fealty, which you have done.'

He went on: 'I ask for no constitution except one article, namely that "India shall be free and independent". I ask for no right for myself, no fundamental rights for the Mussalmans, no rights

for Hindus, no protection for minorities and majorities.'

Hardly had the noise died down when Mohammed Ali had again to face a volley of indignant voices. The Liberal leader, C. Y. Chintamani, was answering criticism of Sen Gupta's resolution, when Mohammed Ali stood up to raise a point of order, but his five-word clause was drowned in an uproar of 'Order, order, sit down !' Mohammed Ali Said: 'If this rabble is going on like this, I will go out.' Many voices replied, 'You are also of the rabble'.

From here, Mohammed Ali went straight to preside over the Bihar and Orissa Muslim All-Parties Conference, which was one of the several other provincial conferences which had been convened to give expression to Muslim reactions to the Nehru Report. He said in his presidential address that the Nehru Report in a nutshell meant that creation was God's, and country was the Viceroy's or Parliament's, and rule was the Hindu Mahasabha's. He believed that many Hindu leaders, who professed to be nationalists, were communalists at heart. Later, presiding over the All-India Khilafat Conference, he presented Islam as a unifying force, and invited all the people of India to embrace it: 'Islam means peace, and nationalism means war. God made Islam to link all mankind in one family and one community. This is my communalism. All mankind is divided into nations each being enemy of others. This is your nationalism which leads to war. I want Hindus, Christians, Jews and stone-worshippers, all to come and unite with me in one life and joint brotherhood, to come and join in embrace without coercion, compulsion, force and subterfuge and without such false propaganda which is taking place today in favour of the Nehru Report. My communalism is to bring all into the fold of Islam by loving persuasion and service. The Koran says that there is no government but the government of God. Therefore the Mussalmans of India, when they make complete independence their goal, say only what the Koran had asked them to do 1,310 years ago.'

His brother, Shaukat Ali, presiding over the U.P. Muslims All-Parties Conference, asked Hindus to declare in clear terms whether they wanted peace or civil war. If they wanted war, Muslims were prepared to take up the challenge any moment. He condemned the Nehru Report, arguing that its purpose was to placate the Hindu Mahasabha; he deplored the Dominion Status resolution as betraying the slavish mentality of Hindus: 'Hindus have been

habituated to slavery, and they would remain slaves. The Mussalmans are a freedom-loving people and would not submit to either Hindu or British rule.'

The Ali brothers' powerful personalities and their Islamic approach influenced the provincial conferences with which they associated themselves to reject the Nehru Report as retrograde and anti-Muslim. The opposition at these conferences was hooted down. For example, at the U.P. Conference, Murtaza Husain Abdi wanted to make a statement to the effect that this Conference was constituted by men who had either no opinion or ever if they had any, were anti-national and anti-Hindu, and could not claim to be a body representative of all shades of Muslim opinion. A 'packed audience like that could not have the moral right to speak in the name of all the Mussalmans of the Province. He took objection to the presidential address of Shaukat Ali, which he characterised as 'philippic', and as full of vituperation against those who were not ready to lose their heads like Shaukat Ali. Abdi felt it was veritable agony to hear Shaukat Ali in that strain attributing motives to all those Hindu and Muslim leaders who had the misfortune to differ from him and support the Nehru Report. He wanted the Conference to know that Muslim opinion in U.P. was preponderantly for a joint electorate and the Nehru Report. The reactionaries should not forget that it was difficult, nay impossible, to deceive people by raising the cry of 'Islam in danger'.

Abdi's disharmonious statement was shouted down from all quarters of the assembly, and the president also asked him not to proceed with it. That was not all; he was ejected from the hall.

The Bengal Muslim All-Parties Conference was presided over by a sober Muslim politician, Sir Abdur Rahim, who said: 'The report of the Nehru Committee is an important public document and deserves our serious consideration. I have given my best attention to the Report and the conclusion that I have arrived at is that it would be a grave political blunder at this crisis to reject it wholesale.' But in Bengal, too, due caution had been exercised to see to it that only anti-Report elements were nominated as delegates, and it was no surprise therefore that the Conference rejected the Report. More confirmation of this fact is to be found in the following account of other Muslim gatherings.

A majority of the members of the Bengal Khilafat Committee,

like their counterparts in the provincial Khilafat Committees of the Punjab, Bihar and North-West Frontier Province, deprecated the attitude taken up by the Ali brothers and their associates, and preferred a conciliatory approach for modification of such of the provisions of the Nehru Report as were unacceptable to the Muslims. To many members of these Committees, the Report was unreservedly acceptable, but they wanted a free, unbiased and untutored discussion so that genuine reactions could be understood and objections formulated on their basis. The result was a meeting of the All-India Khilafat Conference (during the Christmas week) at Calcutta. The Ali brothers were among the most prominent members of the Khilafat Conference, and it was unthinkable to shut out their influence; on the contrary, aggressive efforts were made to shut out the contrary influence. These efforts were raised to such a high pitch that delegates of the Punjab and Bengal were excluded from the conference for 'technical irregularities', but, in fact, for their conciliatory attitude towards the Nehru Report. The Bengal Khilafat Committee was virtually suppressed by rowdyism. A bird's eye-view of the dramatic happenings in the Bengal Committee would facilitate understanding of how pro-Report opinions were being eliminated.

A meeting of the Bengal Khilafat Committee had been called for December 21, 1928, to elect delegates for the All-India Khilafat Conference. While the tentative list of delegates was being discussed, Mohammed Ali, with a crowd of his followers arrived and demanded admittance to the meeting. He was told that he might come as a visitor, but the others could not be allowed. A heated argument eventually secured admission for Mohammed Ali and several others, but soon after their entry, they began interrupting the meeting insisting that it was unconstitutional. The scene was enlivened by the forced entry of Mohammed Ali's other followers who had been left behind at the gate. The meeting was thrown into utter confusion and, as if to proclaim the invaders' victory, Mohammed Ali announced that there was no provincial Khilafat committee in Bengal, and that one could be constituted then and there. He asked the crowd, which had gate-crashed, to pay four annas each so that a provincial committee might be constituted at once. The protest of a leader of the suppressed Committee that this was an extraordinary procedure and that the provincial com-

mittee could only be elected by the district committees, was drowned in the uproar with Mohammed Ali declaring that only a lunatic would object to the procedure he had adopted. Shaukat Ali was by the side of his brother throughout these proceedings. The next day, the Ali brothers caused a meeting of the new Khilafat Committee and had their own list of delegates adopted.

The same drama was enacted at the Central Khilafat Committee, which met on the eve of the plenary session of the All-India Khilafat Conference. Shafi Daudi, one of the disturbers at the Bengal committee meeting, was the president of the Central Committee, and Shaukat Ali, its Secretary. They discovered, to their dismay, that out of some seventy members of the Central Committee present at the meeting, as many as forty-five were arrayed against them. But the president, Shafi Daudi, upheld by a ruling, Mohammed Ali's list of delegates in spite of the majority vote against it. The forty-five delegates then walked out in protest, and said in a statement that they had tried to bring about a compromise between the two groups in the Bengal Khilafat Committee in order 'to come to a reasonable understanding on the Nehru Report, but all our efforts were frustrated by the method of obstruction and procrastination adopted by the representatives of the other party'. They accused Shafi Daudi of unconstitutionally suppressing the representative voices of Bengal, the Punjab, Bihar and the North-West Frontier Province by arbitrarily disqualifying the delegates appointed by their provincial committees. They held a separate meeting of their own and adopted a resolution favouring participation in the All-Parties Convention, and accepting the Nehru Report with certain modifications in the provision relating to communal representation. The Conference, which then met under the presidentship of Mohammed Ali, in a homogeneous atmosphere, steered clear of the Nehru Report, and adopted a resolution to the effect that the way out of India's constitutional tangle was a federation of the free and united states, with full autonomous powers to the states. This was considered a cleverer way of rejecting the Report.

The series of Muslim conferences culminated in a central All-Parties Muslim Conference at Delhi. It was attended by over a hundred Muslim members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures, and representatives of the Muslim League (Lahore group), the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, and some other Muslim organizations. The

Aga Khan, who had headed the first Muslim deputation to Viceroy Minto in 1906, was invited to preside. He was applauded as the 'gardener who first sowed the seed' of separate representation for Muslims. The Conference, in its resolution, elaborated the resolutions adopted by provincial conferences, and laid down that the Muslims should continue to enjoy the right 'to elect their representatives on the various Indian legislatures through separate electorates, and they cannot be deprived of that right without their consent; in the conditions existing at present in India, and so long as those conditions continue to exist, representation, in the various legislatures and other statutory self-governing bodies of Muslims through their own separate electorates' should continue. The resolution further said: 'So long as Mussalmans are not satisfied that their rights and interests are adequately safeguarded in the constitution, they will in no way consent to the establishment of joint electorates whether with or without the conditions.' The Conference put forward the same demands for Muslims as had been presented by the thirty Muslim leaders at Delhi in 1927, and subsequently reiterated by the Muslim League, before the All-Parties Conference and its successor the All-Parties Convention were seized of the question. They were: (1) The majority of Muslims should be reflected in the legislatures of the Muslim-majority provinces, and in the minority provinces they should continue to enjoy the rights enjoyed by them under the existing law; (2) the Muslims should have 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent representation in the Central Legislatures; (3) Sind should be made a separate province; (4) provision should be made in the constitution to give Muslims an adequate share in all services. The resolution laid particular emphasis on the federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent states.

Ostensibly, the Conference did not rule out a joint electorate, but scrupulously avoided discussion of the conditions whose fulfilment would satisfy it to vote for a joint electorate.

CHAPTER XXIV

MUSLIM REACTION TO THE NEHRU REPORT—II

THE ALL-INDIA Muslim League, which was also in session at Calcutta during Christmas week, declined the invitation of the All-Parties Muslim Conference, saying that it was 'strongly of the opinion that it would be disastrous to Muslim interest if rival and *ad hoc* organizations of the nature of the conference were set up at every crisis in the history of the community'. The mover of this resolution, M. C. Chagla, claimed that the League was the sole representative of the Muslims, and said that the improvising of the Conference was an insult to the League, which had looked after the Muslim interests for more than two decades. A section of the League delegates, however, favoured participation in the Conference, but their resolution was defeated. By another resolution, the League appointed a 23-man delegation to 'take part in the deliberations of the All-Parties Convention', giving it no specific instructions, but asking it to 'take into consideration and attach due weight to the views on the communal question expressed in the subjects committee and the open session of the League', and empowering it 'to bring about an adjustment of the various outstanding questions between Hindus and Mussalmans arising out of the Nehru Report'. The delegation was appointed on December 26, when the Convention had already met for three days, and was asked to report the result of its labours to the League by December 28 or 29. The delegates were: The Maharaja of Mahmudabad, M. A. Jinnah, Dr. S. Kitchlew, M. C. Chagla, Malik Barkat Ali, Abdul Hamid, Mujibar Rahman, Hisamuddin, Akram Khan, Zafar Ali Khan, Yakub Hassan, Abdur-Rahman, Abdulla Brelvi, T. A. K. Shervani, Khaliq-uz-zaman, Mohammed Zubari, Abdul Karim, Nawab Liaqat Khan, Dr. Mahmood, Dr. Alam, Khan Bahadur Azizul Haq, Nurul Ain and Mohammed Aslam.

The League representatives came to the Convention at a crucial hour when some of the dissenting members of the League Council had rebelled and gone over to the All-Parties Muslim Conference then gathering momentum under the leadership of the Aga Khan,

when a section of the Khilafat Conference had managed to get control of that organization and had ousted the pro-Convention section, when Muslim opinion was almost unanimous in favour of one-third and not proportional representation of the Muslims in the central legislature; and when the All-India Jamiat-ul-Ulema had declared itself against the Nehru Report, was expressing its indignation at a meeting of its Working Committee at Moradabad (December 28, 1928) by characterising the Nehru Committee as an irregularly constituted body with 'no adequate representation of the Muslims' on it, and was waiting for the decisions of the All-Parties Muslim Conference. It was a crucial hour for other reasons also: The Muslim League, having failed to persuade other prominent members of the All-Parties Conference to agree with its view, had parted company with that Conference in March 1928, and was not represented on the Nehru Committee. Out of the ten members of the Committee, two were Muslims—non-League Muslims—and most Muslims nurtured within themselves a grievance that the Committee did not contain Muslim representation, and if it contained it at all, it was inadequate, and not proportionate even to their population. Of the two Muslim 'representatives', Sir Ali Imam and Shuaib Quraishi, the latter appended a vital minute of dissent to the Report, pressing the Muslim claim to one-third representation in the central legislature. Muslims contended that the only reckonable party in the huge congregation of the All-Parties Conference was the Congress, and pointed out with despondency that even the Congress had condescended to drop the thirty Muslim leaders' Delhi proposals, which it had adopted, and which it should not have agreed to drop in favour of new ones without consulting representative Muslim opinion.

In a way, the Convention, though enjoying the presence of some Congressite Muslims, was meeting Muslim representatives for the first time since they had withdrawn from the deliberations of the All-Parties Conference. The Congress, with all its secularism, was not in a position to claim to represent the Muslims, and if the Conference and the Convention continued to transact business, it was because other parties representing the Hindus (depressed classes being represented separately), Sikhs, Parsis and political opinion other than the Congress, were not agreeable to sign the Muslim charter of demands without any alternations, and were

determined to hammer out a constitution for the country. But in spite of expediency and the inevitable handicap under which the Conference, the Nehru Committee, and the Convention laboured, the fact could not be ignored that the Nehru Report lacked the approval of representative Muslim opinion. This was no small thing for it was the Muslim community whose interests had for half a century clashed with the interests of the rest of the people, and whose cause had been pleaded by the British rulers themselves time and again.

Therefore, the arrival of the Muslim League and Khilafat delegates, though they represented only a section of the Muslims, was a positive contribution to making the Convention more representative. The Convention had appointed a committee of 37 members, including three Muslims (all Congress Muslims, of course) to discuss with them their proposals and explore possibilities of an agreed solution. The statement which the Khilafatists brought in their pocket held out the hope of an easy settlement with the Convention; they agreed to the reservation of seats 'for Muslim minorities on the principle adopted by the All-Parties Conference', and made no mention of the usual demand of one-third representation in the central legislature. The only point of fundamental conflict between them and the Nehru Report was their demand for the vesting of residuary powers in the provincial legislatures. But at the committee meeting the two bodies of representatives joined hands, Jinnah representing the League delegation and T. A. K. Sherwani, the forty-five Khilafatists. And the modifications they suggested to the Nehru Report were drastically different from those in the statement just referred to. The main demands put forward in the modifications were: (1) One-third of the elected representatives of both the houses of the central legislature should be Mussalmans; (2) In the Punjab and Bengal, in the event of adult suffrage not being established, there should be reservation of seats for the Mussalmans on the population basis for ten years subject to a re-examination after that period, but they shall have no right to contest additional seats; (3) Residuary powers should be left to the provinces and should not rest with the central legislature.' The two leaders also wanted deletion of the clause in the Nehru Report relating to Sind, which said that the question of the separation of Sind from Bombay would be

taken up on the establishment of the constitution outlined in the Nehru Report. The Convention committee, in its discussions with the Leaguers and the Khilafatists, expressed readiness to accommodate the other minor modifications, but regretted inability to admit the main four demands. Most members at the Convention took the same attitude.

In a plausible and persuasive speech, Jinnah explained to the Convention why he insisted on these demands. He said that the Nehru Committee had itself stated that according to its scheme the Mussalmans were likely to get one-third representation, and even more. But he would restrict it to one-third, and the reason why he wanted a positive fixation was that the Muslim-majority provinces of the Punjab and Bengal would 'get more than their population', depriving minority provinces of their due share. The fear was not baseless, since the Report did not provide for province-wise representation for Muslims. Jinnah, therefore, proposed that while the Muslims in Muslim-majority provinces should be allowed only as many seats as their populations proportionately warranted, the extra seats, that is between 24 per cent of the Muslim population of India and the $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the seats which he demanded, should be distributed among the Muslim-minority provinces. To quote his own words: 'The method that we want to be adopted is that the excess between one-third and one-fourth should be distributed amongst the other provinces according to the relative position of their importance to the Mussalmans and not according to population.' He illustrated his point thus: 'Take the case of Madras and Bombay—it is not always the only criterion, viz. counting of heads; but the importance of those two provinces. Take the case of the United Provinces again; it is the centre of Mussalman culture and heart, and it will be unfair that they should be restricted according to the number of their population in the representation in the central legislature. These three provinces, Sind being separated, will then, so far as the population goes, be in this position: the U.P. with the 14 per cent of Mussalmans, Bombay about eight per cent, and Madras about six or seven per cent.' He emphasized that since the Nehru Report conceded one-third seats to the Mussalmans in practical results, 'let us carve out of this one-third as the Mussalmans wish'.

Jinnah's arguments for the demand of proportional representation

for the Muslims of the Punjab and Bengal were irrefutable. He said: 'I am not going to enter into the pros and cons but it is an admitted fact that although the Mussalmans in the Punjab and Bengal are numerically in majority, their voting strength is far below in proportion to their population. They fear their representation will be far below their population. It is now devised to meet this undoubted fact by adult franchise, and from those premises it is argued that there is no need for reservation in the Punjab and Bengal. But we wish to provide for the contingency, which is most patent and probable, that in the event of the adult suffrage not being established there should be reservation for Mussalmans in the Punjab and Bengal according to their population, but they should not be entitled to additional seats. We, therefore, attach very great importance to this modification.'

At the Convention, Jinnah moved his demands one by one in the form of amendments. They were rejected by an overwhelming majority, both the Leaguers and the Khilafatists not participating in the voting apparently to test the response of non-Muslims to their demands. The delegates of the Ahmediya Muslim community voted for the amendments, and asked their wish to be recorded.

In vain did Jinnah argue in his reply winding up the debate on his amendments: 'What we want is that Hindus and Mussalmans should march together until our object is achieved. Therefore it is essential that you must get not only the Muslim League but the Mussalmans of India, and here I am not speaking as a Mussalman but as an Indian. It is my desire to see that we get seven crores of Mussalmans to march along with us in the struggle for freedom. Would you be content with a few? Would you be content if I were to say I am with you? Do you want or do you not want the Muslim India to go along with you? You must remember the two major communities in India—I say this without the slightest disrespect to other communities like Sikhs, Christians, and Parsis—are the Hindus and Mussalmans, and naturally therefore these two communities have got to be reconciled and united and made to feel that their interests are common and they are marching together for a common goal.'

That was the end of the rapprochement efforts. The Convention consisted of about 1,200 delegates representing 73 organizations which, in their turn, were supposed to be representing political

parties, trade unions and peasants, the commercial community, landholders, princely states, women, communal bodies, religious and social bodies, backward classes, and a dozen miscellaneous interests. Without many of these, and with the Muslim League, the Convention, as also the All-Parties Conference would have been more representative. Never had so many organizations figured in vital political discussions, and both the Conference and the Convention made a fetish of 'full representation' by calling upon all and sundry, even though they never made politics their concern in life. Most of these organizations were represented by Hindus, who outvoted Muslims and gave the impression that the Convention was a non-Muslim, if not a wholly Hindu gathering. The few Congress Muslims, though nobler than many others in communal organizations, were not acceptable as representatives to the vast mass of the Muslims, who, though divided under different Muslim organizations, leaned towards communalism. Most Muslim leaders complained that the Conference and Convention had yielded to the Hindu Mahasabha pressure in substituting the Delhi proposals by fresh ones in contravention of the Congress resolutions. On the other hand, the main spokesmen of the Convention, who were nationalists to the core and secular beyond any shadow of doubt, presented a picture no less convincing. They told the League and the Khilafat representatives that the conditions about the separation of Sind had been agreed to at the time of the examination of the question by the All-Parties Conference, both by Hindu and Muslim leaders, and that among those who signed the Sind Pact, were Shaukat Ali, Secretary of the Central Khilafat Committee, and Shafi Daudi, Secretary of the All-Parties Muslim Conference. The Punjab Pact which was agreed to be incorporated in the Nehru Report, was signed, among others, by half a dozen Muslim leaders who were now among the Khilafat representatives, and had now taken their positions behind Jinnah. But there was too much of optimism in the belief of the Convention spokesmen that adult franchise would come and obviate the possibility of reservation for Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal as in the restricted franchise. The League and Khilafat representatives read in the Convention committee's insistence on minor admissible points a dictatorial tendency which the Convention could enforce with a vast Hindu majority. They left the

Convention, dubbing it a non-Muslim congregation.

But the Muslims had themselves failed to produce an agreed solution, and the different boisterous groups into which their communal parties had been divided continued to fight with each other throughout 1929, without any tangible result. When the League delegates returned to their Subjects Committee to report the results of their negotiations with the Convention, they found a sharper cleavage. The Subjects Committee sat for the whole night of December 29-30, discussing the drafts of three resolutions and groping for agreement on one of them, but the meeting ended as it started with sharp differences. The three resolutions represented three different schools: one was for the acceptance of the Nehru Report, provided the modifications offered by the League delegation were accepted; the second would have nothing to do with the Report until it incorporated the modifications; and the third was prepared to accept the Report if only a verbal change was made in the clause relating to the exercise of emergency powers by the central legislature over the provinces. Disappointed and tired, the Subjects Committee dispersed at 3 a.m. agreeing to meet in the open session seven hours later. An air of dejection overcast the League camp; the attendance at the open session was thin, and the president (Jinnah) postponed it until May 1929.

The December chill was followed by a pleasant spring breeze, reviving hopes of Muslim unity; the date of the special session was advanced by two months. The Jinnah League and the Shafi League (the two currents into which the League had been split up on the eve of the annual session of 1927) made overtures to each other for a reunion. The Shafi Leaguers were the principal sponsors of the All-Parties Muslim Conference; after holding a session of the Conference, they decided upon a merger of the Shafi League's Executive Council with that of the Jinnah League; and the two held a joint meeting under the presidentship of Jinnah. The meeting authorised Jinnah to negotiate with the different schools of opinion in the League and to place before the forthcoming plenary session an agreed formula on Muslim demands.

During the three weeks left for the plenary special session which was called for March 28, 1929, Jinnah made supreme efforts to bring together the warring elements in Muslim politics and establish his leadership over a united body. On the eve of the session, he cir-

culated a note among the delegates to the session, summarily rehashing the events in the country since the All-Parties Conference first met in February 1928, and concluding that 'the Nehru Report proposals can at best be treated only as counter Hindu proposals to Muslim proposals'. Then he drafted and circulated a compromise formula (well known in contemporary history as 'Jinnah's Fourteen Points'; they are in fact fifteen, but the fifteenth is only an elaboration of point (5), cleverly incorporating the main demands which had been made from different Muslim platforms. The points were:

- (1) The form of the future constitution should be federal with residuary powers vested in the province.
- (2) A uniform measure of autonomy should be granted to all provinces.
- (3) All legislatures in the country and other elected bodies should be reconstituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority of any province to a minority or even equality.
- (4) In the central legislature, Muslim representation should not be less than one-third.
- (5) The representation of communal groups should continue to be by means of separate electorates as at present, provided that it should be open to any community at any time to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorates.
- (6) Any territorial redistribution that might at any time be necessary should not in any way affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and North-West Frontier Province.
- (7) Full religious liberty, that is liberty of belief, worship, observances, propaganda, association and education should be guaranteed to all communities.
- (8) No Bill or resolution, or any part thereof, should be passed in any legislature or any other elected body if three-fourths of the members of any community in that particular body oppose such Bill or resolution or part thereof on the ground that it would be injurious to the interests of that community or, in the alternative, such other

method as may be devised or as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases.

- (9) Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency.
- (10) Reforms should be introduced in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces.
- (11) Provision should be made in the constitution, giving the Muslims an adequate share along with other Indians in all services of the state and in self-governing bodies, having due regard to the requirements of efficiency.
- (12) The constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim religion, culture and personal law, and the promotion of Muslim education, language, religion, Muslim charitable institutions, and for their due share in grants-in-aid given by the state and self-governing bodies.
- (13) No cabinet, either central or provincial, should be formed without there being a proportion of Muslim ministers of at least one-third.
- (14) No change to be made in the constitution by the central legislature except with the concurrence of the states constituting the Indian federation.
- (15) That in the present circumstances the representation of Mussalmans in the different legislatures of the country and of other elected bodies through separate electorates is inevitable and, further, Government being pledged not to deprive the Mussalmans of this right, it cannot be taken away without their consent, and so long as the Mussalmans are not satisfied that their rights and interests are safeguarded in the manner specified above (or herein), they would in no way consent to the establishment of joint electorates with or without conditions.

To these points, Jinnah appended a 'note' with regard to the weightage enjoyed by Muslims in the Muslim-minority provinces under the Lucknow Pact and the 1919 constitution: 'The question of excess representation of Mussalmans over and above their population in the provinces where they are in a minority to be considered hereafter.'

But Jinnah's belief that he had produced a foolproof and comprehensive charter of Muslim demands, and his hope that he would be able to rally all sections of Muslims behind him were belied. With the fourteen-point draft resolution in his pocket, as he went round the political camps—the Shafi League, the Jinnah League, the All-Parties Muslim Conference—he found, to his chagrin, that they were as ever divided, each within itself and against one another. There was still a section in the Jinnah League determined, as ever, to back up the Nehru Report; the gulf between this section and the other, favouring Jinnah's draft, grew wider, when the latter was accused of increasing its strength by enrolling unauthorised persons as delegates. The Shafi League, which still stuck to the Muslim Conference demands, appointed a ten-man delegation to meet the Jinnah League Council in search of a compromise, but the latter refused to meet it, arguing that that would mean recognition of a rival League. And when, with the good offices of some common friends, the two were brought into a conference, they fell out over the Shafi group's insistence on separate electorates at all cost.

With their reservations and their intense dislike of each other, men of the two Leagues and the Muslim Conference gathered together in the plenary session of the League. The most conspicuous absentee was Jinnah, and therefore Dr. Alam was put in the chair. But hardly had Dr. Alam occupied the presidential seat, when rowdyism broke out. Many rose raising their hands and brandishing sticks, and shouting, 'We do not want Dr. Alam'. Dr. Alam had, during earlier parleys, expressed himself in favour of the Nehru Report on certain conditions. When the tempest threatened to gather more force Jinnah arrived on the platform, to relieve the embarrassed acting president. There was complete calm. But, apprehending trouble from the aggressively heterogenous elements, Jinnah, instead of presiding over the seemingly calm gathering, adjourned the session *sine die*.

Such was the end of the session, as of its predecessor of December last.

Jinnah's Fourteen Points, however, remained alive, and were endorsed next December by the All-India Jamiat-ul-Ulema Conference at its annual session at Peshawar. The Jamiat, whose political aims were identical with those of the Congress, had dissociated from it during the communal riots.

Detached observers were now suggesting that, so far as Hindu-Muslim relations were concerned, on a political level they would not have been so bad if the All-Parties Conference, the Convention and the Nehru Report had not come into existence at all. Their most visible effect was almost the complete divorce by Muslims of the nationalism as represented by the Congress. In July 1929, an attempt was made by thirty Muslim Congress leaders, who, headed by Abul Kalam Azad constituted themselves into the All-India Nationalist Muslims' Conference, to attract Muslims again to nationalism. But the Conference did not make any headway; and the Muslims lost another opportunity to grow politically rather than communally.

Weighed in the scale of practical politics, the enormous labour that had gone into the preparation of the Nehru Report appeared to have been a waste at the close of the year. And at the annual session of the Congress, held at Lahore in December, the President, Jawaharlal Nehru, declared that the Congress had fixed a year of grace for the adoption of the All-Parties scheme. That was over, and the Report therefore lapsed. The Congress adopted this resolution: 'In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report, it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an independent India, communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines. But, as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and the other minorities in general, had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal questions proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims, and other minorities that no solution, thereof in any future constitution, will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.'

The year's hectic political activity had shown beyond doubt that 'full satisfaction to the parties concerned' was a mirage. It was the most noisy demonstration of the inability of Indian leaders to come to a compromise.

CHAPTER XXV

MUSLIMS AND THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

AFTER THE Nehru Report had been consigned to the waters of the Ravi (as was apologetically remarked at the 1929 session of the Congress which met on the banks of that river at Lahore), stage was set for the satyagraha movement and terrorist activities. In October 1929, the Viceroy had issued a statement promising Dominion Status for India without fixing a deadline but indicating that a round-table conference would be organized to work out the future constitution for India. Gandhi sought a clarification as to whether the conference would proceed on the basis of full Dominion Status, but the Viceroy did not give a straight affirmative answer. The Congress, therefore, rejected the Viceroy's offer, reiterated its demand for complete independence, and decided on a struggle against British rule. Congressmen were withdrawn from the Legislatures, and were sent round to make preparations. Gandhi submitted a charter of eleven demands to the Viceroy, telling him that if he conceded them there would be no civil disobedience movement. The demands were: (1) total prohibition; (2) reduction of the rupee ratio to 1s. 4d.; (3) reduction of land revenue by half; (4) abolition of the salt tax; (5) reduction of military expenditure by half; (6) reduction of the salary bill by half; (7) a protective tariff on foreign cloth; (8) passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill; (9) discharge of all political prisoners, save those condemned for murder or attempt to murder, withdrawal of all political prosecutions, abrogation of Section 124-A and Regulation III of 1818, and giving permission to all Indian exiles to return; (10) abolition of the Criminal Intelligence Department or popular control over it; (11) free issue of licences for firearms for self-defence.

The Congress believed that the agitation for independence should not stumble over the communal deadlock, and invited Muslims to join in a struggle whose objectives had been placed on an absolutely non-communal and social and economic basis. Jinnah would have nothing to do with anything which might

land him into a law-breaking movement. He had unambiguously made his attitude clear as far back as at the time of the Khilafat movement, and men of his school of thought had stayed away even from a purely Islamic movement. The Jinnah League, therefore, would have no interest in the civil disobedience movement. Its attitude had been further stiffened by what it called the Congress surrender to the Hindu Mahasabha over the Muslim demands at the All-Parties Conference. Most Khilafat Conference leaders had parted company for good with the Congress with a determination never to join in any undertaking with it; those who differed from this attitude were full-fledged members of the Congress, and supported its programme enthusiastically.

The Shafi League and the All India Muslim Conference, a permanent body of the All-Parties Muslim Conference, had come into the limelight only over the communal representation, and had never made any contribution to the political progress of the country. Even if the Nehru Committee had accommodated their demands to the exclusion of all others, there was not the remotest possibility of their making common cause with the nationalist forces. The leaders of these two organizations would do nothing to offend the Government. Such were their relations with the authorities. Whether they possessed the grit to sacrifice their comforts and risk their possessions would be a delicate question for investigation, but they realized that participation in a civil disobedience movement would make no difference to the Muslims, whose cause the British had undertaken to protect. The system of communal electorates, provided for in the 1909 reforms, and further strengthened in 1919, had increased doubts as to whether Indian nationalism could attract Muslims to its fold; for those Muslims who consolidated their distinct communal identity and promoted communalism would have better chances of victory in elections than those who cast in their lot with secular and nationalist organizations like the Congress. It was easier to ensure communal gains under the protection of the authorities than to take risks by participation in Congress movements.

Yet there were Muslims whose vision was fixed primarily on the goal of the country, and they offered themselves for Gandhi's civil disobedience movement, which came off after the Viceroy's rejection of his demands. The first to jump into the movement

were the Muslim divines, whose organization, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, adopted a resolution, offering its co-operation to the Congress and bending its attitude of opposition to the Nehru Report to the exigency of the hour. The second to respond to the Congress call was the Ahrar Party of the Punjab, which had been recently formed. It was a nationalist Muslim group, expressing something of the old Khilafat movement tradition. It consisted of men who had been alienated from the Congress during the communal frenzy. During 1930 and 1932, the Ahrars worked side by side with the Congress in the civil disobedience movement. Working steadily, fervently and inspiredly, the Ahrars played their noble part in the struggle. The third party, more numerous and braver than these two, were the Khudai Khidmatgars (servants of God) of the North-West Frontier Province. They were part and parcel of the Congress, but were more commonly known as Red Shirt volunteers or Khudai Khidmatgars. A brief account of the movement in the Frontier will facilitate an understanding of why later the Congress reigned supreme in that Province, and why the Muslim League made little impression.

The forerunner of the movement in the Frontier was a deputation of the All-India Congress Committee, which had been entrusted with the task of enquiring into the working of the Frontier Regulations. It was stopped by the authorities at Attock. The Red Shirt Pathans were provoked, and decided to take out a procession in protest and hold a public meeting. The deputation was to arrive on April 22, 1930, and the next day, early in the morning, nine Pathan leaders were arrested. A little later, another two were taken into custody; but the lorry in which they were being taken to the police lock-up broke down. They undertook to present themselves at the police station and, as they proceeded, a big crowd gathered round them; it formed into a procession and wended its way towards the police station. As the crowd neared the station, three armoured cars came crushing into them hitting 'about 12 or 14 persons, six or seven of whom were instantaneously killed and the remaining seriously injured'. Then, an Englishman came dashing up on a motor-cycle, which accidentally collided with an armoured car. He was thrown down. One of the cars caught was set on fire. The official version was that the mob was responsible for both these incidents. There was no time to find out

what had actually happened, and the other two cars instantly opened fire on the crowd, which had refused to disperse unless it was allowed to remove the dead and the wounded and until the armoured cars and the troops were withdrawn. Under fire, the crowd began to disperse, but again gathered and the cars were again set fire to. This went on, with brief intervals, for three hours. According to the official figures, 30 persons were killed and 33 wounded; non-official versions put the casualties at seven to ten times the official figure.

This was an invitation to more serious trouble. The police having proved ineffective to control the situation, two platoons of the Royal Garhwal Rifles were called out and ordered to fire, but they refused to fire on an unarmed crowd. This disobedience in the army, the British rulers of the Frontier had not expected; they grew nervous, withdrew all police and troops, and left Peshawar to itself. The city remained in anarchic conditions from April 24 to May 4, on which date the British troops reoccupied it. Immediately after the Peshawar occurrence, symptoms of unrest spread to other towns several of which had their full share of disturbances.

The tribes along the Frontier were now entertaining hopes of seizing the Frontier territories from the British. During the second week of May, about 4,000 Waziris attacked a British post. On their part, the British heavily bombed tribal villages. On June 3, an Afridi Lashkar, 5,000 strong, advanced down the Bara and Bazar valleys and assembled in the caves. On the night of June 4-5, about 2,000 of them invaded the Peshawar district and a considerable number actually reached the outskirts of the city. Throughout June and July, thousands of tribesmen were on the move and raiding villages in the Peshawar district. There was an Afridi invasion—again unsuccessful—on the night of August 7-8. *Mullas* were touring and inciting the tribesmen to insurrection. The British were suppressing the rising by air action. The situation was so tense that it was difficult to re-establish the normal administration and maintain order. Eventually, in August, martial law had to be imposed and kept in force until the following January. 'And the remarkable fact', says the official report, *India in 1930-31*, 'is that during the course of their numerous incursions into the settled districts, the tribesmen altogether abstained—except on

two occasions—from looting in their customary manner the villages they passed through, and that the Afridis, when negotiating a settlement with the authorities, put forward demands for the release of Gandhi and the repeal of the special ordinances in India, clearly showed that Congress agents had been active on the other side of the border also.'

In Mardan, according to an official report, a fierce conflict took place on May 25 between a crowd and the police. The Assistant Superintendent of Police, Murphy, was brutally done to death. Of the four districts affected in the Frontier Province, Bannu was probably the most turbulent. On April 8, as a protest against the arrest of a local Congress worker, an angry crowd surrounded the city police station, destroyed the garden, and threw stones and mud at Europeans playing golf nearby. On April 14, troops were posted at all the entrances to the city to prevent people from the villages from coming to the city and demonstrating. As a protest the Congress Committee organized a general strike for an indefinite period; the strike, however, was abandoned on the sixth day. But in July, owing to the rising of the tribes, the city gates were again closed, and 440 persons were arrested while picketing shops selling foreign cloth and liquor, picketing being an item of the Congress programme.

The leader of the Frontier movement, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, had been arrested just at the start of the movement. He himself was wedded to Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence, but in his absence the Pathans resorted to their customary violence, from which the Khan had been trying to wean them away.

Again, in 1931-32, when the Congress launched a no-rent campaign, the Frontier was one of the few provinces to play a leading role. Soon after his release from jail after the closure of the first movement, Abdul Ghaffar Khan made a whirlwind tour of the province, took many more young Pathans into his Red Shirts organization, addressed peasant gatherings, declaring that the land revenue was a crushing burden and that they should pay only as much as lay within their means. After nine months, he was again arrested on December 24, 1931, when the no-rent campaign was started by the Congress. There were again disturbances, assaults, arrests, processions, public meetings, and firings, resulting in deaths and injuries.

The Frontier's participation in the Congress movements surprised

Muslim communalist leaders, who had, for several years, been carrying on a battle with the Hindu Mahasabha over its future administrative status—amalgamation with or separation from the Punjab. The Pathan leaders of the Frontier had throughout remained indifferent to the strife between the Hindu and Muslim communalists, as well as to the latter's repudiation of the Congress as a national organization. By chance, nationalism had developed strongly in the Frontier Province before communalism had taken root.

In the Punjab, Bengal and Sind, although the local Muslim leadership did not join in the vehement condemnation of the Nehru Report by Muslim organizations, the Muslims generally seemed to be disinterested in Gandhi's movements. Organizationally, they were nowhere; they were not with the Congress, nor were they with the Muslim League or other newly-formed organizations. Only the Frontier Province, among the Muslim majority provinces already in existence or to come into being, had produced a leadership which by assiduous endeavour and suffering had assured itself the following of the people.

In other provinces, Muslims had been active in giving vent to their communalist feelings. Every year, the Muslim Conference, the Muslim League, the Khilafat Conference, the Shia Conference, and several other bodies, had been meeting for their annual sessions and repeating their resolutions on communal electorates, as also their urge for freedom in common with the other communities of India. Their provincial units had been doing the same. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Ahrar Party and the Nationalist Muslim Conference, which had been created as a counterblast to the Muslim Conference, were not able to convert many Muslims even to the creed which gave nationalism a place subordinate to religion. Paradoxically, Muslims who had had the advantage of Western education and were better acquainted with the democratic concept of government than the divines, leaned on the side of communalism. The sense of loyalty to the British, as in the days of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, had returned; most of them had faith in the British granting their communal demands. Sir Syed had advised them to think only of their education and loyalty to the British; the present leadership advised them to think of communal electorates and of nothing else, committed as even the communal organizations were to independence, loyalty had no meaning now.

CHAPTER XXVI
MUSLIM GESTURE AT
ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

NEXT TO the civil disobedience movement, the most important political event in 1930 was the Round Table Conference which met in London in November. Most conspicuous in the Indian delegation was the section which represented communal interests in the country. The presumptive representatives of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others, had been chosen by the Viceroy, who had no means of knowing whether his nominees had any following among the masses of their communities. Apparently, he preferred them because they were aggressively vocal on communal matters. They talked in London quite as exasperatingly as they did in India; that had become the accepted method of creating confidence in their respective communities. The memorandum of Sir Sankaran Nair, Raja Nawab Ali Khan and Sardar Bahadur Shivder Singh Uberoi, which was appended to the report of the Indian Central Committee (the Indian counterpart of the Simon Commission) expresses the state of communal temper in a nutshell. Sir Sankaran was the Chairman of the Committee. Says the memorandum:

Some of the evils of communalism may be briefly mentioned. The transfer of law and order is opposed by English officials on the ground that it is dangerous to place officials under ministers who have to obey the communities who elected them to the councils. Appointments by the local bodies, whose members are elected on communal electorates, are made on communal lines. Similarly, taxes raised from all communities are utilised for the benefit of the communities who have the majority in the councils, and whose nominees by means of separate electorates hold positions of power. Boys of superior intelligence are denied admission or turned out of school by representatives of communal interests, to make room for inferior boys belonging to their own communities. Judges are appointed not for efficiency, but on racial grounds. One Chief Justice explained before us, with a gesture of despair, that he contemplates with

dread the state of things a few years hence, as even now he and his colleagues had to recommend candidates for appointment on a communal basis at the instance of members of Government who owed their position to communal electorates. In the pre-reform days not a whisper was heard against Hindu or Moham-medan superior judges: there is scarcely one who is not now attacked on racial grounds. This is due to the pressure exercised by communal electorates. . . The influence of communalism due to the separate electorates is apparent in everything done by those who owe their position to them, whether it be a 'judicial decision, the giving of a contract, a report on the work of a subordinate, a recommendation for the enforcement of a penalty or the conferment of a favour'.

Taking their cue from the Muslim communalists, other minority community interests had also raised their voices. The Sikhs, who had taken an uncompromising stand in favour of joint electorate without any reservation in the Punjab, were inflating their demands. The annual Sikh Conference (1929), which was attended by 30,000 members of the community, raised their demand to 30 per cent of the seats in the Provincial Legislature. The Sikh representative at the Round Table Conference, Sardar Sampuran Singh told the minority sub-committee of which he was a member that if Muslims were given a statutory permanent majority in the Legislature of the Punjab, there would be a Muslim Government. And with the 'mighty British Empire at their back, there might be a civil war, and we might be altogether annihilated and washed off the face of the world'. Then he said: 'I never say that there should not be a majority of any single community, but not to care for the other two communities, and give this one single community in any house a statutory majority is, I think, against all principles of constitutional law.'

The Muslim delegates, piloting their case with cool and calculated confidence, were not provoked and, replying on their behalf to Sampuran Singh, Sir Mohammed Shafi said: 'I confess I was pained as well as astonished at the language used by the responsible representative of our sister community, the Sikhs. I, for one, had hoped that the followers of that great saint, Baba Guru Nanak, who, when he died, was claimed by the Mussalmans as a Mussalman, and by

the Hindus as a Hindu, would, round this table, be a uniting factor between Muslim and Hindu communities of the Punjab. It is sad to think that that expectation should have been disappointed.' He upheld the Muslim demand thus: 'In spite of the weightage which the Mussalmans at present enjoy, the Hindu majorities in the six provinces are overwhelming majorities ranging from 70 per cent to 85 per cent, while in Bengal and the Punjab, in so far as the population is concerned, our majority is only 55.5 per cent, in the Punjab and 54.5 per cent in Bengal—nominal only. Therefore the Muslims insist that in these two provinces they should be given their proportional representation.'

At the minority sub-committee, presided over by a British statesman, the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh delegates, annoyingly interrupting each other's speeches, appeared like two litigants, with the chairman as the arbitrator. They did not make an inch of progress, all sticking to the positions they had taken up during and after the deliberations of the All-Parties Conference. The All-Parties Conference, the Indian Central Committee, and the Simon Commission, each of which had produced its own solution to the communal tangle, stood discredited, for their recommendations had been rejected by all the communal bodies of the Muslims. One Muslim conference after another, held in different provinces, had rejected the recommendations of the Simon Commission, which offered the Muslim community a choice between two alternatives: either representation on the basis of their population in Bengal and the Punjab, but with the loss of their weightage in the six provinces of Hindu majority; or a joint electorate by mutual consent in Bengal and the Punjab, and the existing scale of weightage elsewhere. The alternatives were dismissed as a shadow of the Nehru Report.

The Hindu and the Sikh delegates at the Round Table Conference had been perturbed by the reports they had received in London of the speech of the Punjab poet, Sir Mohammed Iqbal, to the annual session of the Muslim League in 1930. Iqbal's address turned out to be the forerunner of the idea of Pakistan. He had said:

The conclusion to which Europe is driven is that religion is a private affair of the individual and has nothing to do with what is called man's temporal life. In Islam God and the universe,

spirit and matter, church and state, are organic to each other.

India is Asia in miniature. Part of her people have cultural affinities with nations in the east and part with nations in the middle and west of Asia. If an effective principle of co-operation is discovered in India, it will bring peace and mutual goodwill to this ancient land which has suffered so long.

It is, however, painful to observe that our attempts to discover such a principle of internal harmony have so far failed.

... And as far as I have been able to read the Muslim mind, I have no hesitation in declaring that if the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian homeland is recognized as a basis of a permanent communal settlement, he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India.

India is a continent of human beings belonging to different races, speaking different languages and professing different religions. Their behaviour is not at all determined by a common race-consciousness. Even the Hindus do not form a homogeneous group. The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India is, therefore, perfectly justified.

I would like to see the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of the North-Western India.

The League session did not incorporate the presidential suggestion in any resolution, but it stunned Hindus and Sikhs who, in the light of the utterances of some Muslim leaders during the previous two decades, had expressed apprehensions at the Muslims of the north-west of India making common cause with Afghanistan. They now whispered to each other that their apprehensions were not unfounded. The suggestion apparently made no impression on the Muslim delegates in London, but it stirred up the feelings of a body of Muslims who had gathered round the delegates. They requested the Muslim delegation to make the Iqbal speech the basis of the Muslim demand at the Round Table Conference. Having failed to get the attention of the delegates at the Conference, they formed

themselves into a committee and began to propagate the idea.

Completely ignoring the propaganda, the Muslim delegation stepped down a few rungs in order to meet the Hindu insistence on a joint electorate, and Sir Mohammed Shafi produced this proposal: (1) the seats in the Legislatures should be reserved for both the communities—Hindus and Muslims; (2) no candidate should be declared elected unless he secured (a) at least 40 per cent of the votes cast of his own community, and (b) at least five per cent of the votes cast by other communities wherever he is in a minority of ten or less per cent, and ten per cent where he is in a larger minority or in a majority. Shafi said his scheme would serve three purposes: first, 'every candidate will have to go cap in hand to both the communities', secondly, no man would be returned to represent any community who did not represent at least a fair percentage of that community, and thirdly, 'no person who is a *persona non grata* to a sister community would be able to secure election even if he is favoured by his own community'.

On January 14, 1931, Shafi came out with another proposal, which he submitted to the minority sub-committee: 'Today I am authorised to make this offer; that in the Punjab the Mussalmans should have, through communal electorates, 49 per cent of the entire number of seats in the whole House, and should have liberty to contest the special constituencies which it is proposed to create in that province; so far as Bengal is concerned, Mussalmans should have through communal electorates 46 per cent representation in the whole House, and should have the liberty to contest the special constituencies which it is proposed to create in that province; in so far as the minority provinces are concerned, the Mussalmans should continue to enjoy the weightage which they have at present through separate electorates, similar weightage to be given to our Hindu brethren in Sind, and to our Hindu and Sikh brethren in the North-West Frontier Province. If at any time hereafter, two-thirds of the representatives of any community in any provincial Legislative Council or in the Central Legislative Council desire to give up communal electorates and to accept joint electorate, then thereafter the system of joint electorate should come into being.'

The Shafi proposals greatly differed not only from the stand taken by the Hindu Mahasabha delegates, which was not to budge an inch from the system of election provided in the Nehru Report,

but also from the Congress proposals which had been drawn afresh by the Congress Working Committee in 1930. These proposals were circulated at the second Round Table Conference by the Congress principal delegate, Gandhi. They provided for adult franchise for men and women; joint electorate; reservation of seats for the Hindus in Sind, for the Muslims in Assam, and the Sikhs in the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, and for Hindus and Muslims in provinces where they were less than 25 per cent of the population; Sind to be constituted a separate province 'provided that the people of Sind are prepared to bear the financial burden of the separated province'.

The Working Committee's resolution conceded outright some of the Muslim demands: It agreed to 'prescribe the minimum qualifications' for appointments to public service, with 'due regard to efficiency' and on the principle of 'equal opportunity to all communities for a fair share in the public services of the country'. It also said that the 'interests of minorities communities' in central and provincial cabinets 'should be recognised by convention'.

But if the provision for the 'adult franchise' is taken out of the Congress scheme, the vital part of it topples down. Neither the Congress nor the Hindu Mahasabha proposed an alternative under a restricted franchise. That is where the two organizations erred, and that is where the Muslim organizations were prudent. The assumption of adult franchise or its possible rejection made no adverse difference in the position of Hindu representation, while it would, the Muslims feared, in the position of their representation; (under the 1919 Act, on account of restricted franchise, which was only about four per cent of the population, Muslim voters were fewer than Hindu voters even in Muslim majority areas). Once again, it was clear that Bengal and the Punjab were the real snag, but instead of removing this obstacle, the new Congress scheme sought to steer clear of it.

But the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha were not, and could not, be sure whether a more practicable alternative would be acceptable to 'Muslim representatives' at the Round Table Conference. Among the Muslim delegates, Jinnah was in a minority of one; he was the only person who would be prepared to negotiate a settlement on the basis of a joint electorate; others were unanimous on maintaining the substance of separate electorate. From the

following extracts from Jinnah's speech at the U.P. Muslim Conference held at Allahabad on August 8, 1931, we can see clearly what he had in mind. He said:

As to the most important question, which to my mind is the question of Hindu-Muslim settlement—all I can say to you is that I honestly believe that the Hindus should concede to the Muslims a majority in the Punjab and Bengal, and if that is conceded, I think a settlement can be arrived at in a very short time.

The next question that arises is one of separate vs. joint electorates. As most of you know, if a majority is conceded in the Punjab and Bengal, I would personally prefer a settlement on the basis of joint electorate (*Applause*). But I also know that there is a large body of Muslims—and I believe a majority of Muslims—who are holding on to separate electorate. My position is that I would rather have a settlement even on the footing of separate electorate, hoping and trusting that when we work our new constitution and when both Hindus and Muslims get rid of distrust, suspicion and fears, and when they get their freedom, we would rise to the occasion and probably separate electorate will go sooner than most of us think.

Gandhi also believed that with the disappearance of the British rule, Hindu-Muslim suspicion would disappear. In the speech he made before the second session of the Round Table Conference on November 30, 1931, he observed:

So long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities. It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth—do you suppose that all these will count for nothing? Were Hindus and Mussalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussalman historians to say that we were living in com-

parative peace even then. And Hindus and Mussalmans in the villages are not even today quarrelling. This quarrel is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship between Great Britain and India, is transferred into a natural relationship, when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that, you will find that Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, untouchables will all live together as one man.

These statements—when studied in the context of indications which came from London (referred to earlier) asking the Viceroy to endeavour to 'leave Jinnah high and dry', and of consequent developments in which the pro-Simon elements among Muslims grew into powerful Muslim organizations sticking to separate electorates at all events—could not be dismissed as exaggerated condemnation of the British. The delegates for all the Round Table Conferences were chosen by the Viceroy. At the first Conference, the Congress, the only national non-communal political body, was not represented, and the various delegations and the manner of selection left no doubt that nationalism had been subordinated to communalism. At the second Conference, the Congress was represented, but it was discredited by the Viceroy: it was not allowed to include a Muslim (Dr. Ansari who was the President of the All-Parties Conference) on the ground that Muslim delegates would be selected from among Muslim organizations; this was although the Congress had on its membership register many Muslims, and although there were among its leaders some highly educated Muslims; the Congress had been allowed to send only non-Muslim (Hindu) delegates and was reduced to the position of a communal organization; yet it was not supposed to represent even the Hindus, this function being allowed to the delegates of the Hindu Mahasabha. So the Viceroy's Hindu and Sikh nominees were in no mood to negotiate a settlement; they took up an uncompromising attitude at the Conference; the Muslim communal delegates (Jinnah excepted) seemed to be groping for a settlement, but declined to appreciate the Congress viewpoint that for the evolution of nationalism some kind of joint electorate should

be tried. All the communal delegates, who had a field day, seemed to be making an exhibition of their differences before the world, showing in the process how necessary the presence of British authority was to mediate between the warring communities. Indeed, it was British mediation which settled the question over which Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others had waxed eloquent for over a decade. Sir Mohammed Shafi was the first to suggest mediation in his speech before the Federal Structure Committee of the Conference (November 26, 1931). He said:

My Lord Chancellor, assuming that the constitution which you intend to frame does include in it Mussalman safeguards as well as safeguards for the other minorities, then my advice to His Majesty's Government is 'Go ahead' . . . come to a just decision, a decision which will give the eighty millions of His Majesty's Muslim subjects their rightful place in the India of the future, and a decision which will give the other minorities also a rightful place in the India of the future.

CHAPTER XXVII

PRIME MINISTER'S COMMUNAL AWARD

AT THE CLOSE of the second session of the Round Table Conference, the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, announced his Government's decision that 'if the communities in India were unable to reach a settlement acceptable to all parties on the communal question which the Conference had failed to solve', the Government would devise and apply themselves a provisional scheme. This announcement was made on December 1, 1931, and on August 4, 1932, he actually announced the scheme known as the Communal Award. The Award allowed the communal electorate not only to the Muslims, but also to the Sikhs, Indian Christians, and Europeans. It allowed Muslims reservation of seats in every province, and weightage in the provinces where they were in a minority; it gave weightage to the Hindus in the North-West Frontier Province and Sind. But neither the Muslims nor the Hindus were satisfied over the part of the Award which related to the Punjab and Bengal. The representation given them in the Legislative Assemblies of these two provinces was less than their proportion of population should have secured to them. In the Punjab, against their population of 55 per cent, the Muslims were given 49 per cent of the seats; the Hindus were no gainers either; the percentage due according to their proportion of the population was reduced in order to give weightage to the Sikhs and provide for other interests. In Bengal, the position was worse: against their population of 54.8 per cent, the Muslims were given 47.5 per cent of the seats, and the Hindus 32 per cent against their population of 44.8 per cent. Who, then, had run away with the seats which should have gone to the Muslims and the Hindus of Bengal? The Award provided for excessive representation for the Europeans. They constituted only 0.01 per cent of the population, but were given 10 per cent of the seats.

The Communal Award made a considerable improvement in the Muslim representation over the 1919 Act, but did not give the Muslims a clear majority in the two most contentious Muslim majority provinces, Bengal and the Punjab. The first Muslim

organization to express dissatisfaction was the Muslim Conference, which said that nothing short of a statutory majority in the Punjab and Bengal would satisfy the Muslims. The Award had left the communities free to come to an alternative agreement, which, if unanimous, would replace the Award. Therefore, both Hindu and Muslim leaders once again thought of a better arrangement for the distribution of seats. There was a unity conference, to which representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikh League, the Muslim League, the Muslim Conference, some Christian associations, and a few others, were invited. The Conference was attended by 63 Hindus, 39 Muslims, eleven Sikhs and eight Indian Christians. It met in several sessions, and tentatively drew up an alternative Award, giving the Muslims 51 per cent representation in the Punjab and Bengal, and 32 per cent at the Centre. A joint electorate was agreed upon subject to the condition that a candidate, to be declared successful, should get at least 30 per cent of the votes polled of his own community, failing which the candidate securing the highest number of votes of his community would be returned. It was agreed that Sind should be separated from Bombay provided it asked for no subvention from the Centre. Certain concessions to the Hindus of the North-West Frontier Province and Sind were also agreed upon. The agreement on Bengal, however, depended on the Europeans reducing their excessive representation. The Conference appointed a committee to contact the European community at Calcutta.

But on December 24, 1932, while the unity conference was still in session, the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, announced at the third Round Table Conference that the British Government had decided to allot $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of the British Indian seats to the Muslims in the central legislature, and to provide the new province of Sind with adequate funds from the central revenues. The announcement offered the Muslims more than had been agreed upon at the unity conference. The Conference proposals were to be considered during Christmas week by the Muslim Conference and some other Muslim organizations; but the Secretary of State's announcement was bound to make a change in the conciliatory attitude which had grown in all communities, and when these organizations met, they ignored the unity conference agreement, and put forward fresh demands. The unity conference lapsed,

and the Communal Award became the final settlement of the Hindu-Muslim representation in the legislatures.

In fact, the unity conference proposals stood little chance of ratification by Muslim organizations, which were still sharply divided among themselves. Even the Muslim League had once again split into two sections: one accepting the Award unconditionally, and the other being sceptical of it. The latter section assembled at Howrah on October 31, 1933, and calling itself a session of the Muslim League, adopted a resolution according conditional approval to the Award. The former, arrogating to itself a similar status, met twenty-five days later, at Delhi, and while giving the Award the authority of sessional approval, demanded adequate representation for the Muslims in the Ministry and Government services. Meanwhile, Jinnah returned to India after two years' stay in England and, both the groups accepting his leadership, a united League was again established. On July 7, 1934, the Secretary of State for India fixed the Muslim share in public services at twenty-five per cent. This was a proportionate percentage. But the All-India Muslim Conference protested against this decision, urging that the Muslim share should be on the basis of their representation in the central legislature, that is, one-third of the total appointments.

In spite of the leanings, even of confirmed advocates of communal electorates, towards a humble beginning for a joint electorate and in spite of the unity conference's agreement on such an electorate, the British rulers stuck to the belief that the evolution of a common nationality in India seemed impracticable, and that British rule was necessary to arbitrate between the conflicting interests of different communities. This view is clearly brought out in the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (session 1933-34, Vol. I Part I): 'In India . . . there are no parties as we understand them, and there is no considerable body of political opinion which can be described as mobile. In their place, we are confronted with the age-old antagonism of Hindu and Mohammedan, representatives not only of two religions but of two civilisations; with numerous self-contained and exclusive minorities, all a prey to anxiety for their future and profoundly suspicious of the majority and of one another; and with the rigid divisions of caste, itself inconsistent with democratic principle. In these circumstances communal representation must be accepted as inevitable at the present time.'

In justification of the continuance of the British authority, the Committee said: 'There must be an authority in India armed with adequate powers, able to hold the scales evenly between conflicting interests and to protect those who have neither the influence nor the ability to protect themselves. Such an authority will be as necessary in the future as experience has proved it to be in the past. Under the new system of Provincial Autonomy, it will be an authority held, as it were, in reserve; but those upon whom it is conferred must at all times be able to intervene promptly and effectively, if the responsible Ministers and the Legislatures should fail in their duty. This power of intervention must, generally speaking, be vested primarily in the Provincial Governors.' (Governors were all Englishmen.)

As we have discussed in previous chapters, throughout the long period of constitutional reforms, 1892 to 1935, the British had been adopting peculiar methods of franchise; it was the peculiar method of franchise which left the Muslims practically unrepresented in the 1892 Councils, and made the Governor-General and the Governors protectors of the Muslim interests; in 1909, it was the peculiar franchise which created Hindu-Muslim differences over the method of elections; in 1919 again, it was first property as the basis of franchise, and secondly, the over-representation of vested interests loyal to the British, which cut short the Muslim representation. In 1935 also, in the new Government of India Act, the method of franchise was reserved, as a trump card, for the Government of India. Speaking on the Bill, on behalf of the Opposition, Labour leader Attlee drew pointed attention to this omission. He said in the House of Commons on February 6, 1935: 'There is a most remarkable omission in the Bill, and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will correct it soon. It is the total omission of anything to say who are to be the electors. It is suggested that this will be done by an Order in the Council. It is a most extraordinary thing to produce a Bill to make further provision for the Government of India with no provision whatever showing who are the people who are to govern in India except the Upper House. The right hon. Gentleman never mentioned the franchise, and that is most vital from our point of view.' Attlee then observed: 'The legislature is to be overloaded with conservative interests, landlords, commerce, and the like. The conclusion to which one comes on looking at the Bill

is that the definite decision has been that India is to be ruled by the wealthy and the privileged.'

Three years before, on April 3, 1932, the Bengal Presidency Muslim League had given expression to similar views while making out a case for a joint electorate:

The Bengal Presidency Muslim League is of the opinion that communal electorate has failed to achieve the object for which it was introduced and it has proved detrimental to the interests of the community and the country. The case of the Muslims of Bengal is altogether different from that of their co-religionists in other provinces. In Bengal an overwhelming majority of the community as well as of the whole population—about 86 per cent—come from the cultivating class. The interest of these tillers of the soil really constitute the interests of the community and the country. Unless proper arrangements are made for their adequate representation in the legislature, their interests which are different from the interests of other sections of the population cannot be furthered and safeguarded. In fact the economic condition of the masses cannot be improved until the Hindu and Muslim masses, who are at present divided by communal electorates, make common cause in a common electorate. Separate electorate has brought neither strength nor prosperity to the masses of Bengal who are being exploited by designing persons for their own selfish ends.

Again on November 26, 1933, the Bengal League adopted a resolution to the same effect.

But the 'designing persons' were themselves a necessity.

Right from the days of Lytton, when that Viceroy made the landed aristocracy of India a strong pillar of British rule, British rulers had continued to provide for special representation for landlords in all legislatures of the country. Right from the time of the first Congress, and also in pursuance of Mayo's policy of conciliating the Muslims in order to end the Wahabi mentality, British rulers of India had been encouraging Muslims to hold aloof from the Congress. And right from the time the Muslims had begun to catch up with the Hindus in the race for Government jobs, jealousy had grown between the upper classes of the two communi-

ties. Economically and educationally, better-placed men of these classes were the self-appointed leaders of the communities, and they demonstrated most blatantly to the world that India was a divided house; they also gave the British rulers an opportunity to make a similar demonstration. That they were self-appointed and did not represent even the restricted franchise of 10 per cent which the Indians got from an official order, became evident when the country went to the polls for the first election under the 1935 Act. Neither these leaders, nor the British rulers let the outside world ever realize that the mass of the people did not constitute two peoples and two civilizations. These leaders, and those followers who re-echoed their slogans appeared as Hindu and Muslim claimants for jobs and for that social status which association with the legislatures gave them. It was the exhortation of these leaders which sometimes brought the masses of the two communities to blows. That is why the Congress insisted on adult franchise, and the communalist leaders evinced little interest in the demand. The Congress answer to the British suggestion that political parties on Western lines did not exist in India yet, was that first the British were not helping to create the conditions in which parties could grow, and secondly, that so long as the British remained, all political groups, other than communal, must remain one organization to carry on the freedom movement.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WHO REPRESENTS MUSLIMS? THE CONGRESS?

THE EMERGENCE of the Government of India Act, after a long travail of seven years beginning with the All-Parties Conference, and after unending battles for seats in the Legislatures, brought peace for a while. Civil disobedience movement had been wound up; communal bitterness had been reduced to the Mahasabha demanding abrogation of the Communal Award, and to the Muslim League—as if to counteract the Mahasabha demand—insisting on its continuance; and terrorist activities seemed to be disappearing. Nevertheless there was no surrender to the Act, which was not accorded a good reception by any political party, the Congress characterising it as the shadow of self-government. Whatever its worth, the Act was there, and it was clear that elections under it would be held next year. All parties were, therefore, settling down to the business of elections. New parties with common membership of Hindus and Muslims sprang up, falsifying the much-paraded contention that the two communities could not unite. The Muslim League itself now talked least of communalism, and raised itself almost to the level of the Congress in the economic content of its election programme. The Congress had never been hostile to the League, but as the election drew nearer, its attitude towards the League grew softer. An impression was allowed to prevail that the two organizations would not come into conflict with each other. In the U.P., the Congress and the League pronouncedly arrived at an understanding of mutual help in the election campaign.

The League's formal announcement that it was contesting the elections was prefaced by its deprecation of the Act. In a resolution it adopted at its annual session at Bombay on April 11, 1935, it said: 'The All-India Muslim League enters its emphatic protest against enforcing a constitution upon the people of India, as embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, against their will in spite of repeated disapproval and dissent expressed by various bodies and organisations in the country. The League, however,

considers that having regard to the conditions prevailing in the country, the provincial scheme of the constitution be utilised for what it is worth, in spite of the most objectionable features contained therein, which render real control, responsibility of ministry, and legislature over the entire field of government and administration negatory.'

At the same session, the League set up a parliamentary board with Jinnah as its permanent president, and authorized him to appoint 35 other members for the board. The following are some noteworthy extracts from the election manifesto drawn up by the board:

The main principles on which we expect our representatives in various legislatures to work will be: (1) that the present provincial constitution and the proposed central constitution should be replaced immediately by democratic full self-government; (2) and that in the meantime, representatives of the Muslim League in the various legislatures will utilise the legislatures in order to extract the maximum benefit out of the constitution for the uplift of the people in the various spheres of national life. The Muslim League party must be formed as a corollary so long as separate electorates exist, but there would be free co-operation with any group or groups whose aims and ideals are approximately the same as those of the League Party.

The following shall be the programme for the ensuing elections: To protect religious rights of Mussalmans in which connection for all matters of purely religious character, due weight shall be given to opinions of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Mujahids; to make effort to secure the repeal of all repressive laws; to reject all measures which are detrimental to the interests of India, which encroach upon the fundamental liberties of the people and lead to economic exploitation of the country, to reduce the heavy cost of administrative machinery, central and provincial, and allocate substantial funds for nation-building departments; to nationalise the Indian army and reduce military expenditure; to encourage development of industries, including cottage industries; to regulate and devise measures for the amelioration of the general conditions of the Mussalmans.

For thirty years, the League had claimed the authority to speak on behalf of the Muslims, and although it had, during this period, long spells of paralytic attacks which made it look almost lifeless, it rallied again. Until the eve of the Bombay session, the League had not got over its last attack. The League's entry into and its continuance in Indian politics would have been uneventful had it not concentrated on communalism. And after traversing a long distance of thirty years, one noticed the inevitable phenomenon that really if there was any party which could pretend to represent the Muslims, it was the Muslim League. In spite of all its secularism, the Congress did not enjoy the right to make that claim. Out of the 143 members of the All-India Congress Committee (in 1936), only six were Muslims. Of these, three came from the North-West Frontier Province, one from U.P. and one from Bihar. The sixth was Abul Kalam Azad, who sat in the Committee as a former President of the Congress. The Congress was conscious of its position among the Muslims, and out of the 482 Muslim seats in the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, decided to contest only 58. Many Congress and League leaders believed that the two parties could provide a bulwark against those parties which they described as enjoying the Government's patronage and good wishes.

The election results held up to each party a mirror in which each saw where its impression of itself had been faulty. The Muslim League was routed in all the Muslim-majority provinces, except Bengal; and even in Bengal, it was able to capture only 40 out of the 119 Muslim seats. In the Punjab, the largest single party to emerge was the newly activated Unionist Party of Muslim and Hindu landholders; the League, which won only two out of the 86 Muslim seats, fared no better than the Congress which also gained two. The election gave the unambiguous verdict that, in the Punjab, those who had made the case of that province and Bengal the pivot of their communal demands, and who had been chosen to represent the Muslims at the Round Table Conferences, enjoyed absolutely no following among Muslim voters. In fact, the Punjab Muslims were a disorganized body: they did not owe allegiance either to the Congress or to the League or to any other party, and they chose known Independent candidates—whether they contested as individuals or on the ticket of the Unionist Party—to represent them in the Assembly. The Hindu Mahasabha,

which had claimed to represent the Hindus at the All-Parties Conference and at the Round Table Conference fared little better than the League; from the general constituencies of Hindus, the Congress returned, with 18 out of 44 seats, the largest single party, proving that it had a better claim to speak on behalf of the Hindus. If some kind of elections had preceded and not followed the deliberations at the Round Table Conferences, the complexion of the demands for various communities would have been different, and the results would also have been different. After the elections, the Unionist Party made overtures to the Congress for a coalition for Ministry-making. A coalition of this nature at the Round Table Conference would have greatly altered the approach to the manner of representation in the Legislatures.

In Bengal, it was not the prototype of the All-India Muslim League which won 40 seats, but a provincial League, which again and again raised its lone voice for a joint electorate. Those who represented the Muslims at various constitution-making conferences did not give expression to this voice of Bengal, but to their own which was entirely different. The hurriedly-organized Krishak-Praja Party, like the Unionist Party of the Punjab, made better gains than the League. The Praja Party associated itself with the peasants' fight for agrarian rights and, although its leadership was predominantly Muslim, it did not adopt a Muslim name nor did it go to the Muslim voters as a Muslim organization. That showed that the minds of voters were not receptive to the kind of propaganda that had been carried on on their behalf by the self-appointed Muslim leaders at communal settlement talks. Again, Fazlul Huq, who was the leader of the Praja Party, and who was looking for the co-operation of another party to raise his strength to a clear majority, preferred to approach the Congress, and not the League. The Congress had declined to accept Ministerial responsibility. Huq, therefore, made common cause with the League and, instead of coalescing with that party, joined it with most of his followers. It was an event of outstanding importance. A Congress-Praja Party coalition would have put itself on a road to Hindu-Muslim understanding; the Praja Party's merger with the League made the Ministry almost wholly communal, and gave communalism a foothold to expand.

In the North-West Frontier Province, the Congress returned

the largest single Party, and the League was wiped out at the polls. Later, with the assistance of some Independents, the Congress was enabled to form the Ministry. In Sind, too, the League returned empty-handed; the Congress did not contest in the Muslim constituencies, but helped some 'nationalist' Muslims, who with other Independents gave the Province a Congress-minded Ministry.

In the U.P. the Congress had, on the eve of the elections, virtually admitted the League claim to represent the Muslims and, contenting itself barely with nine contests in Muslim constituencies, left all the rest (there were 66 Muslim seats) to the Muslim League. The Congress lost all the nine contests, and its admission was now fully proved. But, for that matter, the Muslim League did not fully or largely vindicate the faith the Congress had reposed in it. The League gained only 27 seats, losing the rest to independent Muslims. The Congress captured most of the Hindu seats, and was in a position to form a government by itself. The Congress, when it entered the contest, was not sure of a decisive victory, and one of the reasons why its provincial leaders made an alliance with the League was the prospect of a coalition with it in Ministry-formation. There was a gap of a few months between the election results and the assumption of office by the Congress in the Provinces in which it enjoyed majorities. The Congress was insisting on the British rulers in India giving a definite promise that the Governor 'will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to their constitutional activities'. Before this promise was made, interim Ministries were formed. In the meantime, a Muslim seat happened to fall vacant and, since the understanding between provincial Congress leaders and League leaders still held the field, the former prevailed upon the latter to leave that seat to the Congress. The most prominent Congress Muslim, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, who had been defeated in the general election, was thus assured an easy victory.

He was the solitary Muslim on the Congress benches in the U.P. Legislative Assembly. When the Congress decided to accept office and proceeded with its Ministry-making efforts, the League put forward its claim for a share on the strength of its pre-election understanding with the Congress. There were prolonged negotiations between the leaders of the two bodies, but there was no workable arrangement reached. It was one of the most fateful and dis-

troubling failures in the political history of India; it gave strength to the belief, held by some adventurous Muslim leaders, that the Muslims should have a separate homeland.

During the negotiations, Congress leaders had been divided over the terms to be offered to the League. The negotiations started on the assumption that there would be a Cabinet of six Ministers, two of whom would be Muslims. The Congress Party had already one Muslim in the person of Kidwai, and offered the other seat to the League. The principal negotiator on behalf of the League was Khaliq-uz-zaman, who, until the eve of the elections, was a Congress member, and had been sent to the League in pursuance of election tactics. He demanded two seats for the League—one for himself and the other for the other top leader of the provincial League, Nawab Ismail Khan. According to Abul Kalam Azad's version of the negotiations, as given in his *Autobiography*, he (Azad) was in favour of conceding the demand even if the strength of the Ministry had to be raised to nine in order to raise the Muslim share to three. Apparently becoming wise after the event, Azad shifts the blame on Jawaharlal Nehru, who, he suggests, was not prepared to allot more than one seat to the League. But the terms Azad himself offered to the League do not vindicate but implicate him. The terms were:

The Muslim League group in the United Provinces Legislature shall cease to function as a separate group.

The existing members of the Muslim League Party in the U.P. Assembly shall become part of the Congress Party. They will be subject to the control and discipline of the Congress Party.

The policy laid down by the Congress Working Committee for their members in the legislatures along with the instructions issued by the competent Congress bodies pertaining to their work in such legislatures shall be faithfully carried out by all members of the Congress Party including these members.

The Muslim League Parliamentary Board in the United Provinces will be dissolved, and no candidates will thereafter be set up by the said Board at any by-election. All members of the Party shall actively support any candidate that may be nominated by the Congress to fill up a vacancy occurring hereafter.

Understandably, the League leaders characterized this as the death warrant of the League, which, curiously enough, they of all people, were asked to sign. Was it, it was asked, for this that the League had built itself up as an all-India party, issued an election manifesto, presented itself before the Muslim voters and contested the elections? And, having miserably failed in Muslim constituencies, was it ethically proper for the Congress to suggest that the Leaguers should virtually enter the Congress through the back door? No straight answer to these questions was ever given, though the anxiety of the Congress to make its actual form reflect its creed was an answer; but it was an answer which was naturally more repulsive to the League. There was another snag, a fresh one.

While the negotiations were going on, the thought of evolving the party system of government again suggested itself to some of the Congress leaders; the uncompromising advocates of this course were some of the Muslim leaders in the Congress. Eventually, this view became the policy of the Congress leaders, and the final offer they made to the League was on this basis, namely, that Khaliq-uz-zaman, would be included in the Cabinet provided he joined the Congress Party as its full-fledged member and signed the party pledge. He rejected the offer, arguing that the League as such should be represented in the Cabinet, but agreeing that if that was done, he would not only abide by the Congress programme, but persuade all the League members of the Legislature to have common benches with the Congress Party. But the Congress leaders insisted on purity of party government, and that was the end of the negotiations and the beginning of extreme provocation.

The Congress leaders then offered the second Muslim seat to another League member, Hafiz Mohammed Ibrahim, who had been an experienced legislator and had once participated in the Congress movement during the Khilafat agitation. He gave up his League ticket, resigned his seat, re-contested and won it on the Congress ticket. It was his personal influence in the constituency that had got him the seat first on the League ticket and then on the Congress ticket. Later, five independent Muslim members and Leaguers joined the Congress Party, raising the Muslim strength in the Party from one to seven.

In the other Hindu-majority provinces, the League gained 11 out of 29 seats in Madras, and 20 out of 30 in Bombay. The Cong-

ress, too, got four Muslim seats in Madras, but none in Bombay where it contested two and lost both. In Bihar, the Congress contested seven out of the 40 Muslim seats, and won five. In Bengal, the Congress did not contest any Muslim seat; in the Central Provinces, it contested two, but gained none.

In a nutshell, these were the results of the elections: the Congress annexed 715 out of the 836 Hindu seats, and only 26 out of the 492 Muslim seats. The Muslim League, in spite of its crushing defeats in Muslim provinces, was the next best party, securing 108 seats; the elections showed that the League was the only organization which had some following among the Muslims. A big majority of the rest of the seats was shared by independent Muslims, many of whom were in course of time won over to the League. But whoever ran away with Muslim seats, and whatever the cause, the fact (again and again asserted by the League) remained that the Congress did not represent the Muslims. The progressive conversion of the Congress into a Hindu organization, contrary to the wishes of its leaders, was attributed by some to communal electorates and by others to the lack of contact of Congressmen with the Muslims. But the broad fact that one saw on the conclusion of elections was that on the one side stood the Congress with its Hindu seats, and on the other the Muslim League with 108 Muslim seats, trying to increase its numbers, and claiming that no other Muslim or secular organization had emerged to lay claim to Muslim representation.

Unlike the Congress, the League had not distinguished itself by a struggle for political emancipation or by constructive work in the economic field. It was not wholly religion which differentiated Congressmen from Leaguers, but the attitude of their members to British rule. Many League leaders enjoyed Government patronage and titles, which the Congress had abjured and which Congressmen shunned. Congressmen believed that the instalments of reforms which the British Parliament had been granting to India, ever since 1892 were the result of agitation, and that the rapid stride to autonomy under the Act of 1935 was secured by the sacrifices Congressmen had made during the various movements Gandhi had conducted since 1919. Leaguers, in their agitation, steered clear of this part of politics, and demanded a share in power. But whatever the nature of the League and whatever

its attitude to freedom movements, the Muslims were there to claim their share when a political reform was an accomplished fact. And it was for the electorate to say who would represent the Muslims. The electorates said they would be represented first by independent men who enjoyed their confidence, and secondly by the Muslim League.

The Congress attitude towards the League was summed up thus in a letter of the Congress President, Jawaharlal Nehru, to the League president, Jinnah, in January 1937: 'In the final analysis there are only two forces in India today—British imperialism and the Congress representing Indian nationalism. . . The Muslim League represents a group of Muslims, no doubt highly estimable persons, but functioning in the higher regions of the upper-middle classes and having no common contact with the Muslim masses and few with the Muslim lower middle class.' The League countered this assertion by saying that the Congress did not represent either the upper classes or lower classes of Muslims, and repeated that it alone enjoyed the authority to speak for the Muslims.

On this basis, the League aspired for a share in the Ministries in Hindu-majority provinces, particularly in U.P. where it had annexed more seats than in any other province, and where it had entered into an alliance with Congress leaders. Now the League was taking its stand not so much on any alliance as on a statutory provision, which, according to its interpretation, empowered Governors to choose Muslim Ministers from among Muslim representatives in the Assemblies.

Clause 52 (1) (b) of the Government of India Act, 1935, is rather vague. It says: 'In the exercise of his functions the Governor shall have the following special responsibilities, that is to say: the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities.' In so far as the appointment of Ministers is concerned, clause VIII of the Instruments of Instructions to the Provincial Governors amplifies the provision in the Act thus: 'In making appointment to his Council of Ministers, Our Governor shall use his best endeavour to select his ministers in the following manner, that is to say, in consultation with the person who in his judgment is likely to command a stable majority in the legislature to appoint those persons (including so far as practicable members of important minority communities) who will best be in a position collectively

to command the confidence of the legislature. But, in so acting, he shall bear constantly in mind the need for fostering a sense of joint responsibility among his ministers.'

This instruction envisaged a party system of government, and since the Congress constituted the majority party in the Legislative Assemblies of the Hindu-majority provinces, its leaders were invited by the Governors to form Ministries. The risk that the Congress Party took was quite glaring: it gave the Muslim League leaders an opportunity of telling their co-religionists in frustration that the Congress interpretation of the party system was peculiar; on the benches of the ruling Party sat all Hindus and on the opposition benches sat all Muslims; the peculiarity consisted in the fact that the opposition could never hope to replace the ruling Party.

Jilted and provoked, the Muslim League, which had been decaying and revived only after Jinnah's assumption of its leadership in 1935, made the Congress attitude the main point of its campaign among the Muslims. At its annual session at Lucknow in October 1937, after the Congress Ministries had been formed, the League passed the following resolution: 'This meeting of the All-India Muslim League deprecates and protests against the formation of ministries in certain provinces by the Congress parties in flagrant violation of the letter and the spirit of the Government of India Act, 1935, and Instrument of Instructions, and condemns the Governors for their failure to enforce the special powers entrusted to them for the safeguards of the interest of the Mussalmans and other important minorities.' Another resolution said: 'Resolved that the object of the All-India Muslim League shall be the establishment in India of full independence in the form of federation of free democratic states in which the rights and interests of the Mussalmans and other minorities are adequately and effectively safeguarded in the constitution.'

Were the 'letter and spirit of the Government of India Act, 1935' really violated? Clause 52 (1) (b) of the Act and clause VIII of the Instrument of Instructions apparently provided for a Ministry of a majority party, and said nothing about the manner in which minorities should be represented in the Cabinets. And it was argued that the letter of the law was duly complied with by the inclusion of Muslim Congressmen in the Cabinets. The Leaguers drew their authority to say that the spirit of the Act and the Instru-

ment of Instructions was missed from clause X of the Instructions which said: 'Our Governor shall interpret his special responsibility for the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of the minorities as requiring him to secure, in general, that those racial or religious communities for the members of which special representation is accorded in the legislature, and those classes of the people committed to his charge who, whether on account of the smallness of their number or their lack of educational or material advantages or from any other cause, cannot as yet fully rely for their welfare upon joint political action in the legislature, shall not suffer, or have reasonable cause to fear, neglect or oppression, but he shall not regard as entitled to his protection any body of persons by reason only that they share a view on a particular question which has not found favour with the majority.'

Among these two clauses in the Instrument of Instructions (VIII and X), the former is specific, and Governors believed they had duly discharged the 'special responsibility' placed on them in agreeing to the list of Ministers (including Muslim Ministers) as presented to them by leaders of Congress Parties in Assemblies. The discharge of special responsibilities was not to be influenced by Ministers who could not be blamed for a violation, if any. Clause 52 (3) of the Act made it clear: 'If in so far as any special responsibility of the Governor is involved, he shall, in the exercise of his functions, exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken.'

But the situation, as it emerged after the elections and at the time of Ministry-making, had been foreseen by the Joint Parliamentary Committee which said in its Report (Vol. I Part I p. 11): 'In India... there are no parties, as we understand them, and there is no considerable body of political opinion which can be described as mobile. In their place we are confronted with the age-old antagonism of Hindu and Mohammedan, representatives not only of two religions but of two civilisations.' At another place (pp. 62-3), the report observed: 'But it must be remembered that in two respects the difficulties of provincial ministries in the future may be greater than in the past. In the first place, they will not in future be able to rely upon the official bloc which, in the words of the Statutory Commission "has helped to decrease the instability of the balance of existing groups in the legislature

and has made the tenure of office of ministries far less precarious". In the second place, each ministry may, as we have already pointed out, be a composite one. The legislatures will be based on a system of communal representation, and the Governor will be directed by his Instrument of Instructions to include in his Ministry, so far as possible, members of important minority communities. A ministry thus formed must tend to be the representative, not, as in the United Kingdom, of a single majority party or even of a coalition of parties, but also of minorities as such.'

It would be another thing to say that a series of events encouraged by the British or accidentally shaped by history, led to growing estrangement between the different communities, and that the results would have been different had British statesmen dealing with Indian political affairs thrown their weight in favour of a joint electorate. All that had become hypothetical after the enforcement of the new Act and the communal electorate, and the situation at present was as it had been anticipated by the joint committee.

It was against this background that the League's contention deserved to be appreciated; it deserved appreciation even if it was suggested that the League's claim to represent the Muslims had not been upheld by Muslim voters. But for the Congress, secularism was an article of faith, and the provision as it stood in clause VIII of the Instrument of Instructions seemed to hold out the hope of the evolution of a secular party system of government in India. The Congress believed it could provide flesh to this hope by its Muslim mass contact programme. In the communal atmosphere that had been advancing, and not receding, ever since the birth of the Congress and the reactions of the British rulers to its progress, it was a forlorn hope. It really proved to be so. In the first place, the mass contact programme was never taken up seriously; and in the second, it was crushed, wherever it was launched, by the wheels of the League, which were rapidly gaining speed, strength and mobility.

CHAPTER XXIX
CONGRESS GOVERNMENT :
WAS IT HINDU RAJ ?

AS CONGRESS rule, with its ameliorative measures for the people, continued, the Muslim League, which had been reduced to the position of an unconcerned onlooker, moved deeper and deeper into the Muslim masses. With the Crescent and the Koran held aloft, it proclaimed that a fascist Hindu Raj had been established, and that Muslims had been thrown overboard. At the 25th annual session of the Muslim League (held from October 15 to 18, 1937) where speeches did not betray much intemperance, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the Raja of Mahmudabad, told a big audience : 'A delicate political situation has been created in our country. The majority community refused to recognise even the existence of the Muslim community as such, and refused to work in co-operation with our leadership for national advancement.' Jinnah, who was now being voted to the presidency of the League year after year, was more explicit in his attacks. He said : 'The present leadership of the Congress, especially during the last ten years, has been responsible for alienating the Mussalmans of India more and more by pursuing a policy, which is exclusively Hindu, and since they have formed Governments in six provinces where they are in a majority, they have by their words, deeds and programme shown that the Muslims cannot expect any justice or fair play at their hands. Wherever they are in a majority and wherever it suited them, they refused to co-operate with the Muslim League parties and demanded unconditional surrender and signing of their pledges.'

The Congress had been in office only a short while when the League assembled for its annual session and, apparently, Leaguers had no instances of the lack of fair play and justice of the Congress Governments towards Muslims. The only instance brought forth at the session was of a sentimental nature. It related to the singing of the Congress national anthem, *Bande Mataram*, with which opened each day's proceedings in Legislative Assemblies in the Congress Provinces. *Bande Mataram* had been sung during the

Congress movements against British rule times without number : all public meetings began with its recitation in chorus ; it imparted courage and patience to processions maintaining their progress in face of police firings and *lathi* charges ; it had become a form of salutation among Congressmen ; in fact, it was inseparably associated with nationalism and every manifestation of it. Such was *Bande Mataram*, to which Congressmen clung as a supreme national sentiment, and to which the League was now taking exception.

The song occurs in the renowned Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterji's *Anand Math*, a most widely-read novel for many decades ; it was translated into several Indian languages. *Anand Math*'s theme is a Sanyasi rebellion : ascetics, apparently all Hindus, raise the standard of revolt against Muslim conquerors. During the freedom movement, those who suggested that this song should become the national anthem, explained that Bankim had given revolutionary ideas to the people of his age, and that he had chosen Muslim rulers as the target of the fury of the Sanyasis, apparently because if the British had been made the target, the novel would have been suppressed and the author's intent frustrated. In any case, the song itself was innocuous, and only paid homage to the motherland. When patriotism was just rising in Bengal, it was invoked by early Bengali nationalists to arouse patriotic sentiments among educated people. With the spread of nationalist sentiments from Bengal to other parts of the country, the song also spread, becoming as dear as the motherland itself. But Muslims had nothing in common with this sentiment and, while Hindu nationalists detached the song from its context, Muslims insisted on reading it with the context. The Muslims were half a century too late to say that nationalist India should abandon it. It was adopted at a time when to Muslim leaders like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, self-government was not only an unwise demand but beyond the pale of practical politics.

The League steered clear of this history, and expressed its resentment against public singing of *Bande Mataram*. The resolution it adopted said: 'This meeting of the All-India Muslim League strongly condemns the attitude of the Congress in foisting *Bande Mataram* as the national anthem upon the country as callous, positively anti-Islamic, idolatrous in its inspiration and ideas, and definitely subversive of the growth of genuine nationalism in India.

This meeting further calls upon Muslim members of various legislatures and public bodies in the country not to associate themselves in any manner with this highly objectionable song.’

The mover of the resolution, Akram Khan of Bengal, read before the audience passages from *Anand Math* to show that the song was not national but was an attack on the Muslims, and exhorted his co-religionists to boycott it. Several times, Muslim Leaguers walked out of Legislative Assemblies with a view to recording their protest against the singing. In Madras, the Assembly Speaker allowed reading from the Koran also in the House on Fridays, and said he would endeavour to have a song of prayer acceptable to all religions.

As if the Congress rejection of the League’s demand for a share in the government was necessary for the League to galvanize itself, branches of the organization in provinces and districts began to appear with incredible speed. Never had middle-class Muslims displayed so much vigour, so much steadfastness and devotion to practical politics. Condemnation of Congress rule as a Hindu Raj portending dangerous consequences to Muslims was the central point of the propaganda, which sought to create the religious fervour of a *jihad*. Communal venom, which had been confined until the Round Table Conference to political gatherings, was now carried to every nook and corner of Muslim habitation. This was bound to raise counter-communal feelings among Hindus; and it did. The calm which had followed the enforcement of the 1935 Act and which had remained unbroken during the elections, was now seriously threatened. Communal antagonism in towns (which had the lion’s share of the propaganda) increased rapidly, and erupted in bitter riots in several of them. Hindus and Muslims grew suspicious of each other, and even petty affairs, that were generally dismissed as negligible, were magnified into serious grievances. In the prevalent communal atmosphere, even serious grievances were not difficult to arise, and may actually have arisen. And one could appreciate Jinnah’s allegations, which he made in the course of his presidential address to the 1938 session of the League. ‘Numerous representations and complaints’, he said, ‘have reached the central office of hardship, ill-treatment and injustice that is meted out to Muslims in the various Congress-governed provinces, and particularly to those who were workers

and members of the All-India Muslim League'.

The Bengal Premier, Fazlul Huq, whom expediency had forced into the League, in his welcome address to the annual session (which was held at the headquarters of Government, Calcutta) was more vehement than Jinnah himself. His description of the situation in the Congress provinces was: 'In Congress provinces, riots had laid the countryside waste. Muslim life, limb and property have been lost, and blood has freely flowed, but here in Bengal not one head has been broken, and not one drop of blood has been shed. There the Muslims are leading their lives in constant terror, overawed and oppressed by Hindus, but here the Hindus are leading perfectly happy peaceful life—a circumstance that delights and gratifies us. There mosques are being defiled and the culprits never found nor is the Muslim worshipper unmolested, but here worship proceeds unhampered in Hindu temples, and none dare defile them, because we resolutely set the law in motion against any evil-doer who would defile or desecrate any community's places of worship. There you will find many instances where Muslim officers have been unjustly treated or deprived of their legitimate rights; here I defy any one to cite a single instance where a Hindu officer has been unfairly treated by us.'

This was one side of the picture. The other was the one presented by the Hindu Mahasabha, which at its meetings accused the Congress Governments of pursuing a policy of appeasement towards the Muslims, and exhorted Hindus to disown the Congress. Communal riots, the League's unending charges against Congress Governments, and the denials issued by the Governments after official inquiries, had made fair-minded people feel as if they were in a fog. It was difficult to say who was really to blame for initiating riots; it seems it will remain an unsolved mystery. Consistently with its new programme, the League appointed a committee, under the presidentship of Raja Mohammed Mehdi of Pirpur, to investigate Muslim complaints against Congress Governments and Hindus, and submit a report. At no stage of this inquiry were Hindus and Government spokesmen associated with it; perhaps they would not have cared to be associated even if it was offered to them; but opinion nevertheless prevailed that the committee's report was an *ex parte* judgment passed on Hindus and Congress Governments.

The report of the committee was published at the end of 1938

and became known as the Pirpur Report, after the name of its chairman. The Report attacked the Congress 'closed door' policy and cited it as proof that parliamentary government as practised in Britain was unworkable in India. 'The Muslims think that no tyranny can be as great as the tyranny of the majority.' The committee argued that it was not only a question of the religious and cultural freedom of Muslims: they must obtain their due share in the government of the country. The Congress was not only denying them this, but was trying to break the political power of the Muslims by the British device of 'Divide and Rule'. Then, the committee complained of the inadequate Muslim representation in the public services, of the Congress Committees in the districts which in effect were 'parallel governments' denying fair play to the Muslims, of the Congress flag, the national anthem, the reverence paid to Gandhi, the emphasis laid by Gandhi on 'cow protection', and of many such things, which were considered as deliberate and far-reaching attacks on the civic and cultural rights of the Muslim community. The most insidious feature of Congress rule, according to the committee, was the attempt to extend the use of Hindi at the expense of Urdu. 'When a small country like Switzerland can afford to impart education in three languages, surely more than one language can be taught in an Indian province.'

The Pirpur indictment of the Congress rule was followed by two more reports of the same kind. They did not exercise the same restraint as the Pirpur Report had. One was the report of the Inquiry Committee appointed by the Working Committee of the provincial Muslim League to inquire into some grievances of the Muslims in Bihar. It was published in March 1939 and was known as the Shareef Report after the name of its draftsman, S. M. Shareef. The Shareef Report was full of 'atrocities' 'perpetrated' by Hindus in various parts of the province. Details were recounted, repeated and italicised obviously in order to impress on Muslim readers how impossible was it for them to live under 'Hindu Raj'. 'Muslims will have to decide soon whether they should migrate from this province or face annihilation.' Not only Ministers and local Congressmen, but the administrative and judicial services were accused of pursuing a policy of persecution of Muslims. The President of the Bihar League, in his preface to the report would not, however, go as far as to suggest migration, but believed that

the situation could still be saved if the leaders of both the Congress and the League would undertake a concerted campaign of preaching and propaganda to convince the ignorant masses of both communities that they must observe the principle of mutual toleration.

Third indictment of the Congress Governments was made by Fazlul Huq in December 1939, in a statement issued to the press and later re-published in pamphlet form under the title, *Muslim Sufferings under Congress Rule*. Congress policy, wrote Huq, had set the stage for the blatant arrogance of the militant Hindu to burst the bounds of restraint which non-partisan governments had hitherto imposed. . . They set about to impose their will on the Muslim minorities. And what was their will? . . . Mother cow must be protected. . . Muslims must not be allowed to eat beef. . . The religion of Muslims must be humbled because was not this the land of the Hindus? Hence the forbidding of *azan* (the call to prayer), attacks on worshippers in mosques, the insistence on the triumphant passage of noisy processions before mosques at prayer time. . . Was it strange, then, that tragedy followed tragedy?

The statement then gave a description of 72 incidents in Bihar and 33 in the U.P. and a summary account of similar events in the Central Province. 'Cow sacrifice is prevented in villages where it had long been customary. Muslim butchers are assaulted. Pigs are thrown into mosques. The *azan* is denounced and interrupted. Muslim shops are boycotted. Muslims are prevented from using the village well. They are attacked irrespective of sex or age.'

In the Central Province, the Government was charged with an attempt to Hinduise Muslims through a system of education which drew inspiration from Hinduism. The system owed its birth to Gandhi's concept of Basic Education which was thoroughly examined and elaborated at Wardha by a committee of educationists, and presided over by a nationalist Muslim, Dr. Zakir Husain. The concept was that students of primary schools should earn for the running of the school through mild constructive work such as spinning so that they might not be a burden on the public exchequer. This thought had come to Gandhi at a time when education was being linked with excise revenues by official spokesmen much before the arrival of the Congress Ministries. He had suggested Prohibition for the moral uplift of the people, and was told that education

would suffer if excise revenues ceased. That was the basis of the 'basic' system of education. Spinning and hand-spun and hand-woven cloth had become a symbol of nationalism and, since Muslims had been told by their leaders to observe complete aloofness from nationalism and all its manifestations, they saw in the spinning something of the Hindu Congress. Town Muslims shunned it in spite of the fact that many weavers were Muslims. Muslims of the League school opposed the plan of Basic Education, and as if to enable them to vindicate their opposition, the basic schools started in the Central Province were given a name at once repulsive to educated Muslims; the name was Vidya Mandir, temple of learning. *Mandir* means a home, at best a sacred home, and connotes no offensiveness to any religion; it is not a religious term. But in common parlance, it means almost always the abode of a Hindu god. With the exception of Hindus of high literary attainments, no Hindu would take *mandir* for a common home. Anybody aware of the sensitiveness of Muslims in the matter of education would have dropped this word and adopted a common name. Gandhi had himself said: 'We have left out the teaching of religions from the Wardha scheme of education, because we are afraid that religions as they are taught and practised today lead to conflict rather than unity.' Gandhi's concept should have been reflected, it seems, in the name given by the C. P. Government to its new schools, but this was not done.

All the League's grievances against the Congress Governments, and all the grouses of the Hindu Mahasabha, had existed for many years. Hindu-Muslim riots, the offence taken by Hinduism or Islam over each other's religious ceremonies, the Hindi-Urdu controversy, the distribution of Government and local self-government jobs among members of various religious communities, and so on were not new problems which had arisen under Congress rule. Hindu-Muslim clashes had been taking place since the early 'twenties; the lower classes of the people of the two communities broke each others' heads, and when peace returned, the leaders of one community blamed the other, and, as if to take revenge at the next riot, set up consolidating organizations like the Hindu *Sangathan* and the Muslim *Tanzeem*. Eminent Hindu and Muslim leaders, who had been together in the Khilafat movement, had made supreme efforts to establish such normal relations between

the two communities as had existed for centuries, but there was no abatement of communal passions. Now it fitted in with the Muslim League campaign to depict the riots as planned Hindu attacks on Muslims; attacks which would not be punished under the Congress 'Hindu Raj'. There was at all times some truth in the allegations that Hindu officers of Government, as was the case with Muslim officers, had been bred in a communal atmosphere, and that many of them, imbued with partisanship, showed communal leanings in the discharge of their official duties. The Congress Governments had received this fault as a legacy and could not be held responsible for promoting it. Congress leaders continued to appeal as ever for communal harmony, but as ever the appeals fell on deaf ears. During the two previous decades during which communal frenzy had been mounting year after year, the Congress had been a pathetic and helpless onlooker. The same could not be said of the Muslim League, other Muslim organizations and the Hindu Mahasabha, who in social and political matters made no small contribution to Hindu-Muslim estrangement.

Similarly, the Hindi-Urdu controversy was very old. Hindus never forgave Urdu, written in Persian characters, for keeping Hindi out of the courts of law. Hindi protagonists had fought many a losing battle for the promotion of Hindi to the status of Urdu; their failures had made them inimical to Urdu, and when the Congress Governments allowed them equality, they used it with a vengeance, which was, speaking psychologically, natural. Hindi by itself was a poor language; its enrichment depended on borrowings from Sanskrit. In their zeal and spirit of vengeance, the protagonists of Hindi proceeded to Sanskritise the language, throwing out many words which Urdu had derived from Persian and Arabic and which had been in use both in Urdu and Hindi for a hundred years. There were enthusiastic protagonists among officers of the Government Education Departments also, and it was impossible for any government to exercise control over the words used in the writing of textbooks. The more communal-minded among the protagonists satisfied their communalism by loading textbooks with biographical sketches of Hindu heroes, practically ignoring Muslim heroes. The indiscretions committed at lower levels of the administration were capable of correction at the annual stock-taking of administrative activities, but the

Congress Governments stayed in office for barely two years, and had had no time for correction. Two years was too small a period for the curing of chronic ills. Ordinarily Jinnah would have appreciated it, but the choice for him was difficult; it was the choice between this appreciation and the injury which it would have caused to the League's rising campaign for Muslim solidarity under the green Crescent flag.

The Muslim grievance against Hindus taking away disproportionate share of Government jobs was not new either. It had existed ever since Sir Syed Ahmed Khan preferred education to politics for Muslims, and loyalty to British rule to the Congress agitation. Half a century had passed, but Muslims were still finding themselves unfit to secure their share of jobs through competitive tests, and had, by a Government of India resolution dated July 4, 1934, been allotted 25 per cent of civil posts under the Central Government (in the all-India services). The resolution provided that 'when recruitment is made by open competition and if Muslims . . . obtain less than this percentage, this percentage will be secured to them by means of nominations'. Muslims could have no grievance in the matter of high posts. But they had reason to entertain grievances in the matter of lower posts, which were ordinarily filled by departmental heads. The appointing authorities at these lower levels betrayed worse than communal tendencies, and were either influenced by caste considerations or by recommendations in making appointments. Merit was seldom the criterion of selection, and even more competent Hindus were left murmuring. But the lower middle classes among the Muslims which were now flocking to the League, attributed the behaviour of the appointing authorities to their Hindu bias, and nurtured the belief that fair play was impossible to get under the 'Hindu Raj'. Formerly, Muslim leaders ascribed their under-representation in the services to their lack of education; now they blamed the Congress Governments. Again, within a period of two years, the Ministries could not be expected to have the appointment question thoroughly investigated by an inquiry committee in order to formulate a scheme for a fair distribution of Government jobs. It was impossible in the prevalent atmosphere to expect a fair assessment of the situation.

The only chance of the League returning to a rational assessment of things lay in the Congress recognizing it as the sole repre-

sentative of the Muslims and accepting its right to partnership in the Ministries—a demand which had been repeatedly made on the Congress and which the Congress had always rejected. The League's invitation to the Muslims to come under its banner, excited the Hindu Mahasabha to start a counter campaign among Hindus. The Mahasabha's re-entry into aggressive politics made the League's task of rallying Muslims easy. It also affirmed a Muslim idea, which was that the Hindus and the Muslims could never constitute a single Indian nation. Speaking at the annual Hindu Mahasabha session of 1937, from the presidential chair, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the renowned revolutionary leader who had been released by the Congress Government, said: 'Several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmonious nation, or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so. These our well-meaning but unthinking friends take their dreams for realities. That is why they are impatient of communal tangles and attribute them to communal organisations. But the solid fact is that the so-called communal questions are but a legacy handed down to us by centuries of cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims. When the time is ripe you can solve them; but you cannot suppress them by merely refusing recognition of them. It is safer to diagnose and treat the deep-seated disease than to ignore it. Let us bravely face unpleasant facts as they are. India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogeneous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main, the Hindus and the Muslims.'

At the Calcutta session of the Mahasabha in 1939, he repeated more emphatically: 'We Hindus, in spite of thousand and one differences within our fold, are bound by such religious, cultural, historical, racial, linguistic and other affinities in common as to stand out as a definitely homogeneous people as soon as we are placed in contrast with any other non-Hindu people—say the English or Japanese or even the Indian Muslims. That is the reason why today we, the Hindus, from Kashmir to Madras and Sind to Assam will have to be a nation by ourselves.'

But Savarkar's solution was not the division of the country into a Hindu India and a Muslim India: he would have a dominant position for the Hindus who constituted the majority. He

proposed to secure the Muslim rights thus: 'When once the Hindu Mahasabha not only accepts but maintains the principles of "one man and one vote", and the public services to go by merit alone added to the fundamental rights and obligations to be shared by all citizens alike irrespective of any distinction of race or religion . . . any further mention of minority rights is on the principle not only unnecessary but self-contradictory. Because it again introduces a consciousness of majority and minority on communal basis.'

The two-nation theory captured the imagination of some Leaguers of Sind, who at the annual session of the Provincial League in October 1938, had a resolution passed proposing the partition of India, thus forestalling the All-India Muslim League by seventeen months. The resolution said: 'This Sind Muslim League Conference considers it absolutely essential in the interests of abiding peace of the vast Indian continent and in the interests of unhampered cultural development, the economic and social betterment and political self-determination of the two nations, known as Hindus and Muslims, that India may be divided into two federations, viz. the federation of Muslim states and the federation of non-Muslim states.'

The Sind conference was presided over by Jinnah, but he did not yet seem to have been converted to the two-nation theory. He was confining himself to attacks on the Congress Governments. His statements compelled top Congress leaders, like Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Bose, Rajendra Prasad and Kripalani, to open correspondence with him to find what truth, if any, there was in the grievances put forward from public platforms. All the correspondents ignored the foundation on which the entire superstructure of the League campaign had been built; they got entangled in the details of the complaints, which, detached from that foundation, could not stand. Therefore, quite understandably the correspondence produced no results, but merely some more ill-will. Even the suggestion made in October 1939, by Rajendra Prasad, who was then the President of the Congress, that the League complaints should be investigated by an impartial authority such as Sir Maurice Gwyer, the Chief Justice of India, was turned down by Jinnah, saying: 'The matter is now under His Excellency's (Viceroy's) consideration, and he is the proper authority to take

such action and adopt such measures as would meet our requirements and restore complete sense of security in those provinces where the Congress ministries are in charge of the administration.' But the Viceroy did not order any inquiry nor did he come out with any statement upholding the League's complaints. Later, Jinnah made a demand for a Royal Commission to investigate his charges, but it was not conceded by the British Government. However, if the British authorities were to be considered impartial judges, the Congress Government in U.P. produced such an authority vindicating its claim of fair treatment of Muslims. The U.P. Governor, Sir Harry Haig, said after his retirement at the end of 1939: 'In dealing with communal issues, the Ministers, in my judgment, normally acted with impartiality and a desire to do what was fair. Indeed, towards the end of their time they were being seriously criticised by the Hindu Mahasabha on the ground that they were not being fair to the Hindus, though there was in fact no justification for such a criticism.'

By August 1939, the League's faith in even the British authorities was shaken, and on the 28th of that month, its Working Committee said in a resolution that the hopes once cherished by Muslims that their position would be secured by the safeguards had proved a complete illusion in face of a 'permanent hostile communal majority'. The resolution deplored 'the utter neglect and indifference shown by the Viceroy and the Governors in the Congress-governed provinces in exercising their special powers to protect and secure justice to the minorities'.

In September 1939, on the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe, the complexion of politics in India underwent some change. Within a few hours of the declaration of war on September 3, the Viceroy of India, without any consultation with the provincial Ministries, proclaimed India a belligerent. An amendment to the Government of India Act was rushed through Parliament in eleven minutes, empowering the Viceroy to over-ride the provisions of the Constitution even in respect of provincial autonomy. The same day, the Defence of India Ordinance was promulgated by the Viceroy considerably curtailing the civil liberties of the people. The Congress Working Committee met to consider the new situation and said: 'If the war is to defend the status quo, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privileges,

then Indians can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it.' The Committee invited the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims were and how these aims were to be given effect to in India and to be given effect to 'in the present'. The British Government did not yield to the Congress demand for immediate establishment of responsible self-government, and the Working Committee asked the Congress Ministries to relinquish office, which they did by December 1939. Jinnah welcomed the resignations, and declared that the Congress Ministries must never come back; he fixed December 22 for celebration as a 'day of deliverance and thanksgiving'. It was celebrated by the League organizations throughout the country, with more enthusiasm in the Congress Provinces than elsewhere, 'as a mark of relief that the Congress Governments have at last ceased to function'.

The Congress and the League now entered the decisive phases of their careers, the one for freedom and the other for Pakistan.

CHAPTER XXX
PARTITION—A WAY OUT OF
'HINDU DOMINATION'

IN SEPTEMBER 1939, while the Congress was still in office, the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League declared that Muslim India was 'irrevocably opposed to any "federal objective" which will necessarily result in a majority-community rule under the guise of democracy and a parliamentary system of government. Such a constitution is totally unsuited to the genius of the peoples of this country which is composed of various nationalities and does not constitute a national state.' In February 1940, Jinnah elaborated the Working Committee resolution by a press statement in which he said that the constitutional settlement must proceed on the assumption that India was not one nation but two, and that the Muslims would not submit to the arbitration of anybody, but would themselves determine their political destiny. He was gradually preparing the Muslim mind for his theory that Muslims could not remain happy under one central government. In March, at the League's most momentous annual session, attended by a hundred thousand people from different parts of the country, Jinnah spoke as follows in his presidential address: 'It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are in fact different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. This misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time. The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature. They neither intermarry, nor interdine together and, indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspirations from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and different

episodes. Very often, the Hero of one is a foe of the other and likewise their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.'

The League put its official stamp on Jinnah's analysis by a resolution, commonly known as the Pakistan Resolution, in which it said: 'Resolved that it is considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz. that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.'

The idea which Jinnah and this resolution put forward was not new. It had first been mooted by Sir Mohammed Iqbal (Vide Chapter XXVI) at the 1930 annual session of the League. He had been apprehensive of a central government that would be dominated by Hindus, and his remedy was: 'Residuary powers must be left entirely to self-governing states, the central federal government only exercising those powers which are expressly vested in it by the free consent of the federal states. I would never advise the Muslims of India to a system, whether of British or of Indian origin, which virtually negatives the principle of true federation or fails to recognise them as a distinct political entity.'

Shortly after this, at the Round Table Conference, a few Muslim students in London had canvassed support among the Muslim delegates to the Conference for a proposal to partition India into a Muslim India and a Hindu India. Leading Muslim delegates dismissed the suggestion as a 'students' scheme', and took no notice of it during their discussion of the electoral system. But the students doggedly pursued the idea, and two years later, four of them—C. Rahmat Ali, Mohammed Aslam Khan, Mohammed Sadiq, and Inayatullah Khan—circulated a four-page leaflet from Cambridge in January 1933, at the

time of the third Round Table Conference, saying that while Sir Iqbal 'proposed the amalgamation of these (Muslim) provinces into a single state forming a unit of the All-India Federation, we propose that these provinces should have a separate federation of their own. There can be no peace of and tranquillity in this land if we, the Muslims, are duped into a Hindu-dominated federation where we cannot be the masters of our own destiny and captains of our own souls.' These sentiments were presented 'on behalf of our thirty million Muslim brethren who live in *Pakistan*, by which we mean the five northern units of India, viz. Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan'. (*Pakistan*—land of the pure—was later adopted as the name of the new Muslim state, and spelled as Pakistan.) There is a marked similarity between the words and phrases used in the students' leaflet entitled *Now or Never* and Jinnah's address to the Lahore session. The leaflet said: 'India is not the name of one single country, nor the home of one single nation. It is, in fact, the designation of a state created for the first time in history by the British . . . We do not inter-dine; we do not inter-marry. Our national customs and calendars, even our diet and dress are different.'

In July 1935, Rahmat Ali proclaimed himself the 'founder of the Pakistan National Movement', and circulated another four-page leaflet from another Cambridge address. In the new leaflet, the only new point he made was that 'while Burma is being separated from Hindoostan, it remains a mystery to us why Pakistan. . . is to be forced into the Indian federation'. Rahmat Ali's idea did not spread. A few years later, the wind seemed to be blowing in a favourable direction, and in 1940 he made a statement to a meeting of the 'Supreme Council' of his 'Movement' at Karachi. (The statement was reproduced in the Indian press and in pamphlet form in England under the title, *The Millat of Islam and the Menace of 'Indianism'*, by C. Rahmat Ali, Founder-President, Pakistan National Movement, 16, Montague Road, Cambridge.) The statement restated the case for Pakistan thus: (1) The Muslims in so-called India are 'Muslim, not Hindu; Pakistani, not Hindustani; and Asian, not Indian. . . In retrospect the India of today is the South Asia of yesterday, but in prospect the sphere of the individual solidarity of several nations of tomorrow'; (2) The choice now facing the Muslim community (*millat*) is 'between reconstruction

in Asia and re-destruction in India'. In the past 'Indianism', spiritually and morally 'corrupted the standards of our Islamic values', and 'politically it deprived us of imperial supremacy, dispossessed us of national sovereignty, and reduced us to a "minority community". In the future "Indianism", on the premise of the territorial unity of India, proposes to create the central government, control its civil administration, and command its military arm. . . . When sure of its power, it will, in the name of democracy and with the help of British bayonets, make use of it to coerce and crush us, its prey, into complete captivity'; (3) The *millat* can only be saved by severing all ties with India which 'never was and never would be the Muslim motherland'. North-West India must constitute the nation and sovereign State of Pakistan.

Rahmat Ali's map of Pakistan showed three independent Muslim units differently named: the North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab, Sind, Kashmir and Baluchistan were named 'Pakistan'; Bengal, with its hinterland of Assam, was called 'Bang-i-Islam', and the princely state of Hyderabad as 'Usmanistan' (from the family name of the Nizam, that is, Usman).

Vocal sections of the Muslim intelligentsia expressed concern over the future of the Muslims under a 'Hindu-dominated' centre, and several men of political vision produced their own schemes. Prominent among them were Dr. Syed Abdul Latif, who preferred a federation with its power reduced to the minimum; Sir Mohammed Shah Nawaz Khan, who would divide India into five 'countries' each a federation in itself; Sir Abdulla Haroon, who would have two separate federations, 'each reflecting the strength of one of the two major communities'; and Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Punjab Premier, who pleaded for a federation of the loosest possible kind, with the re-division of the country into seven zones enjoying the fullest autonomy.

The idea of a common Indian nationalism and one Indian community which had been conceived and supported by the Muslim leaders of the Congress school at the All-Parties Conference and throughout the subsequent period of strain and strife was still their dream. And as they did then, they organized an All-India Independent Muslim Conference at Delhi, with Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh, who had ascended to the premiership of Sind with the help of the Congress group, as the President. The Conference

denounced the partition proposed by the League and repudiated the League's claim to represent the Muslims of India. The conference was largely ineffective as was its predecessor, which was a counterblast to the All-Parties Muslim Conference. But the Pakistan resolution of the League and other schemes missed the fact that an overwhelming number of Muslim members in the Legislatures of the Provinces—Sind, North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab and Bengal—never wanted any partition. The North-West Frontier Province had a Congress Ministry, and Sind had a pro-Congress one. The Bengal Premier, Fazlul Huq, who had moved the Partition resolution and said in his ephemeral zeal that 'every one of us is a tiger and a lion', denounced the League towards the close of 1941, formed a government without the League Party and with the aid of the Forward Bloc (a section of the Congress Party), and put on a new interpretation on the Partition resolution, namely, that it would not apply to Bengal. In the Punjab, Sir Sikandar's successor, Malik Khizr Hayat Khan, rejected Jinnah's dictation. This sombre picture, it was the difficult task of Jinnah and his colleagues to convert into a hopeful one. We will see in the next chapter how circumstances and their own persistent efforts brought about favourable results.

CHAPTER XXXI
DEFEATED LEAGUE'S 'VICTORY'
IN ASSEMBLIES

THE LEAGUE'S propaganda machine, whose food was the rich anti-Hindu and anti-Congress material presented in the Pirpur Report, the Shareef Report and other reports and whose efforts more than matched the best of the Congress campaigns for liberation of the country, was making a rapid advance from the Congress Provinces, where it was born, to the Muslim-majority Provinces. Already, the Punjab Premier, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, and the Bengal Premier, Fazlul Huq had, with their followers, become members of the League, but, as we will presently see, it was not their conversion to the League ideology which had induced them to adopt the new label. The charge-sheets against the Congress appeared later, and were fully utilised by the League in the Muslim-majority provinces. No remedy could be more successful in rallying Muslims than an appeal in the name of religion, and nothing could arouse their anger more than a report that Islam had been insulted; whether the insult was reported from an adjoining village or an adjoining province was immaterial. But hardened Muslims politicians, who had weathered much serious communal strife in the 'twenties and 'thirties, were not much affected by this propaganda, and were still making and breaking Ministries with the help of their Hindu colleagues. The League Party, wherever it existed or came into being subsequently through expedient conversions, was like any other component part of coalitions; its co-operation was sought as a contributor to a coalition, and seldom as a communal group.

In Bengal, Fazlul Huq owned or discarded the League as it suited him in his Ministry-making efforts. In a House of 250, he found, on the opening day of the new assembly (1937), that his Praja Party was in a hopeless minority of 35. Other seats were distributed as under: Congress had 60, including 17 members of the depressed classes who carried the extra tickets of the Scheduled Castes, Labour and the Tippera Krishak Samity; Independent Muslims had 41; the Muslim League had 40; the Europeans

had 25; the Independent Scheduled Caste group had 23; and the Independent Caste Hindus had 14; the rest did not identify themselves with any group.

The search for coalescing parties should have been started by the Congress Party, which was the largest single Party in the Assembly, but like all Congress parties in other provincial Assemblies, it had been restrained from accepting Ministerial responsibility until the promise was made that the Governor would not interfere in the Ministry's day-to-day working. The Praja Party leader, Fazlul Huq, circumvented the League Party leaders by his offer to join the League if he was accepted as the leader of the coalition. The condition was conceded, and Huq's search for support also secured him the co-operation of the Independent Scheduled Caste group of 23, and fourteen Independent Caste Hindus. With all these groups, Huq was able to muster only 112 Members in a house of 250; and his ambition would have remained unrealized had not the 25 European members (who, as has been already pointed out, enjoyed excessive representation by cutting down the Hindu and the Muslim share of seats) promised him support.

With 75 Members in a coalition of 112 owing allegiance to the League, the Huq Ministry was passed as a League Ministry, and in his attacks on Congress Ministries from League platforms, he was as unsparing and as vehement as the staunchest Leaguer in the Congress Provinces. The need for him to depend on Muslims increased when the way was cleared for the Congress to accept office, and the Bengal Congress Party (consisting of Hindus) attempted to gather sinews for a Ministry under its own leadership. The first fruit of this attempt was the secession of the Scheduled Caste group, now 24 strong. In its immediate effect, it may have been a helpful development for the Congress Party, but it aided the forming of a solid Hindu bloc suggesting to Muslims to close their ranks similarly. This happened in the summer of 1938, and encouraged the Congress Party to sponsor a motion of no-confidence in the Huq Ministry. This was followed by nine similar motions each worded differently. The tension in the Assembly overflowed into the streets of Calcutta and into Muslim localities of the city. The Congress attempt was interpreted as a machination to pull down the Muslim Ministry, and on the day fixed for the no-confidence motions, a procession of Muslims marched to the Assembly House

to demonstrate support for the Government. 'Opposition leaders were assaulted in the streets, and on the night before the debate some members of the Opposition slept in the House for fear of being seen outside it.' The Huq Ministry, however, survived with the vote of the European members and some additional Muslim Independents, but its position remained precarious, for when passions died down, the additional support was withdrawn. Negotiations were now started for a coalition with the Congress, but they broke down, and apparently in order to obviate any chance of whispers growing in the Muslim bloc, Huq came out with a press statement saying he would have signed the death-warrant of Islam, if he had accepted the Congress offer.

But a rift was to grow between the League leadership and this man who had moved the most important resolution of the League's chequered life of three decades and a half (for the partition of India). In the summer of 1941, the Viceroy's Executive Council was expanded with some Indian leaders in the public life of the country, and a Defence Council created for the better carrying out of the war effort. The eight Muslims who had accepted the Viceroy's invitation to join the Defence Council included the Premiers of the Punjab, Bengal, Assam and Sind. Five, including the three first-named Premiers, were members of the League, but Jinnah who had been developing an attitude of non-co-operation with the Government of India's war effort, secured the authority of the League executive to ask the League Premiers to resign from the Defence Council. Fazlul Huq resented Jinnah's interference in the governmental politics of Bengal—it was as the Bengal Premier that Huq was made a member of the Council—but fearing desertion by the League group in the Assembly, he bowed to Jinnah's decision under a protest which he manifested by his resignation from the League Working Committee. This was interpreted as half-hearted obedience by Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, the League leader in the Assembly, whose aspiration it was to be the League Premier of Bengal. So the majority of the Leaguers turned against Huq. 'A demonstration was organised in Calcutta, and a violent clash between the two Muslim groups was narrowly averted.' Peace returned for a while, but only for a while, and Huq had no doubt left in his mind that his Ministry might fall any day.

In the meantime, the Congress Party had been split into two

after the revolt of Subhas Chandra Bose against the Congress High Command, and the formation of a Left wing which Bose named the Forward Bloc. The new developments in the Congress Party and the League Party gave rise to a new 'Progressive Coalition Party' in the Assembly; Huq's remaining supporters of the League, the Praja group, the Forward Bloc, and other minor elements, being its constituent units. Even late in 1940, several months after the Partition resolution, Huq had sought the co-operation of one or both of the Congress wings with a view to broadbasing his Ministry, if only to assuage the communal tension which had burst out in serious riots, and which was the natural result of the division of the Assembly Parties and the formation of the Ministry itself along communal lines. Unrest was growing among educated Hindus who were being deprived of their opportunity of jobs under the Government by Muslims imported from other provinces. In 1940, serious resentment was expressed in the Legislative Council through an adjournment motion, and the reply given on behalf of the Government and re-echoed by a few Muslim members added to the resentment. The mover of the motion, Lalit Chandra Das, sought to censure the Government for over-riding, under a definite policy, the claims of the qualified applicants of other communities in Bengal. He said: 'This is communalism in excelsis, rather communalism run mad.' Earlier the question was raised in the Legislative Assembly also, and Premier Huq had summarily disposed of it by a queer answer that Islam was a democratic religion recognizing the brotherhood of Muslims throughout the world. The same answer was repeated in the Council, with Khan Bahadur Syed Muazzamuddin Hossain, a Muslim Leaguer, adding that the interests of Bengali Muslims would be better served by Muslims imported from outside.

The Muslim share in the services was indeed too small in proportion to the community's population in the Province. According to an established practice, most jobs in the Provinces went to local men, but in the background of the Bengal Pact (see pp. 174-6) and the new development in which all Muslims of India were to be considered as the nationals of one Muslim nation, the Muslim Ministry of Bengal thought it was doing the right thing in inviting better-qualified Muslims from other Provinces. Huq's position was unenviable. Communal riots, Hindu opposition, the hectic

campaign of the League workers, dictation from Jinnah and, with all these, the shaky position of his Ministry, unnerved him. He formed a new coalition, with the League officially staying out of it; yet he persisted in calling himself a Leaguer and retaining the presidentship of the provincial branch. On assuming the leadership of the new Government, he said in a statement to the press: 'I wish to avail myself of this opportunity as President of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, to express my grateful thanks to those members of the Muslim League who have kindly offered the benefit of their advice and support by joining the new progressive coalition party under my leadership. I am a loyal and staunch member of the Muslim League . . . The present Progressive Coalition Party is composed of members of the Muslim League, the Krishak Praja Party, the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Nationalists, the Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Labour, Scheduled Castes and other elements in the Legislature.'

Huq's claim that his new coalition included the the Muslim League was preposterous. A dozen League members had, no doubt, like himself deserted the League Party, but the League Party had declined to join him, and continued to function as a distinct Party in the Opposition. Immediately after Huq's new compromises, Jinnah came out with a statement saying that Fazlul Huq 'has been for a considerable time trying to stab the Muslim League in the back'. In the telegram which Jinnah sent Huq, his attack was more violent: 'You have betrayed the former coalition party . . . by your intrigues with parties in the opposition, behind the League's back.' In order to bury finally Huq's pretensions to membership of the League, the All-India Muslim League Council condemned him, taking it for granted that his connection with the League had been severed, and the Bengal Muslim League Conference expressed no-confidence in him and his Ministry.

Four years' labour spent in building up a coalition with the Muslim League as the dominating party, was undone. With it was also undone to a considerable extent the communal mischief which had been let loose during this period. With Huq in the Cabinet there now sat, besides four Muslims, two members of the Forward Bloc, one of the Hindu Mahasabha (Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee), and one of the Scheduled Castes. The complexion of politics had changed. The Muslim League Party, which now sat on the Opposi-

tion benches, described the new Government as a Hindu Government. Its propaganda machine outside tarred the Government with the same brush which it used against the Congress Governments in the Hindu-majority provinces.

But some of the Huq Ministry's new members were hardened politicians. They belonged to the Forward Bloc which had not long ago waged a war against the Government over the Black Hole episode. The Bloc's association with the Government required constant watchfulness by the Governor, especially because its leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, while on temporary release from jail for reasons of health, had disappeared and was some months later broadcasting from Berlin inciting his countrymen to rebellion. His brother, Sarat Chandra Bose, was also arrested for 'contacts between him and the Japanese'. A few days after his arrest, two other members of the Bloc were sworn in as Ministers. The Governor seemed helpless: an alternative Ministry was not to be found. On March 24, 1943, the League Party put it to the test whether a coalition it had gathered round itself was strong enough to defeat the Ministry. A hostile motion on the Budget was moved, but was rejected by 116 votes to 86. On March 27, a regular motion of no-confidence was tabled, but it also failed, though on that day the Government strength dwindled to 109, and the Opposition's rose to 99. However, though moving with seeming reluctance, the Governor, Sir John Herbert, forced Huq to resign and installed a League Ministry, after a month's suspension of the constitutional provisions regarding the formation of a Ministry, and taking upon himself the entire responsibility for the administration (under section 93 of the Government of India Act). Huq's exit was unceremonious. He was summoned by the Governor and asked to sign a letter of resignation which had already been typed. Huq did as instructed, came away and announced the fact to the Assembly. His fault, (he was told by the Governor) was that in August 1942 when he had been asked by the Governor to inquire into a shooting incident in Dacca, he had failed to do so. On April 24, Sir Nazimuddin formed his League Ministry, and soon gathered scattered elements to command a majority. He was as much committed to the prosecution of the war as his predecessor, but was better able to deliver the goods because his Cabinet was free from suspicious elements like the Forward Bloc. The Huq opposi-

tion challenged a division in July over the Ministry's grievous mishandling of the food situation, which had caused three million deaths in the province, but the Ministry carried the day with 134 votes to 88; the European Bloc was now voting with the League. Within the next three years, the strength of the Ministerial Party considerably dwindled, and on March 28, 1945, it was defeated by 106 votes to 97. The Ministry resigned, and the administration was taken over by the Governor under section 193 of the Government of India Act.

The Punjab was impressively different from Bengal. Right from the days of Ameer Ali and his Central Mohammedan Association and the insistence of some Muslim leaders on separate schools for Muslim children to teach Persianised Urdu in place of Sanskritised Bengali, Bengal had been building brick by brick a house of communal separatism. The Punjab did not nourish communal politics; on the contrary, its Hindus and Muslims displayed commonness of political purpose in mingling their blood during the anti-Rowlatt Bill movement. But afterwards, its response to Gandhi's movements was poor; poor also was its response to the call of Muslim communalism. In spite of the exhortations to Hindus of the Arya Samaj to go in for Hindi, Urdu continued to be the medium of instruction of both Hindus and Muslims. In social life, the two communities were nearer to each other than they were in Bengal. The Punjab peasant was economically better off than his counterpart in other provinces; he had also little opportunity of listening to the new anti-feudal ideas. Many Punjabis had participated in the Congress and the revolutionary movements or were associated with the Muslim organizations, but the mass of the people had remained unaffected. The loyalty of the Punjab peasant to his landlord, and of an average Punjabi to the British, continued undisturbed. The political atmosphere of the Province was more propitious to the pro-British feudal leaders than to the Congress and the League; the Congress had some following, but the League was nowhere in the picture. The feudal Unionist Party's victory at the 1936 polls was, therefore, not surprising. Its capture of 96 seats out of 175 gave the Province a stable Ministry. Unlike the groups in the Bengal Assembly, the Unionist Party was an all-community party. And whatever his political leanings, the Muslim Premier, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, later showed, whether by expediency or by conviction, that his

Cabinet colleagues remained loyally attached to each other. It was not only the Cabinet homogeneity which produced this result, but their past association in the Government and in society generally. The Premier and his three colleagues had served at one time or another on the Governor's Executive Council before the inauguration of provincial autonomy. Others were associated with vested interests. The Ministers were no gamblers on the political chess-board: they were champions neither of freedom nor of communalism.

But soon after the assumption of office, they were confronted with a serious communal situation. The land and the building known as the Shahidganj Mosque, had been in the possession of the Sikhs for about a century, and this had been ratified by judicial decisions. Shahidganj could, however, be used any day by designing persons as an excuse to rouse religious fervour. In the summer of 1935, a rumour got currency that the Sikhs were going to demolish the building; later it was said that they had actually pulled down a portion of it. There were serious disturbances in Lahore, and the police and military were called out. Fire was opened on several occasions, and quiet was restored. Muslims then went to the courts of law once again to try to obtain possession of the mosque. But towards the close of 1937, when the suit was in its final stage, the Ahrar Party (which belonged to the Congress school in politics and had participated in the freedom movements) started an agitation for the restoration of the mosque to the Muslims at all costs. The Ahrar Muslims were more religious than political. They decided upon a course of law-breaking, and marched to the mosque in defiance of Governor's orders. By the end of January 1938, 200 Ahrar volunteers were arrested and 158 were in jail. About the same time, the court decision was also given; it was again in favour of the Sikhs, and raised the tempo of the Ahrar movement. Volunteers were now coming from Delhi and the North-West Frontier Province to offer themselves for arrest, and the number of arrests rose to 1,000. The situation threatened to grow into a first-class political crisis when a Muslim Member of the Assembly gave notice of a Bill to apply the Muslim law with retrospective effect to all buildings which had ever been mosques. He was joined by twenty-four Muslim Members of the Unionist Party. If the Bill had become law, its immediate effect would have been dispossession of the Sikhs from

the Shahidganj Mosque, and its delivery to the Muslims. The crisis was averted by the intervention of the Governor, who, in consultation with his Ministers, and in exercise of his discretionary powers, refused leave for the introduction of the Bill.

In the then temper of the Muslim League, it would not have acquiesced in the Ministry's treatment of the Shahidganj affair, had the Punjab Premier not circumvented it by readily responding to Jinnah's invitation to join the Muslim League. In any Congress Province, a Shahidganj episode would have provided the League with rich propaganda material. In the Punjab, it was turned to the mutual advantage of the League and the Unionist Party: the former was enabled to put up an appearance that the Muslim-majority Province of the Punjab was a League-ruled province; the latter cheaply escaped the possible consequences of a League offensive. What greater victory could the Premier expect than to secure approval of his conduct in the Shahidganj affair by the League Council, and later at the 'Shahidganj session' of the League?

Sir Sikandar was no better than a foreign ally of the League, and it was the uneasy law-and-order situation of the Punjab which induced him to conclude a pact with Jinnah in the winter of 1937-38, which provided that the Muslim members of the Unionist Party would henceforth call themselves a League group, and that the Unionist Party and the Muslim League would support each other's candidates in elections to the Legislature. Muslim leaders of the Unionist Party never became torch-bearers of the League in the Province, and if the League gathered some influence outside of the Assembly chamber, it was the result of other efforts, and of the communal tension which found a conducive atmosphere after the passage of the Partition resolution and the propaganda that followed it.

By 1943, the strength of the Unionist Party had risen from 96 to 120, and with most of the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh members rallying behind it, it was proved beyond doubt that it was not the influence of the League which was keeping the union alive. In fact, it was the expediency and the spirit of unity in the Unionist Party that had given the League the opportunity to gain a foothold in the Assembly. Any suggestion, therefore, to allow the League greater influence than the Unionist Party was bound to fall flat as indeed it did when it was made by Jinnah.

On the sudden death of Sir Sikandar, the Premiership was assumed by another Muslim Minister of his Cabinet, Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana. In April 1944, Jinnah demanded that Tiwana change the name of the Unionist Party to 'Muslim League Coalition Party'. The two discussed the question 'during half a dozen interviews lasting over two hours or three hours on each occasion' (as Jinnah disclosed in a press statement), and at the last interview on April 27, Tiwana definitely indicated that the proposal was not acceptable to him. Jinnah said they had discussed many things 'verbally', and that something in precise terms should be exchanged between them in writing. Accordingly he dictated a letter to his private secretary, and handed it over to Tiwana on the understanding that a reply would be given by 9 o'clock that night. The reply never came by the stipulated time, and Jinnah telephoned Tiwana asking for it. Tiwana's reply, as recorded by Jinnah in a statement, was: 'Much to my surprise, on the telephone he (Tiwana) informed me that he had no reply to give except what he had told me verbally.' Jinnah obstinately pursued his effort to get a written opinion from Tiwana, and sent another letter at 9.30 p.m. through 'a responsible person', with an acknowledgement slip. Tiwana refused to sign the slip. Jinnah again sent the letter, and this time through the President of the Punjab Muslim League, the Nawab of Mamdot, and a League MLA, Mumtaz Daultana. Tiwana again refused. They went again, and delivered the letter without insisting on a receipt. In this letter repeatedly sent and repeatedly returned, Jinnah had said: 'We have had prolonged discussions and I shall feel obliged if you will be good enough to let me know your final decision with regard to the three points which are as follows: (1) That every member of the Muslim League Party in the Punjab Assembly should declare that he owes his allegiance to the Muslim League Party in the Assembly and not to the Unionist Party or any other political party; (2) that the present label of the coalition should be dropped, namely the "Unionist Party" ; (3) that the name of the proposed coalition party should be the Muslim League Coalition Party. Please let me know to what extent Sir Chhotu Ram and Sardar Baldev Singh* agree with all these three proposals or any of them and also whether you agree with all these three proposals or any of them. I hope that you will let me have your reply by this evening, as it is not

*Hindu and Sikh Ministers of his Cabinet

possible to wait any longer.'

Tiwana was in a state of mental agony. He was terribly conscious of the risk he would be taking if he decided to break away from the League; and on the other hand, he feared that a Cabinet crisis might overtake him if he surrendered completely to Jinnah's will; four days later the two Hindu Ministers and the one Sikh Minister of his Cabinet actually issued a press statement to the effect that the Hindu and Sikh members of the Assembly would desert him if he surrendered completely to Jinnah. In their statement, these Ministers said: 'We can consider the question of our joining a Muslim League Ministry or a Muslim League Coalition Ministry as an emergency measure only if the formation of such a ministry in the Punjab is a part of an all-India understanding and the idea of Pakistan is abandoned for the period of the war, and in order to enable all concerned to judge the merits of the scheme, its precise political and constitutional implications are fully explained and the geographical boundaries of the Punjab under the scheme of Pakistan as well as the principle to be adopted for the fixation of such boundaries are indicated as clearly as practicable and an unequivocal assurance is given in a resolution formally adopted by the League that the League will unconditionally support all forms of war effort until final victory is won.' This attitude would have amounted to a dictation to the League, which had itself been imposing its dictation on others.

Out of this whirlpool, Tiwana swam to the shore with a statement in which he exposed the absurdity of the League leader's demand and examined the whole position of the League in historic perspective. He said:

The Unionist Party was founded by the late Mian Sir Fazl-i-Hussain in December 1923. The object was to have an assembly party on a non-communal basis with a programme which would rectify the lopsided development of the Punjab in the education, economic and political spheres of life. Speaking generally, the prominent features of this lopsidedness were the glaring inequalities of development both between the agricultural and commercial classes, and between the rural and urban areas. With this broad distinction, the late Mian Saheb sought to give an agricultural and rural bias to the legislative and administrative

policy of the Government. But he perceived further that the under-dog was not confined either to agricultural classes or to rural areas. Therefore he described the distinction as one between "haves" and "have-nots". He stated the objective of his policy as being the special care of backward classes, irrespective of caste or creed and of backward areas irrespective of location. It so happened that among backward classes the Muslims predominated. This supplied the political opponents of Mian Sir Fazl-i-Hussain with a loophole to suggest that the Unionist Party was a communal party and was designed specially to promote the interests of the Muslim community. But there were many classes among Hindus as well as among Sikhs who were equally backward and to whom Mian Sir Fazl-i-Hussain's policy, founded on sound principles, worked for the benefit of Muslims as a whole and for the backward among all communities.

After having completed his term in the Government of India, Mian Sir Fazl-i-Hussain returned to the Punjab in April, 1935. He was pressed by his lifelong friends and associates, including Sir Shahabuddin, Sir Feroze Khan Noon, the late Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the late Nawab of Mamdot and the late Mian Ahmad Yar Khan Daulatana to re-enter politics and reorganise the Unionist Party and set in train the necessary arrangements for the coming elections. He agreed strictly on the condition that individual members would not allow their personal jealousies to impair their loyalty towards the Party and their province. Though pressed in some quarters to start a purely communal organisation, he was unwilling to accept their suggestion.

In the spring of 1935, Mr. Jinnah spent a considerable time at Lahore trying to persuade the late Sir Fazl-i-Hussain to run candidates on the Muslim League ticket and to enter into an alliance with non-Muslim groups as soon as the results of the general elections were known. The late Mian Saheb declined to accept the suggestion on the ground that a natural alliance fitted to the peculiar economic and social conditions of the Punjab was already in existence for the benefit of Muslims in the sphere of the Unionist Party. Sir Fazl-i-Hussain undertook to render all possible help to the Muslim League in all-India affairs, but declined to have purely communal parties in the Punjab and the Muslims of the Party decided to follow the lead of Sir Fazl-i-Hussain and

stood by the Unionist Party. Mr. Jinnah ran some candidates on the Muslim League ticket but only two succeeded and subsequently one joined the Unionist Party.

Exactly the same question is raised again today some seven years later in the form of Mr. Jinnah's demand, originated on the initiative of a few interested persons and like Sir Fazl-i-Hussain and for the same reasons I am unable to accept this demand which is contrary to the best interests of the Muslims of this province, who should refuse to be divided among themselves or to accept outside interference to their detriment.

Tiwana then went on to explain the circumstances which, according to him, persuaded Sir Sikandar and Unionist Muslims to form a League Party in the Assembly, and under which a pact was reached between Sir Sikandar and Jinnah, commonly known as the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact. He said:

The first general elections under the Government of India Act, 1935, resulted in no Muslim League Ministry being formed, which severely handicapped the Muslim League and its leader, Mr. Jinnah, in all discussions and negotiations of an all-India character. In October 1937, to meet the criticism questioning Mr. Jinnah's status as the accredited Muslim leader and to enable him to represent the whole Muslim community and settle terms with other parties in all-India matters, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan concluded the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact. The Pact was announced to the Council of the All-India Muslim League and references have been made to it repeatedly in responsible League quarters since 1937, without any repudiation from Mr. Jinnah or the League itself. The Pact provided that on his return to the Punjab, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan would convene a special meeting of his party and advise all Muslim members of the party, who were not members of the Muslim League already, to sign its creed and join it. The Ministry continued to function according to the terms of the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact. . . .

The question whether the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact should be made a part of the rules and regulations was put to vote in the Muslim League Party and carried by a majority of 52 against seven. Mr. Jinnah now proposes to repudiate the Pact and

wishes that I should convey to my non-Muslim colleagues a message that the pledged word of the Muslim community, pledged through the League Council, approved by the *Quaid-e-Azam** and conveyed through me should no longer be respected. I as a true Muslim and a follower of the Prophet of Islam will not be guilty of a breach of faith. Mr. Jinnah now wishes to interfere in provincial affairs and disturb the inner working of the Ministerial Party. This attitude has no justification and savours of dictatorship and totalitarian methods.

Tiwana, however, affirmed his faith in Pakistan, and promised his support to the *Quaid-e-Azam* 'in all questions which relate to the welfare of the Muslim community and to strengthen and enliven the organisation of the Muslim League in the Punjab'. But, like the Bengal Premier, Fazlul Huq, he was expelled from the League by the Action Committee of the All-India Muslim League. This decision was extolled by the Council of the Punjab Muslim League. The Action Committee met on May 27 and the Council on May 28. The Action Committee's decision was confirmed by the plenary session of the League in July. The League resolution used highly condemnatory language against Tiwana, and said that a member of the Muslim League, 'cannot owe allegiance to two political parties'. It was a peculiar logic. The League Party owed its existence in the Assembly to the Unionist Party, but was now giving a contrary impression.

Sind was another province where the League, starting from zero, became the ruler. The results of the elections gave 18 out of the 60 Assembly seats to the Sind United Party (the chief Muslim group), eleven to the Sind Hindu Sabha, nine to the Independent Muslims, eight to the Congress, four to the Sind Muslim Party, three to the Sind Azad Party (another Muslim group, associated with the Congress), and four to candidates who had adopted no party labels.

With no party enjoying a clear majority, the Ministry-making efforts began with an experienced legislator and landowner, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, who first attempted to bring together the different Muslim groups and, when he failed in that attempt, formed an inter-communal coalition. He joined the Muslim League and created a League group in the Assembly,

*Great leader, a title bestowed on Jinnah by his admirers.

but the dream of joining the Muslim Members into a single unit remained unrealized. The Ghulam Hussain Ministry had not completed one year of its life when some of its Hindu supporters went over to the dissident Muslims. The Ministry was left with minority support, and fell in March 1938.

The next best man, in point of following, was Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh, another landowner and a former member of the Bombay Legislative Council, but he could only count on 22 supporters. He looked around and found that the lasting support could come only from the Congress group. But Congress support, that Party had clearly stated, presupposed submission to the Congress election manifesto. A compromise was reached and some items of the Congress programme were accepted; Ministerial salaries were reduced to the Congress level, honorary magistracies were abolished, Ministers were asked to boycott social functions, and a single political prisoner confined in the Province, a Punjabi terrorist, was released.

But hardly had the Ministry enjoyed a peaceful tenure of office for a few months when it lost support of the Congress Party over its plan to enhance land revenues to meet the debt charges on the Lloyd barrage. In October 1938, Jinnah, while he was in Karachi for the annual League conference, made a bid to convert the Ministry into a League Ministry. But his negotiations with Allah Baksh broke down, and he publicly accused the Premier of 'treachery'. Sandwiched between two potential foes, the Congress and the League, Allah Baksh leaned on provincial patriotism in whose name he grievously told the waverers in the Assembly that outside political influences were interfering in the affairs of Sind, and that it was time they said in a united voice, 'Sind is for Sindis'. The slogan worked, and in January 1939, the Ministry defeated a motion of no-confidence by 32 votes to seven. Next month, the Government was further strengthened by Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah resigning his leadership of the provincial branch of the League, and joining the Cabinet. On the outbreak of the war, the Ministry unanimously requested the Governor 'to place the entire resources of the province unconditionally at the service of the Viceroy'.

Sir Ghulam's desertion of the League was no small setback to the progress of the Party in the Assembly and outside. But Muslims discovered a 'Shahidganj' in Sind, and here, unlike the Punjab,

the League used the issue to its advantage. On the river-front at Sukkur were two domed buildings known as the Manzilgah which had been for a century past in the possession of the Government. Muslims claimed that one of them had once been a mosque, and should be surrendered to Muslim occupation. There were no documents to support this claim, nor was the building shown as a mosque on any map. As days passed, the agitation for restoration grew fierce, and one of the best indicators of its success was the division between Hindu and Muslim Ministers of the Cabinet; Muslim Ministers asserting loudly that the building was a mosque, and Hindu Ministers contradicting this. Some Muslim leaders decided to enforce their claim by defiance of law, and launched a 'civil disobedience' movement on October 1. Within a few days, hundreds of volunteers courted arrest. On October 3, a mob swept aside the police guard at the Manzilgah and occupied it. The movement was suppressed, but it gave rise to Hindu-Muslim tension, which steadily increased after the murder on November 1 of a Hindu poet. At this time, the Hindu Mahasabha also appeared on the scene, as it usually did on such occasions, as the champion of the Hindus, and exhorted Hindus to consolidate their forces. The Muslim League was already doing this and the Mahasabha only made its task easier. There were Hindu-Muslim riots not only in the towns but in interior villages, and among the hundreds to lose their lives and suffer injuries, Hindus were more numerous than Muslims. Hindus severely criticised the two Hindu Ministers for sticking to their jobs in spite of the 'Muslim onslaught on Hindus' and eventually succeeded in forcing them to resign. In a coalition government, every ministerial resignation meant withdrawal of the support of a group. The Allah Baksh Ministry was weakened, and with the League Party's persistent intrigues against it, it lost its majority, and laid down its office. In March 1940, Mir Bunde Ali Khan, the Revenue Minister in the previous Government and now the leader of a new 'Nationalist Party', a strange combination of the Muslim League and the Hindu Independents, formed a new government. In November, Allah Baksh was also included in the Cabinet. In March, 1941, just after a year's life, the Bunde Ali Cabinet also fell, the cause of disruption among the Ministers being Jinnah's insistence on an increase in the number of Muslim Ministers.

Like the later Mughals, Ministries in Sind were falling in quick succession. Once again, Allah Baksh was called to the premiership, and he collected a majority with the help of the Congress Party. The Ministry seriously set out to work for communal harmony, and secured the Assembly's vote for a lakh of rupees for this purpose. The vote was fiercely opposed by the League members on the ground that it would weaken the Muslim support for the recently-launched Pakistan campaign, and that the Ministry would use the money to strengthen its own position.

Allah Baksh was not going to last long in the office, but this time his exit was to be for different reasons. Several times, the Governor (Sir Hugh Dow) had imposed his decisions on the Premier to the latter's great resentment. The resentment increased when the Governor refused to sanction the appointment of an Indian official to succeed a British official as revenue officer for the Lloyd barrage. These developments brought about or coincided with a closer liaison between the Premier and the Congress. In August 1942, the arrest of Gandhi, the members of the Congress Working Committee, and hundreds of other Congress leaders, was followed by what is known as the August rebellion. On September 26, Allah Baksh communicated to the press a letter he had written to the Viceroy renouncing his titles of 'Khan Bahadur' and O.B.E., which, he said, were 'token of British imperialism'. 'The policy of the British Government', he wrote, 'has been to continue their imperialistic hold on India and to persist in keeping her under subjection, to use political and communal differences for propaganda purposes, and to crush national forces to serve their own imperialistic aims and intentions'. On October 8, he said in another press statement: 'The responsibility for plunging the country into chaos must lie with the British Government... Instead of winning the friendship and alliance of India, the Government has launched a campaign of repression and terror.' On October 10, the Governor dismissed Allah Baksh from the Premiership.

No group realignment had now any chance of putting Allah Baksh in power and, since there were few in the Assembly besides the Congress group who would fall in line with him, the way was smoothed for the League to occupy the field. On October 22, Sir Ghulam Hussain formed a coalition Ministry, and on October 23, he announced that he had decided to re-join the League. All the four

Muslim Ministers of the Ghulam Ministry were or had become members of the League. The climax of the League's control over Muslim members was reached when the Assembly passed on March 3, 1943, a resolution recording a vote in favour of the Pakistan resolution as adopted by the League at its annual session of 1940. On May 14, four assailants fell upon Allah Baksh and shot him dead near Shikarpur.

But the fluid following of the League never gave the Chief Minister a sense of security and resulted in mounting corruption which was inherent in a policy of appeasement. Both these factors led the League Working Committee to adopt an unusual attitude: on June 7, 1944, it met at Karachi and asked the Chief Minister to lay down the reins of the government. The resolution it adopted said that the League accepted office as an experimental measure to see how far and to what extent it was able to safeguard and promote the interests of the masses. The experiment, the resolution added, had failed. 'The working committee has before it a long list of the misdeeds of some of the ministers. It is unnecessary to draw a detailed indictment, but the committee cannot help putting on record the unsatisfactory character of the foodgrain policy of this ministry. . . . The poor Muslim agriculturists are compelled to sell their wheat at Rs. 7 per maund, in spite of the control price being Rs. 9/8 per maund. What justification will the Muslim League have for its existence if it will not actively and energetically advance the cause of the Hari—the Sindi cultivator—who is the backbone of our province?'

The resolution was ignored, and the Ghulam Ministry continued in office, though not without a somersault. On February 24, 1945, fourteen members of the League Party in the Assembly went over to the Opposition, leaving only eleven in the Party. Joining with the Congress Party and some Independent Hindus and Muslims, they defeated the Ghulam Government by 25 votes to 19 (five Hindus, two Europeans and one Independent Muslim voted with the Government). But the Government survived with the inclusion of Khan Bahadur Moula Bux in the Cabinet (on February 26). He took with him some leading Oppositionists (non-Leaguers), and agreed to join the Ministry on Sir Ghulam accepting his conditions. One of them was that Congress detenus would be released early; another that three anti-corruption officers would be appointed to

work for purity of the administration. During the next ten days, loyalties again changed, the League Party grew a little stronger and its Central Parliamentary Board called upon the Premier to reconstitute his Cabinet allotting the Muslim share in the Ministry wholly to Muslim Leaguers. Moula Bux was asked to choose between signing the League pledge and going out. He preferred the latter course, ending his two weeks' career as a Minister.

In circumstances different from those of Sind and Bengal but similar in effect, the League was able to count on the Assam Ministry also as a League Ministry. Of the 34 Muslim seats in a house of 108, the League had won only nine; the other sharers were fourteen Independent Muslims, five Assam Valley Muslims, five Surma Valley Muslims, and one Praja Party member. The Congress was the biggest single Party, and was in a position to rally more support, but it was not until July that the Congress decided to accept office. In the meantime, Sir Syed Mohammed Saadullah roped in some Muslim and Hindu members to produce a majority. His coalition did not last and he was thrown out and replaced by a Congress Government in September 1938. After the declaration of war, the Congress Ministry, headed by Gopinath Bardoloi, resigned in response to the decision of the Congress High Command. Saadullah was again in the saddle. He had joined the League in 1937 during his first Ministry in response to Jinnah's appeal, and had by now swelled the membership of the League Party in the Assembly. It was obviously the resignation of the Congress Ministry which afforded the League with an opportunity to occupy the vacant seats and tell the world that another province had fallen to it.

A little while later, the North-West Frontier Province also went to the League under similar circumstances. The Congress Ministry of Dr. Khan Saheb, which had increased its following from 19 in a House of 60 to a working majority, went out over the war issue. By then, Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, had formed a League Party, and with the help of some Independent Hindu and Sikh Members, formed a Government consisting of four Muslims and one Sikh. The League had been unknown in the Frontier Province until 1937, but was now gaining a foothold, as was apparent from its victory in four by-elections.

By the autumn of 1944, the Congress movement in the Frontier had been exhausted, and Congress members of the Assembly

decided to return to legislative life. This decision constituted a threat to the Aurangzeb Ministry, and the Chief Minister put off the evil day until the next spring. On March 12, 1945, Dr. Khan Saheb moved a motion of no-confidence in the Ministry, accusing Aurangzeb Khan of dropping the autumn session only to postpone the day of his exit. The motion was carried by 24 votes to 18, and the *interregnum* of the League rule was brought to an end in the Frontier.

Such was the position of the League in the Assemblies of the Muslim-majority Provinces, and in Assam, which was included in the League's map of Pakistan. It was seemingly a sombre picture. But it was no index of the tremendous popularity the League had gained among Muslims, who were flocking to it as Hindus flocked to the Congress.

CHAPTER XXXII
CONGRESS LIBERATION MOVEMENT
ANTI-MUSLIM!

FOR OVER thirty years, Jinnah had cherished a wish to be the Gokhale of the Indian Muslims. When Jinnah had just started his political life, Gopal Krishna Gokhale was one of the most venerated Congress leaders. His sagacity, his practical wisdom, his hold on the intelligentsia, and the privilege he enjoyed of an always respectful hearing in official quarters, had attracted Jinnah to him. Until after the 1936-37 elections, the wish remained unrealized. But within two years, 1937-39, Jinnah emerged as the greatest Muslim leader in India; all those who shared Muslim spokesmanship with him until the Round Table Conferences had disappeared. He now occupied, both in the League and among Muslims, the same position as Gandhi did in the Congress and among the mass of the people, mostly Hindus. Paradoxically, he presided over a multitude of leaders who were traditionally loyal to British rule and were helping the war effort as a matter of course; and yet he called upon them to withhold themselves from the war committees, and they felt helpless to resist his authority. His word was law at the meetings of the League Council and the League Working Committee. At the plenary sessions of the League, he was heard in pin-drop silence with an amount of devotion and affection which no Muslim leader had enjoyed before him. In the negotiations that followed the declaration of war in September 1939, he presented the League as the sole representative of Indian Muslims and himself as its spokesman. In October, the All-India Congress Committee adopted a resolution offering conditional co-operation in the war effort: 'India must be declared an independent nation, and present application must be given to this status to the largest possible extent.' The League, too, made its co-operation conditional, but in a different way: 'No declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of the All-India Muslim League, nor any constitution be framed and finally adopted by His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament without such consent and approval.'

The country was now faced with two deadlocks: the one was between the political opinion of India and the British Government, the former insisting on full responsible government to be established at once, and the latter agreeing to its association with the Government during the war and promising self-government after the termination of the war. The other was between the Congress and the League; the former recognized the League as the most influential organization of Indian Muslims, and the latter insisted on its recognition by all concerned—the British Government, the Congress and other notable Hindu organizations—as the sole representative of the Indian Muslims. The Congress stand was summed up in a letter Nehru wrote to Jinnah on December 14, 1939, in which he observed: 'The Congress has always considered the League as a very important and influential organisation of the Muslims, and it is because of this that we have been eager to settle any differences that may exist between us. But. . . there are as you know a large number of Muslims in the Congress, who have been and are our closest colleagues. There are Muslim organisations like the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the All-India Shia Conference, the Majlis-e-Ahrar, the All-India Momin Conference, etc. apart from trade unions and peasant unions which have many Muslims as their members. As a general rule, many of these organisations and individuals have adopted the same political platform as we have done in the Congress. We cannot dissociate ourselves from them or disown them in any way.'

All these organizations held their annual sessions, were noticed in the press, enjoyed some following among religious or professional sections of Muslims, and contributed volunteers to the Congress movement; but their representative character had never been vindicated at the polls, nor in the group reshufflings in the Assemblies. In spite of their praiseworthy utility to the Congress in its liberation struggle, they remained in practical politics a drag on the Congress. For, on the one hand, they failed to convert any appreciable section of the Muslim community to Congress secularism, and on the other, they vitally influenced the Congress decisions relating to communal settlements.

These Muslim organizations and Nationalist Muslims were an eyesore to Jinnah, and several times he lost his temper when he was asked to negotiate with the Congress through Abul Kalam

Azad. When, on August 8, 1940, the Viceroy made an offer for the expansion of his Executive Council and invited Indian leaders to join it, and when the Congress put forward its own conditions, Azad, in his capacity as the Congress President, telegraphically asked Jinnah to agree to those conditions. Jinnah told Azad in reply: 'I refuse to discuss with you by correspondence or otherwise as you have completely forfeited the confidence of Muslim India. Cannot you realise you are made a Muslim show-boy Congress President to give it colour that it is national and deceive foreign countries? If you have self-respect, resign at once. You have done your worst against the League so far. You know you have hopelessly failed. Give it up.'

The few Muslims among Congress leaders were victims of their uprightiness and sacrificing spirit. They never lost faith in the Congress doing justice by the minorities; that faith had endured ever since they reposed confidence in a joint electorate. One of the reasons why they were unable to carry Muslims with them was the ever-growing demand of Muslim communalists for Muslim representation in the Legislatures and the opposition to this of the Hindu communalists. Jinnah was still drawing upon this factor, and in his letter to the Viceroy (June 1, 1940), he further inflated the demand. While sticking to the eventual partition of India, he said: 'That (a) the executive council of the Viceroy should be enlarged within the framework of the present constitutional law, the additional number to be settled by further discussion, but it being understood that the Muslim representation must be equal to that of the Hindus if the Congress comes in, otherwise they should have the majority of the additional members as it is obvious that the main burden and the responsibility will be borne by the Mussalmans in that case; (b) In the provinces where section 93 of the Act has to operate, non-official Advisers should be appointed, the number to be fixed after further discussion, and the majority of the non-official advisers should be the representatives of the Mussalmans; and where the provinces can be run by a combination of parties or "coalition", naturally it would be for the parties concerned to adjust matters by agreement among themselves; (c) There should be a war council. . . Here again the representation of the Muslim India must be equal to that of the Hindus if the Congress comes in, otherwise they should have the majority.'

Finally, the representatives of the Mussalmans on the proposed war council and the executive council of the Governor-General and the additional non-official Advisers of the Governors should be chosen by the Muslim League.'

This demand note was followed by the League Working Committee resolution which it adopted on June 16, in which it asked Muslims generally and the members of the League particularly not to serve on the war committees until two demands were conceded: (1) 'No constitution, interim or final, would be adopted by His Majesty's Government without the approval and consent of the Muslim India'; and (2) 'Muslim leadership should be associated as a partner in the realm of the central and provincial governments forthwith.'

In a way, the atmosphere in India, and England at the time of the Round Table Conference had returned. The Congress was concentrating on the demand for independence and relegating the communal settlement to a secondary position; the League had made this settlement a preliminary to all talks about interim and long-range arrangements. It was against this background that the Viceroy's offer of August 8, 1940, came. During the course of his announcement, the Viceroy said: 'There are two main points that have emerged. On those two points His Majesty's Government now desire me to make their position clear. The first is as to the position of minorities in relation to any future constitutional scheme. It has already been made clear that my declaration of last October does not exclude examination of any part either of the Act of 1935 or of the policy and plans on which it is based. His Majesty's Government's concern that full weight should be given to the views of minorities in any revision has also been brought out. That remains the position of His Majesty's Government. It goes without saying that they could not contemplate transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government.'

The 'August offer' did not concede the Congress demand for the transfer of the substance of power during the war itself, and was therefore rejected by the Congress. The League ignored this aspect,

and its Working Committee welcomed that part of the offer in which the Viceroy gave 'a clear assurance to the effect that no future constitution, interim or final, should be adopted by the British Government without their approval and consent'. Yet the League would not agree to co-operate with the war effort until its demand for a 'fifty-fifty' share was also conceded.

The deadlock between the Congress and the League and between both these and the Government remained unresolved. There was no immediate hurry to resolve the one between the Congress and the League. It was obvious to both that the real power would never be transferred while the war was on, and without that the Congress would not undertake to share the responsibility of the Government. Therefore it was left in abeyance, and the Congress decided to advise the Indian people not to co-operate with the war effort. Gandhi was given full powers to start a movement, and he argued thus: 'If we can get a declaration from the British Government that the Congress can carry on anti-war propaganda, and preach non-co-operation with the Government in their war effort, we will not have civil disobedience.' He said he would seek an interview with the Viceroy and tell him that 'this is the position to which we have been reduced; we do not want to embarrass you and deflect you from your purpose in regard to the war effort. We go our way, and you go yours, undeterred, the common ground being non-violence. If we carry the people with us, there will be no war effort on the part of our people. If, on the other hand, without your using any but moral pressure you find that the people help the war effort, we can have no cause for grumbling.'

All Congress movements had one aim, the liberation of the country. But Jinnah denounced the present campaign as an attempt to take advantage of the war to force the Congress demand on the British Government. He would beat the Congress and 'Hindu leadership' with every stick he could get hold of. Every condemnation of these resulted, curiously enough, in greater solidarity of Muslims, and as a practical politician, Jinnah would not let the iron get cold. His following grew by leaps and bounds as the Hindu Mahasabha continued its anti-Pakistan propaganda, and as a new movement for *Akhand Hindustan* (United India) grew vocal.

In March 1942, when the war entered a critical phase in the East,

Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the British War Cabinet, was sent on a mission to India to attempt solution to the Indian deadlock. His scheme was rejected by the Congress because it did not concede the demand for responsible government. It conceded the substance of the League demand, but the League also rejected it because it did not announce unequivocal acceptance of Pakistan.

Both Parties reverted to the positions they held on the eve of the Congress anti-war campaign. The Congress again decided on August 8, 1942, upon a mass movement, which soon broke out and developed into an open rebellion. Again the League came out with its condemnation of the movement and, on August 20, its Working Committee met at Bombay, and said in a resolution: 'It is the considered opinion of the working committee that this movement is directed not only to coerce the British Government into handing over power to a Hindu oligarchy and thus disabling them from carrying out their moral obligations and pledges given to the Mussalmans and other sections of the peoples of India from time to time, but also to force the Mussalmans to submit and surrender to Congress terms and dictation.'

Jinnah asked Muslims to keep completely aloof from the movement, and the Hindu Mahasabha leaders gave the same warning to Hindus. The followings over which these two communal organizations presided never thought of making any sacrifice for the country, and only the most ignorant would have deceived himself into believing that without these warnings communalists among Hindus and Muslims would have responded to the Congress call—a call which in this movement meant untold physical suffering and material loss. The Muslim mobilization behind Jinnah was the culmination of successive events since the latter half of the 19th century, and it would be a mistake to see in this mobilization a spirit of nationalist fervour. The August rebellion was for Congressmen the culmination of the spirit of patriotism and nationalism which came years before the birth of the Congress in 1885. The Muslim demand for Pakistan and the spirit to fight for it was the culmination of communalism, constantly fed by the fear of Hindu domination. The motive power behind the latter was religious fanaticism and not patriotism and nationalism, which take time to grow. To use Jinnah's words, the 'Hindu Congress' developed

the prerequisite of democracy in three quarters of a century. The League as an active organization was only a few years old. Its leadership consisted of title-holders. Ever since it lost caste with the Congress during the All-Parties Conference deliberations, it never interested itself in non-communal politics. Its members' loyalty to the Government was never doubted by rulers. The Muslim League Premiers bowed, for their own reasons, before Jinnah by resigning at his bidding from the War Council, but lent all help to the war effort in spite of him. District Magistrates encouraged eminent Muslims to enrol themselves as members of the League. The renunciation of titles insisted on by Jinnah was not opposed, but was not accepted in practice by titled leaders of the League.

The League had never come into open conflict with the Government, and even if a settlement satisfactory to Jinnah had been arrived at between the Congress and the League, there was not the shadow of a chance for Jinnah to succeed in persuading the League to join hands with the Congress in a freedom movement. Such a prospect, if it happened to confront Jinnah, would have undone him. Most of those who had given him a representative character in the Assemblies would have forsaken him.

Such was the state of Muslim politics at the time of the August rebellion, which Jinnah repudiated as harmful to Muslim interests. The rebellion was the outburst of nationalism which had grown in a hundred years. From that nationalism, Muslims, for whatever reason, kept aloof, and Jinnah's command meant only the continuation of a history which was as old as 'Hindu' nationalism. It was, in its own way, conducive to Hindu communalism: Hindus murmured that Muslims kept aloof from suffering but came out to share the fruits of that suffering. It will be another thing to ask whether the fruits came from suffering or would have come even without it.

CHAPTER XXXIII
LEAGUE'S STAND VINDICATED

EVER SINCE the adoption of the Pakistan Resolution by the League, every reiteration of the demand brought ever fresh condemnation in the editorial columns of newspapers, and every condemnation only made the League ever more popular among Muslims. The entire body of Congressmen, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Akhand Hindustan Conference, and the press which Jinnah called 'the Hindu press', stood up as one man against Pakistan. None of them was prepared to touch Pakistan with a pair of tongs. In this atmosphere of antagonism, a lonely favourable voice was raised from Madras, shocking Congressmen and surprising Jinnah. The voice was of C. Rajagopalachari, a top Congress leader and the Premier of Madras until the withdrawal of the Congress Ministries. He said that Hindu-Muslim differences should be settled on the basis of Pakistan. He succeeded in converting to his view many of his colleagues in the Congress Party of the Madras Assembly, and in securing its formal acceptance by the Party, on April 23, 1942. His next step was to take the resolution to the All-India Congress Committee, which rejected it by 120 votes to 15, saying that 'any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian union or federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole, and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal'.

This did not stop Rajagopalachari. After his proposal had been rejected, he told the press (May 4) that he was going to continue his campaign, because a settlement with the League was necessary to obtain the transfer of power from Britain. 'I cannot achieve anything', he said, 'by negotiating with the League myself. I must convert the Congress and the people of India to my views.' He freed himself from the Congress discipline by resigning from that body, and in order to free himself also from the obligation he owed to the Congress, he resigned from the Legislative Assembly whose membership he had won on a Congress ticket. But in face of the A-ICC stand, his following on his new approach dwindled: barely

seven persons were left to go into the wilderness with him.

The first man among Congress leaders whom Rajagopalachari converted was Gandhi himself. When the August rebellion had been taking place and most Congress leaders and Congressmen had been put in detention camps, the All-India Hindu Mahasabha appointed (August 1942) a special committee 'to negotiate with the leaders of the principal political parties to mobilise public opinion in support of the national demand'. The General Secretary of the Mahasabha, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, established contact with Jinnah through a common friend and got from him the following proposal: 'The leader of the Muslim League endorses the national demand for freedom as adumbrated in the resolution of August 30, 1942, of the working committee of the all-India Hindu Mahasabha and expresses the League's readiness to join other parties to fight for and win freedom immediately, provided a settlement is reached with the Muslim League guaranteeing certain broad principles. In the event of such a settlement being reached the Muslim League will co-operate in the formation of a provisional composite government. The broad principles to be agreed to are that after the war, (a) a commission shall be appointed to mark out contiguous areas in the north-west and north-east of India where the Muslim population is in a majority; (b) In these two areas there shall be a universal plebiscite and if the majority of the population vote in favour of a separate sovereign state such a state shall be formed; (c) In the event of separation the Muslims shall not demand any safeguard for Muslim minority in Hindustan. It will be open to two Indias to arrange on a reciprocal basis safeguards for religious minorities in the respective states; (d) There shall be no corridor between the two Muslim areas in the north-west and north-east of India but the two areas shall constitute one sovereign state; (e) A government machinery shall be provided for giving due facilities for transfer of population absolutely on a voluntary basis.'

The Hindu Mahasabha Secretary read out the formula at a conference of political leaders of different shades of opinion, held at Allahabad in December 1942. Rajagopalachari was also present, and was given a copy of the formula. In February 1943, while Gandhi was on his 21-day fast in the Aga Khan Palace, where he had been detained since August 9, 1942, Rajagopalachari met

him and obtained his approval to the formula. On April 8, 1943, he put the proposal before Jinnah in a slightly altered form. The altered formula is known as the C.R. Formula from the name of its author (C. Rajagopalachari), and is as follows:

- (1) Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for a free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for independence and will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim government for the transition period;
- (2) After the termination of the war a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants, held on the basis of adult franchise or other practical franchise, shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decides in favour of the formation of a sovereign state separate from Hindustan, such a decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of the districts on the border to choose to join either state;
- (3) It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held;
- (4) In the event of separation, a mutual agreement shall be entered into for safeguarding defence, commerce and communication and other essential purposes;
- (5) Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis;
- (6) These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the government of India.

The formula rationalized the Pakistan demand by drawing a dividing line through the heart of the Punjab and Bengal, on the one side of the line being the districts of Muslim-majority population, and on the other the districts of Hindu-majority population. It was implicit in the formula that the districts on the west of the line in the Punjab and on the east in Bengal would constitute Pakistan, and those on the other side would remain with India. While the Pakistan idea was now thirteen years' old and different authors of the plan of the new Muslim State had included in it the entire provinces as they had been carved out by British rulers for facility of administration, they never paused to think that con-

tigious Hindu districts in administrative divisions of Indian territories could not form part of a Muslim State. Jinnah himself had included in his conception of Pakistan the whole of the Punjab and the whole of Bengal, and when the C.R. Formula was put before him he evaded the issue by deprecating the Formula as a truncated form of Pakistan. But the formula eventually formed the basis of Pakistan.

Concessions were now made to Jinnah as easily as ripe fruits fall off a tree. In 1944, when the war was coming to a close and Congress detenus were being set at liberty, discussions for an interim composite government were again started. The leader of the Congress Party in the Central Legislative Assembly, Bhulabhai Desai, opened negotiations with the deputy leader of the League Party Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, and the two evolved a formula subject to its ratification by Gandhi and Jinnah. It provided that the Congress and the League would join in forming an interim government in the centre; the Government to be composed of: (a) 'Equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the central executive (the ratio of the Congress, the League and others being 40:40:20) (Persons nominated need not be members of the central legislature.); (b) Representatives of minorities (in particular Scheduled Castes and the Sikhs). (c) The Commander-in-Chief. The Government would function within the framework of the 1935 Act, but would not invoke the Viceroy's reserved powers against any decision of the Legislative Assembly.'

Gandhi put the seal of his approval on the Desai-Liaquat formula.

On June 14, 1945, after the termination of the war in Europe, the Viceroy again called to a conference political leaders of different parties, to explore the possibility of an interim government. The Congress and the League representatives were asked to submit to him their parties' nominees for the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Congress list contained two names of non-League Muslims. The League also submitted its list of five names. From these the Viceroy prepared his own list, and when Jinnah called on him, he showed him that part of it which contained the Muslim names, which included a nationalist Muslim. Jinnah objected to this name, arguing that all Muslim members of the Executive Council should be Leaguers, for the League was the sole representative organization

of the Muslims. Jinnah's claim was refuted not only by the Congress but by the ruling Unionist Party of the Punjab, whose leader, Khizr Hayat Khan, had also been invited to the conference and had asked for a Unionist Muslim to be included in the interim government. The erstwhile League Premier of the Punjab in a statement said: 'Mr. Jinnah's totalitarian claim to monopolise Muslim seats so that Muslims who do not belong to the League go unrepresented, cannot be accepted without reserve. I can safely assert that a Punjabi Muslim would be not a whit behind a Muslim drawn from any other source in maintaining the rights and claims of Indian Muslims.'

The negotiations for the interim government broke down, with the Viceroy informing Jinnah: 'I am unable to give you the guarantee you wish, i.e. that all the Muslim members of the proposed new council shall necessarily be members of the Muslim League.'

Who really represented the Muslims was a difficult question to answer. The elections of 1936-37 did not secure the right of sole representation to anyone of the political organizations of the country. Now only a fresh general election could determine the representative character of different parties and therefore the Viceroy announced, on the authority of the British Government, that he would 'take steps to bring into being an executive council which will have the support of the main Indian parties', and which these main parties were would be found from fresh provincial elections. These were held early in 1946.

To the great surprise of the Congress, nationalist Muslim parties and the Unionist Party, the League swept the polls in Muslim constituencies, securing 75 per cent of the total Muslim votes polled in the country. It won 113 out of the 119 Muslim seats in Bengal, 73 out of the 86 seats in the Punjab, and 27 out of the 34 seats in Sind. In the Hindu-majority provinces also, its victories in Muslim constituencies were equally heavy. In the U.P., it secured 54 out of the 66 seats, in Bihar 34 out of the 40, in Orissa all the four, in Madras all the 29, in the Central Province 13 out of the 14, in Bombay all the 30 seats, and in Assam 31 out of the 34. In the North-West Frontier Province, it captured 17 against the Congress gain of 21 (including two Jamiat-ul-Ulema members). While the Congress undoubtedly won 19 Muslim seats in the Frontier, its gain in the rest of India was barely five—a result which once again

proved the fact that in ten out of the eleven provinces, the Congress did not represent the Muslims.

Of the total of 492 Muslim seats, the Muslim League gains amounted to 425--the number increased as the assemblies settled down to work. For example, in Sind, the League strength rose to 35 by January 1947, giving it a clear majority in a House of 60. In that province and in Bengal, the League established its governments with an amount of vengeance; almost wholly Muslim Ministries were formed: in Sind, all the six Ministers were Muslims; in Bengal, eleven were Muslim and three Hindu. But in the Punjab, the League victory was circumvented by a combination of the Congress, the Unionist Party (reduced only to 20 by the new elections, and later only to 16 by defections) and a few other groups, and a Unionist-headed Ministry was formed.

Soon after the results of the elections became known, the entire body of the League legislators met in a convention where some of them made bellicose speeches. Ismail Chundrigar of Bombay said the British had no right to hand over the Muslims to a subject people over whom they had ruled for 500 years. Mohammed Ismail of Madras declared that the Muslims of India were in the midst of a *jihad*, a holy war. Shaukat Hayat Khan (a Minister in Khizr Hayat Khan's war-time Cabinet, later dismissed) said if Muslims were 'given a chance', they would 'show a rehearsal now when the British army is still there'. Sir Feroze Khan Noon thundered that if they were driven to fight a central government or Hindu raj, 'then the havoc which the Muslims will play will put to shame what Chengiz Khan or Halaku did'.

The convention adopted the following resolution: 'The Muslim nation will never submit to any constitution for a united India and will never participate in any single constitution-making machinery set up for the purpose.' The resolution demanded that the 'zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the North-east and the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the north-west of India . . . where the Muslims are a dominant majority, be constituted into a sovereign state; and two separate constitution-making bodies be set up by the peoples of Pakistan and Hindustan for the purpose of framing their respective constitutions. The acceptance of this demand and its implementation without delay are the *sine qua non* for the Muslim League co-operation

in the formation of an interim government at the centre.'

The events of the next few months put the League right on the road to Pakistan. And circumstances so shaped themselves that there was no going back.

CHAPTER XXXIV
LEAGUE'S ACCEPTANCE AND
REJECTION OF CABINET MISSION
PROPOSALS

THE ESTABLISHMENT of Pakistan could only follow the political independence of the Indian 'sub-continent', and inevitably, therefore, in all announcements pertaining to India made by the British authorities, the question of independence was given precedence over that of Pakistan. In July 1945, while the war with Japan continued, though showing unmistakable signs of an early termination, the British general elections resulted in the victory of the Labour Party. On July 10, Churchill vacated office and Clement Attlee took over as Prime Minister. In the several announcements made by the new Prime Minister and his Government's Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, complete freedom for India was unequivocally promised. A Parliamentary delegation, under the auspices of the Empire Parliamentary Association, was sent to India. The delegation went about the country, met people of various shades of opinion, established contacts with political leaders, and returned home in the second week of February 1946, to inform the British Government that 'India has reached full stature of political manhood'. The delegation consisted of Richards (leader), Lord Munster, Lord Chorley, Brigadier Low, Hopkin Morris, Nicholson, Major Wyatt, Sorensen, Mrs. Nichol, and Bottomley.

But an unequivocal declaration accepting Pakistan had yet to come from the British Government. On March 15, 1946, Attlee made another statement in Parliament in which, while announcing the appointment of a Cabinet Mission (consisting of the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Sir A. V. Alexander) and saying that 'my colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain freedom as speedily and fully as possible', made only the following reference about the minorities: 'We are mindful of the rights of the minorities and the minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand, we cannot allow a minority

to place a veto on the advance of a majority.'

Jinnah was disappointed. He found no trace of Pakistan in this announcement, and described it as 'most deplorable'. He was in Lahore then, and gave his reactions to a meeting of the Assembly League Party: 'Let your sword arm play a magnificent part in the achievement of Pakistan.'

The Cabinet Mission left London on March 19 by air, and landed at Karachi airport on the evening of March 23. After a week of exploratory talks with the Viceroy, his Executive Councillors and the Provincial Governors, the Mission interviewed a large number of Indian leaders, representing various political parties, and the Princes. The talks which continued, with small breaks in between, up to April 26, yielded no solution of the Congress-League tangle. The Congress representatives pointed out to the Mission that the British Government would find the solution not in any agreement between the Congress and the League, but in handing over full control of Indian affairs to the Congress or the Muslim League or any other organization. Whoever held charge of the Government would endeavour to seek the co-operation of other Parties and groups in the country. This proposal was not acceptable to the Mission and the Viceroy.

The Mission then made a move for a tripartite conference with the representatives of the Congress and the League. The Congress Working Committee nominated Abul Kalam Azad (its President), Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Vallabhbhai Patel; and the League, M. A. Jinnah (its President), Liaquat Ali Khan, Mohammed Ismail Khan and Abdul Rab Nishtar. The basis of discussion at the tripartite conference was the following note enclosed with the Secretary of State's invitation: 'The future constitutional structure of British India to be as follows: A Union Government dealing with the following subjects: Foreign Affairs Defence and Communications. There will be two groups of provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim provinces, dealing with all other subjects which the provinces in the respective groups desire to be dealt with in common. The provincial Governments will deal with all other subjects and will have all the residuary sovereign rights.'

In their replies to the invitation, both the Congress President

Azad and the League President Jinnah repudiated this basis for their own reasons: The Congress considered formation of groups of provinces on a religious basis wrong, and the League missed in it the independent Muslim homeland.

Yet the conference was held and lasted for several days, the representatives of the two parties putting forward their views. The memorandum presented by the League contained the following proposals:

(1) The six Muslim provinces (the Punjab, the N-W.F.P., Baluchistan, Sind, Bengal and Assam) to be grouped together as one group. It would deal with all matters except Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications necessary for Defence, which may be dealt with by the constitution-making bodies of the Pakistan Group and the Hindu provinces.

(2) A separate constitution-making body to be set up for the six Muslim provinces.

(3) There should be parity of representation between the two groups of provinces in the Union Executive and the Legislature, if any.

(4) It will be open to any province of the Group to decide to opt out of its Group, provided the wishes of the people of that province are ascertained by a referendum.

(5) The two constitution-making bodies would decide whether to have a Legislature or not; they would also decide the method of providing the union with finance, but in no event should it be by means of taxation.

(6) No major point affecting the communal issue to be decided except by the majority of the members of the two.

(7) No decision, legislative or executive or administrative, shall be taken by the Union in regard to any matter of controversial nature except by majority of three-fourths.

(8) The Group and provincial constitutions would provide for safeguards concerning religion, culture and other matters affecting different communities.

(9) A province would have liberty to secede from the Union at any time after an initial period of ten years.

The proposals made on behalf of the Congress were:

(1) The Constituent Assembly to be formed of representatives elected by each provincial assembly by proportional representation.

(2) The Constituent Assembly to draw up a constitution for the federal union. This would consist of an All-India Federal Government and Legislature dealing with Foreign Affairs, Defence, Communications, Fundamental Rights, Currency, Customs and Planning as well as such other subjects as on closer scrutiny, may be found to be intimately allied to them. The Union would have necessary power to obtain for itself the finances it required for these subjects.

(3) All the remaining powers to vest in provinces.

(4) Groups of the provinces may be formed if any provinces want them.

(5) No major point affecting the communal issue to be decided except by the majority consent of the representatives of the community affected.

(6) Provision to be made for the revision of the constitution.

(7) Unsettled disputes to be referred to arbitration.

Surprisingly enough, from the League proposals emerged a shape of Pakistan which was very much different from the one conceived in the Lahore resolution. That resolution envisaged a completely independent Muslim State; while the present proposals envisaged a union government and a union legislature. The difference between the proposals of the League and the Congress was one of degree: while the former would surrender to the union only three subjects, the latter would give it all those subjects which a federal government usually enjoys in a federal set-up. This major difference and other minor ones in the two proposals were capable of being interpreted as a happy departure from the League's six-year-old obstinate stand. But antagonistic mental attitudes had crystallized into a definite vision of the future, which was that the League leadership must be given, even if it did not want it, its Pakistan—a Pakistan which would not contain the whole of the Punjab and the whole of Bengal but only the Muslim parts. Therefore, there were to be no more peace parleys, even if gestures came from the League quarters. The League had now to choose between the two alternatives: to have its 'truncated' Pakistan, or to accept the Congress

concept of the future constitution of India. Events were moving so fast that going back upon Pakistan was virtually made impossible.

The Mission studied the Congress and the League proposals and came out with its own on May 16. According to its calculation, Muslims formed 62.07 per cent of the population in the north-western area of Pakistan, and 51.69 per cent of the population in the north-eastern; in the remainder of British India, they numbered some 20 million dispersed amongst a total population of 188 million. 'These figures show', the Mission argued, 'that setting up of a separate sovereign State of Pakistan on the lines claimed by the Muslim League would not solve the communal minority problem; nor can we see any justification for including within a sovereign Pakistan those districts of the Punjab and of Bengal and Assam in which the population is predominantly non-Muslim. Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan, can equally in our view be used in favour of the exclusion of the non-Muslim areas from Pakistan. This point would particularly affect the position of Sikhs . . . Any division of the Punjab would of necessity divide the Sikhs leaving substantial bodies of Sikhs on both sides of the boundary.'

After touching on economic, geographical and military considerations, the Mission said: 'We are therefore unable to advise the British Government that the power which at present resides in British hands should be handed over to two entirely separate sovereign states.'

The Mission examined the question from the Muslim point of view thus: 'This decision does not however blind us to the very real Muslim apprehension that their culture and political and social life might become submerged in a purely unitary India, in which the Hindus with their greatly superior numbers must be a dominant element. To meet this the Congress have put forward a scheme under which provinces would have full autonomy subject only to a minimum of Central subjects, such as Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications.' By implication, the Mission agreed with this scheme. It recommended that the constitution should take the following basic form:

- (1) There should be Union of India, embracing both British India and the States, which should deal with the following sub-

jects: Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications; and should have the powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects.

(2) The Union should have an Executive and a Legislature constituted from British Indian and State representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the Legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

(3) All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces.

(4) That States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.

(5) Provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures, and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.

(6) The constitutions of the union and of the groups should contain a provision whereby any province could, by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly, call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of ten years and at ten-yearly intervals thereafter.

The Mission recommended that the plan for the formation of the Constituent Assembly would be:

(a) to allot to each province a total number of seats proportional to its population, roughly in the ratio of one to a million, as the nearest substitute for representation by adult suffrage;

(b) to divide this provincial allocation of seats between the main communities in each province in proportion to their population;

(c) to provide that the representatives allotted to each community in a province shall be elected by the members of that community in its legislative assembly.

The Mission divided the Indian provinces into three sections into which the constituent assembly would be split up, and the sections would proceed to settle the provincial constitutions for the provinces and would also decide whether any group constitution

would be set up for those provinces and, if so, with what provincial subjects the group should deal. Provinces would have the power to opt out of the groups, on the vote of the first legislature elected under the new constitution.

The provinces were classified into three sections as follows. Against each province was given the representation allowed to it in the Constituent Assembly:

	SECTION A		
	<i>General</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Total</i>
Madras	45	4	49
Bombay	19	2	21
United Provinces	47	8	55
Bihar	31	5	36
Central Province	16	1	17
Orissa	9	..	9
TOTAL	167	20	187

	SECTION B			
	<i>General</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Sikhs</i>	<i>Total</i>
N-W.F. Province	..	3	..	3
Punjab	8	16	4	28
Sind	1	3	..	4
TOTAL	22	22	4	35

	SECTION C		
	<i>General</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Total</i>
Bengal	27	33	60
Assam	7	3	10
TOTAL	34	36	70

To section A was to be added one representative each from Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara and Coorg. The Princely States were to be given not 'exceeding' 93 seats.

After the provincial and group constitutions had been formed,

the sections and the Princely States would reassemble for the purpose of settling the Union Constitution.

The Mission also announced that an interim government having the support of the major political parties would immediately be set up.

A spate of correspondence followed the announcement of the Mission proposals, between the Mission on the one side, and the Congress, the Muslim League, the Princes, and Sikh leaders on the other, each seeking elucidation of some points or expressing resentment over some provisions.

On June 16, while the correspondence was going on, the Viceroy proceeded to implement the Interim Government part of the proposals, and after consulting the parties concerned about their nominees, announced the list of the team he had chosen for his Executive Council. From the Congress nominees, two names—one Muslim (Dr. Zakir Husain) and one Hindu (Sarat Chandra Bose, brother of Subhas Chandra Bose)—were dropped and replaced by Sir H. P. Engineer, and H. K. Mahtab. The Congress reconciled itself to the exclusion of Sarat Bose, but would not agree to the dropping out of its Muslim nominee. The Congress claim to represent Muslims even to that extent was questioned by the League. The general elections of 1946 had given the Congress about five per cent of the Muslim seats, and with the gains of the Nationalist Muslims (sixteen) added to it, the percentage rose to about eight. It was not for this that the Congress insisted on a Muslim nominee, but for the vindication of the secular character of the organization. The League similarly insisted that if it made this concession to the Congress, it would compromise its position as the sole representative of the Muslims. The negotiations for an interim government again broke down.

The correspondence between the parties and the Mission, consideration by the parties of the Mission's proposals, and the Viceroy's negotiations for an interim government had overlapped, and while the negotiations were going on, both the Congress and the League representatives had expressed their acceptance of the proposals.

But the failure of the two to come to an agreement on the interim government, sealed for all times all chances of India remaining united under one central government. The course of events that led to this result was this:

On June 26, ten days after the failure of the Viceroy's effort, the Congress Working Committee, adopted the following resolution: 'The kind of independence Congress has aimed at is the establishment of a united, democratic Indian federation, with a central authority, which would command respect from the nations of the world, maximum provincial autonomy, and equal rights for all men and women in the country. The limitation of the central authority as contained in the proposals, as well as the system of grouping of provinces, weakens the whole structure and is unfair to some provinces such as the N-W.F. Province and Assam and to some of the minorities, notably the Sikhs. The Committee disapprove of this. They feel, however, that taking the proposals as a whole, there is sufficient scope for enlarging and strengthening the central authority and for fully ensuring the right of a province to act according to its choice in regard to grouping, and to give protection to such minorities as might otherwise be placed at a disadvantage.'

The Committee, therefore, decided that the Congress should join the proposed constituent assembly, 'with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India', and demanded that a representative and responsible provisional national government should be formed at the earliest possible date. This resolution was ratified by the All-India Congress Committee on July 7.

In the meantime, opinions in League circles stoutly veered round the old demand for an independent sovereign state of Pakistan. It was too late now to reconvert Muslims even to a semblance of united India, and the leadership was helpless. All those Muslims who constituted the All-India Muslim League Council had come together in the name of *jihad* (holy war), and had gathered together the scattered Muslim masses for the same purpose. The *jihad* was to be an alternative to the rejection of the Pakistan demand. It was this Council which the leadership (that had descended from the Lahore resolution to a federal centre) had to face. Jinnah faced it cleverly and made no mention of a united federation, when it met on July 27 to consider the developments since the arrival of the Cabinet Mission. And the Council said, in its decision, that while the League had accepted both the long-term and the short-term (formation of interim government) proposals, the Congress had accepted only the former and rejected the latter. It accused the Congress of putting an unwarranted interpretation on the proposals

in so far as they related to the establishment of a constitution-making body.

The Council's resolution said: 'The Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy, collectively and individually, have stated several times that the basic principles were laid down to enable the major parties to join the constituent assembly and that the scheme cannot succeed unless it is worked in a spirit of co-operation. The attitude of the Congress clearly shows that these conditions precedent for the successful working of the constitution-making body do not exist. This fact, taken together with the policy of the British Government of sacrificing the interests of the Muslim nation and some other weaker sections of the people of India particularly the scheduled castes, to appease the Congress and the way in which they have been going back on their oral and written solemn pledges and assurances given from time to time to the Muslims, leave no doubt that in these circumstances the participation of the Muslims in the proposed constitution-making machinery is fraught with danger and the Council therefore hereby withdraws its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals which was communicated to the Secretary of State for India by the President of the Muslim League on the 6th of June, 1945.'

One will search in vain in this resolution for any sound reason for going back upon the acceptance of the proposals.

And as if to undo the effect of the acceptance, the League Council decided to resort to 'Direct Action', in order 'to achieve Pakistan and assert their (Muslims) just right and to vindicate their honour to get rid of the present slavery under the British and contemplated caste Hindu domination'. An extraordinary decision of this session of the League Council was to ask Muslims 'to renounce forthwith the titles conferred upon them by the alien Government'.

Almost all non-official Muslim title-holders were members of the League; official title-holders were its ardent supporters. No title-holder had a place in the Congress, but in the League, title-holders really constituted the district and provincial leadership. They enjoyed again, unlike Congressmen, happy relations with British district officers and other superior officers. The basis of this relationship was unstinted loyalty to British rule. Many a district officer asked his distinguished Muslim visitors whether they were members of the League. If they were not, he would give

broad hints suggesting that such membership was not incompatible with the loyalty which a title-holder owed to the British authorities. The League campaign consisted of attacks on Hindus and on the Congress, and avoided giving any offence to the British. The latest command of the League Council (renunciation of titles) was a striking departure from the old policy, and a test of the loyalty of the title-holders to the League. There were not many to obey the command. The obedience would have itself constituted a big demonstration of the 'Direct Action', but since it produced poor results, a bigger show was called for. Bengal, where the League ruled and enjoyed greater influence over Muslim masses than elsewhere, was chosen for the biggest demonstration. The League Working Committee fixed August 16, for the 'Direct Action', and the League Government of Bengal declared that day a public holiday. Preparations similar to those usually made for a *jihad* were started. The League leaders of Calcutta moved about in Muslim localities preaching violence and exciting Muslims to 'teach Hindus a lesson'. Jinnah did not anticipate that the 'Direct Action' would be interpreted in the manner the Bengal Leaguers did, and when he heard of the preparations he came out with a statement explaining the Council's resolution and saying that meetings should be held on the appointed day to mobilise public opinion in favour of Pakistan; he said 'Direct Action' did not mean direct action in any other form.

But preparations in Calcutta were already complete, and on the appointed day there broke out an orgy of violence. Many Calcutta streets became scenes of mass murders: there were reprisals and counter-reprisals. Events of a similar nature occurred in Sylhet (Assam). Again, there were Muslim reprisals in the Noakhali and Tipperah districts of Bengal where Muslims were predominant. These two districts gave a much more terrible account of their violence than Calcutta did. First, there was a spate of murders, arson and loot. Then followed abduction of Hindu women and their forced marriage with Muslims. Rape and conversion became the rule of the day.

Violence at such a scale perturbed Gandhi, and he proceeded to Noakhali to take up residence there for some time to contribute his mite in restoring peace. His mission succeeded. He was warmly received by well-meaning Muslims in the ravaged district of Noakhali. They implored him to be their guest and promised him all

help. The Government of Bengal arranged for his protection, though he had said he did not want any police help. To the lilting music of Tagore's song, *Ekla Chalo Re* ('Move Alone'), he moved all by himself in the areas thickly populated by Muslims, saying that no harm would come to him. As if by magic, he changed the hearts of many Muslims. Many abducted women were voluntarily returned to Hindus. A peace which was difficult to gain by counter-violence came back by love.

But while Gandhi's presence calmed the waters in Noakhali, turbulence raged in Bihar; and there the aggressors were Hindus. At one time, the ferocious attacks by Hindus on Muslims became uncontrollable, and had to be put down by bombardment from the air.

History has not known many follies of the kind of 'Direct Action'. After thousands of innocent men, women and children had been mercilessly wiped out or humiliated, the League joined the Central Government, as we shall see in the next chapter, with the Congress Muslim nominee taking his seat on the Executive Council with the League's Muslim nominees.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE FINALE

ON AUGUST 25, 1946, the Viceroy repeated his offer to Indianise his Executive Council. This time he was determined to proceed with the reconstruction of the Council with whatever parties that agreed to come in. He said the Council would consist of six Congress nominees (including a Scheduled Caste representative), five League nominees, and three representatives of the minorities (one of them being a Sikh), and would be treated 'with the same close consultation and consideration as a Dominion Government'. The Congress list again included Muslims, and the League as usual claimed for itself the entire Muslim representation. The League was left out, and the Congress nominees were included in the new Council. Jawaharlal Nehru was the leader of the Congress group.

After taking over on September 2, Nehru entered into correspondence with Jinnah in order to persuade him to permit the League's entry into the Government. In one of his letters (dated October 6), Nehru expressed his willingness 'as a result of elections, to accept the Muslim League as the authoritative representative organization of an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of India and that as such and in accordance with democratic principles they have today the unquestionable right to represent the Muslims of India, provided that for identical reasons the League recognises the Congress as the authoritative organization representing all non-Muslims and, such Muslims as have thrown in their lot with the Congress'. Jinnah expressed satisfaction on the admission of his claim, but demanded that the League alone should represent the entire Muslim community on the Government. This time he also questioned the right of the Congress to represent the Scheduled Castes of the Hindus. For a while, there was stalemate again. But on October 15, Jinnah climbed down, and as if to maintain the prestige of his intransigence, included in the five nominees of the League a Hindu Scheduled Caste representative. Most Scheduled Caste seats had been won by the Congress in the elections of 1946, but whether the Congress represented these castes or not, the League, being a wholly Muslim organization, had no right to

profess to be their spokesman. Obviously, therefore, the Scheduled Caste nominee in the League list was being used as a pawn. The Congress was free to have all Hindus for its nominees, and if it insisted on a Muslim, it was in vindication of its convictions; it incidentally raised the number of Muslims in the Council. After the establishment of Pakistan, there would be many Muslims left in the so-called Hindu Provinces, and the Congress rightly believed that after the foreign rule had ended it would have an uninterrupted chance of growing into a really secular organization. It is difficult to judge from the same standard the League's inclusion in its list of a Scheduled Caste nominee, for all its life it had catered exclusively to the political needs of Muslims through the medium of religious zeal. It made no profession of converting itself at a later date into a secular organization; and then a secular organization would be open only to Scheduled Castes and not to the 'caste' Hindus. And if a Scheduled Caste nominee was an answer to the Congress insistence on a Muslim, it could as well have been given when the Viceroy first announced his offer in 1945.

The setting up of an interim government of the Dominion Status variety, with the Viceroy as the constitutional head, was one step—a very important one—in the direction of transfer of power to Indians. The next, in terms of the Cabinet Mission plan, was the setting up of a constitution-making body, and accordingly, December 9 was fixed for the opening meeting of the Constituent Assembly. But since the League had rejected the plan, it would not participate in the common Constituent Assembly, and demanded another for the Muslim provinces. Another effort was made to persuade the League, and four Indian leaders, including Nehru and Jinnah, were invited to London for negotiations through the good offices of the British Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for India. There was no optimistic result, but the statement the British Government issued after the abrupt end of the negotiations, recognized the validity of the League's objection to participate in a common Constituent Assembly. The statement said: 'There has never been any prospect of success for the constituent assembly except upon the basis of the agreed procedure. Should a constitution come to be framed by the constituent assembly in which a large section of the Indian population has not been represented, His Majesty's Government could not of course, contemplate as the Congress have stated

they would not contemplate forcing such a constitution upon any unwilling part of the country.'

Upon this, the Working Committee of the League asked the British Government to declare 'that the constitutional plan formulated by the Cabinet Mission had failed', and that 'the elections to and the summoning of the assembly are *ab initio* invalid, void and illegal and it should forthwith be dissolved'. There was no dissolution, but its boycott by the Muslims reduced it to the constituent assembly of 'Hindu India', and made it clear that the constitution for 'Muslim India' would be framed by another constituent assembly.

On February 20, 1947, the British Prime Minister made the following announcement in the Parliament:

His Majesty's Government desire to hand over the responsibility to authorities established by a constitution approved by all parties in India in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's plan, but unfortunately there is at present no clear prospect that such a constitution and such authorities will emerge. The present state of uncertainty is fraught with danger and cannot be indefinitely prolonged. His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that it is their definite intention to take necessary steps to effect the transference of power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. . . .

His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India, or in some areas to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people. Although the final transfer of authority may not take place until June 1948, preparatory measures must be put in hand in advance.

The Prime Minister also announced the appointment of a new Viceroy, Admiral Viscount Mountbatten, in place of Lord Wavell, to undertake the task of transferring power to Indians.

Pakistan was now going to be a reality, and the Bengal carnage on the one hand and the Bihar killings on the other were striking terror in the hearts of millions of people, both Hindus and Muslims.

in the Punjab, Sind and the N-W.F.P. and also in Bengal, especially in those parts which would constitute the new State. Men, women and children of the Hindu community were fleeing, with whatever belongings they could carry, to those parts which would remain as India after the partition. Many Muslim families of East Punjab and West Bengal were similarly leaving their hearths and homes to settle in what was advertised as *Darul-Harb*. In distant U.P., Bihar and the Central Province, also, well-to-do Muslims were winding up their businesses and leaving for the Pakistan territories. Many of them had been in the forefront of the struggle for Pakistan, and were looking for safety and prosperity in the new country.

But at this fateful time, when some kind of referendum would decide what parts would form Pakistan, the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, were under non-League Governments. The latter presented a more difficult problem, for it had rejected the League and its claim for Pakistan by a majority vote only a year before in the general elections to the provincial Assembly. In that province, Muslims of the League school started a campaign of abuse and vilification against the Congress, the Congress Government and the Khudai Khidmatgars, the volunteers of the Red Shirt movement of Pathan Congressmen. League Muslims freely indulged in murders, arson and loot. The Government was helpless, because even Government servants and the police were divided between the two camps, the Congress and the League. Order had given place to anarchy.

In the Punjab, where the League had scored a thunderous victory in the Muslim constituencies, Muslims in the services, including the police, were more loyal to the League than to the Government. Government measures for the maintenance of law and order were either ignored or carried out half-heartedly. Many Government servants not only connived at but actually helped in the creation of lawless conditions. The administration was collapsing and, finding itself unable to exercise any effective control, the Unionist-Congress coalition Ministry tendered its resignation. The League Party tried to form a ministry by seeking an alliance with some Hindus and Sikhs, but these two communities had, as a whole, lost confidence in the League, and every Hindu and Sikh member of the Assembly rejected the League's offer of ministership. There was a pause in the lawlessness for a while, but after the Ministry-

making efforts were abandoned, there were again riots, murders, loot and arson. Early in March 1947, the Congress was so overwhelmed by the happenings in the Punjab, that its Working Committee asked for early division of the Province into Muslim Punjab and non-Muslim Punjab. The League repudiated this resolution saying that it would have the whole of the Punjab. And as if this was an invitation to more trouble, the fire spread to those parts of the province which had so far remained immune.

The British Government, too, finding itself in a helpless condition, said that it could not hold India under its control even up to June 1948, and expressed its desire to transfer power at an earlier date on the basis of partition of India. On June 3, 1947, the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, announced the final Statement of the British Government which contained the plan of the Partition of India and the Transfer of Power to the Dominions of India and Pakistan.

The Statement said: 'It is clear that any constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly cannot apply to those parts of the country which are unwilling to accept it.' It laid down the following procedure as 'the best practical method of ascertaining the wishes of the people of such areas on the issue whether their constitution is to be framed: (a) in the existing constituent assembly; or (b) in a new and separate constituent assembly consisting of the representatives of those areas which decide not to participate in the existing Constituent Assembly.'

The Statement laid down this procedure:

The provincial legislative assemblies of Bengal and the Punjab (excluding the European members) will, therefore, each be asked to meet in two parts, one representing the Muslim-majority districts and the other the rest of the province. For the purpose of determining the population of districts, the 1941 census figures will be taken as authoritative.

The members of the two parts of each legislative assembly sitting separately will be empowered to vote whether or not the province should be partitioned. If a simple majority of either part decides in favour of partition, division will take place and arrangements will be made accordingly.

Before the question as to the partition is decided, it is desirable that the representatives of each part should know in advance

which constituent assembly the province as a whole would join in the event of the two parts subsequently deciding to remain united. Therefore, if any member of either legislative assembly so demands, there shall be held a meeting of all members of the legislative assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision will be taken on the issue as to which constituent assembly the province as a whole would join if it were decided by the two parts to remain united.

In the event of partition being decided upon, each part of the legislative assembly will, on behalf of the areas they represent, decide which constituent assembly to join.

The Legislative Assembly of Sind (excluding Europeans) would take its own decision, but since Sind had no Hindu-majority district, it would not meet in parts.

In regard to the North-West Frontier Province, the Statement provided for a referendum to be made to the electors of the Legislative Assembly to choose between the existing Constituent Assembly and a new, separate constituent assembly. A similar referendum was provided for the Sylhet district, which was the only Muslim majority district in the Hindu-majority province of Assam, having a common border with the East Pakistan.

According to the 1941 Census, the Muslim majority districts in the Punjab were: in the Lahore Division, Gujranwala, Gurdaspur, Lahore, Sheikhpura, Sialkot; in the Rawalpindi Division, Attock, Gujrat, Jhelum, Mianwali, Rawalpindi, Shahpur; in the Multan Division, Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Multan, Muzaffargarh. The Muslim-majority districts in Bengal were: in the Chittagong Division, Chittagong, Noakhali, Tippera; in the Dacca Division, Bakerganj, Dacca, Faridpur, Mymensingh; in the Presidency Division, Jessore, Murshidabad, Nadia; in the Rajshahi Division, Bogra, Dinajpur, Malda, Pabna, Rajshahi, Rangpur.

The Mountbatten Plan, as the British Government's Statement was called, was in fact the C.R. Formula given practical shape. Before publicly announcing it, Mountbatten gave copies of the Plan to Indian leaders to enable them to study it and give their reactions by the midnight of June 2. Jinnah said he could not take any decision himself, nor could his Working Committee; both he and the Committee would have to go before their masters,

the people, prior to a final decision. 'All he would undertake was that he would use his best endeavours to persuade them in a constitutional manner to accept and that his Working Committee would support him.'

Mountbatten then reminded Jinnah that 'the Congress Party were terribly suspicious of this particular tactic, which he always used, whereby he waited until the Congress Party had made a firm decision about some plan, and then left himself the right to make whatever decision suited the Muslim League several days later'. Mountbatten warned him that Nehru, Kripalani and Patel had made an absolute point that they would reject the Plan unless the Muslim League accepted it simultaneously with themselves; and furthermore accepted it as a final settlement. The Congress leaders were very cautious this time because only a few weeks before Jinnah had demanded an eight-hundred-mile 'corridor' to link West Pakistan with East Pakistan, and the League organ, *Dawn*, had started a campaign for it. Jinnah's attitude that he could not call a meeting of the League Council for several days was regarded by Congress leaders as confirmation of their suspicion. Mountbatten, therefore, firmly told Jinnah: 'If that is your attitude, then the leaders of the Congress Party and Sikhs will refuse final acceptance at the meeting in the morning; chaos will follow, and you will lose your Pakistan, probably for good.' His only reaction was, as he shrugged his shoulders, 'What must be, must be'. Mountbatten then said, 'Mr. Jinnah! I do not intend to let you wreck all the work that has gone into this settlement. Since you will not accept for the Muslim League, I will speak for them myself. I will take the risk of saying that I am satisfied with the assurance you have given me, and if your Council fails to ratify the agreement, you can place the blame on me. I have only one condition, and that is that when I say at the meeting in the morning, "Mr. Jinnah has given me assurances which I have accepted and which satisfy me", you will in no circumstances contradict that, and that when I look towards you, you will nod your head in acquiescence.'

In the morning, Jinnah did as he was told. The Congress leaders also signified their acceptance of the Plan, although Gandhi refused to align himself with it. And within a few days of the announcement of the Plan, the Working Committees of the Congress and the League formally accepted it.

The Viceroy then proceeded with the maximum speed to give effect to the provisions of the Plan. The Legislative Assemblies of the Punjab and Bengal were summoned, and a referendum was ordered in the North-West Frontier Province and in the Sylhet district of Assam. Each of the two Assemblies met in two parts; in one part sat both Hindu, Muslim and other Indian representatives of the Muslim-majority districts (that is the West Punjab and the East Bengal), and they decided in favour of division, by a majority vote, all Muslims voting for the division. Members sitting in the other part voted for a united India and one Constituent Assembly. The Sind Assembly also voted by a heavy majority in favour of Pakistan.

In the North-West Frontier Province, where Muslim voters had rejected Pakistan at the polls of 1946, the referendum was held in conditions of anarchy and violence. Muslim Leaguers were masters of the situation; it was a victory of violence over non-violence. Muslim Congressmen and Khudai Khidmatgars, who had taken to non-violence under Gandhi's leadership, were in a helpless state. Their leader, Abdul Ghaffar Khan felt that in such an atmosphere a fair referendum was impossible, and he decided to boycott it. In a press statement on June 25, he said:

During the last few months an organised campaign of terrorism was launched by Muslim Leaguers which resulted in the murder of hundreds of innocent men, women and children. Property worth crores of rupces was destroyed. The whole atmosphere is surcharged with communal frenzy and poison. Even now leading members of the Muslim League are carrying on a raging and tearing campaign to frighten the people from voting against them in the referendum. Evidently they want to prevent tens of thousands of refugees who have gone out of the province from voting in the referendum. Religious passions of the unsophisticated Pathans are also being aroused by describing the contest on the present issue as a contest between 'Kafir' and Islam.

With over fifty per cent of the population voting for the League, the referendum's verdict was in favour of the inclusion of the Frontier Province in Pakistan. Sylhet gave a similar verdict, and under similar circumstances.

In July, the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act, which provided that on August 15, 1947, the two independent Dominions, India and Pakistan, would come into existence. The Act vested in the Legislatures of the two Dominions full powers to make laws both for internal and external operation, and laid down that no law enacted by these Legislatures would be void or inoperative on the ground that it was repugnant to British law. This divested the British Parliament of its power of control over India, and made India and Pakistan masters of their destiny.

In the 'thirties, when the idea of a separate Muslim homeland was born, an exchange of the Muslim and the non-Muslim populations between India and Pakistan was suggested but was laughed off as the main proposition was laughed off. Jinnah did not believe an exchange of populations would be necessary. Congress leaders advised Hindus in the Pakistan territories to stay on and told them that no harm would come to them. But both failed to take the psychological factor into consideration. Muslims had been gathered together behind the League by a campaign of hatred of Hindus, and Muslims seemed determined to wipe out Hindus from the 'holy' land of Pakistan. There was an equally terrible reaction among the Hindus in the territories remaining with India. An exchange of population was therefore inevitable; and as August 15 neared, more millions of men, women and children were moving from or into the new State. While on the march or preparing to leave, many lost their lives; many were deprived of their daughters and wives by hooligans. Almost the entire Hindu and Sikh population left western Pakistan, leaving it a wholly Muslim state. In the eastern part, disturbances remained for the most part confined to Calcutta, and mass evacuation was not a frequent sight in Bengal. As many as ten million Hindus in East Bengal betrayed no fear of insecurity and stuck to their ancestral homes. So did most Muslims in West Bengal. The happenings in the border Provinces were bound to have repercussions on other parts of India, and there were repeated Hindu-Muslim riots, especially in U.P. where communalism had always flourished.

Such were the terrible birth-pangs of the new State. It was inaugurated on August 14, 1947, with Jinnah as its Governor-General, and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan as his Prime Minister.

Thus the curtain fell over a drama which had occupied the Indian stage for three-quarters of a century. For good, Jinnah bade good-bye to India, wishing that 'the two Indias are parting as friends and will continue to be friends for ever'. It was a vain hope.

APPENDIX A

IN 1888, the Central National Mohammedan Association had the following branches in different provinces: Karachi, Shahzadpur, Shikarpore, Larkana, Sukkur, Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi, Hardoi, Hissar, Gujerat, Amballa, Ludhiana, Bareilly, Budaun, Mohan, Allahabad, Ajmer, Lucknow, Ghazipur, Surat, Dindigal, Bangalore, Tumkooor, Vizagapatam, Vizianagram, Sasseram, Arrah, Dinapore, Gaya, Patna, Chapra, Sewan, Muzaffarpur, Motihari, Bhagalpur, Hooghly, Jahanabad, Pundooah, Rungpore, Midnapore, Bogra, Rajashahi, Noakhali, Mymensingh, Comillah, Shillong, Chittagong, Dumka, Brahmunbariah, and Cuttack.

APPENDIX B

Address presented to Lord Minto, Viceroy of India, on October 1, 1906 at Simla, by a 35-man Muslim deputation headed by Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan, G.C.I.E.

May it please Your Excellency, Availing ourselves of the permission accorded to us, we, the undersigned nobles, jagirdars, taluqdars, lawyers, zemindars, merchants and others representing a large body of the Mahommedan subjects of His Majesty the King Emperor in different parts of India, beg most respectfully to approach Your Excellency with the following address for your favourable consideration.

We fully realise and appreciate the incalculable benefits conferred by British rule on the teeming millions belonging to diverse races and professing diverse religions who form the population of the vast continent of India, and have every reason to be grateful for the peace, security, personal freedom and liberty of worship that we now enjoy. Further, from the wise and enlightened character of the Government, we have every reasonable ground for anticipating that these benefits will be progressive, and that India will in the future occupy an increasingly important position in the comity of nations.

One of the most important characteristics of British policy in India is the increasing deference that has so far as possible been paid from the first to the views and wishes of the people of the country in matters affecting their interests, with due regard always to the diversity of race and religion which forms such an important feature of all Indian progress.

Claims of the Community

Beginning with the confidential and unobtrusive method of consulting influential members of important communities in different parts of the country, this principle was gradually extended by the recognition of the right of recognised political or commercial organisations to communicate to the authorities their

criticisms and views on measures of public importance, and finally by the nomination and election of direct representatives of the people in Municipalities, District Boards, and above all in the Legislative Chambers of the country. This last element is, we understand, about to be dealt with by the Committee appointed by Your Excellency with the view of giving it further extension, and it is with reference mainly to our claim to a fair share in such extended representation and some other matters of importance affecting the interests of our community, that we have ventured to approach Your Excellency on the present occasion.

Past Traditions

The Mahommedans of India number, according to the census taken in the year 1901, over sixty-two millions or between one-fifth and one-fourth of the total population of His Majesty's Indian Dominions, and if a reduction be made for the uncivilised portions of the community enumerated under the heads of animist and other minor religions, as well as for those classes who are ordinarily classified as Hindus but properly speaking are not Hindus at all, the proportion of Mahommedans to the Hindu majority becomes much larger. We therefore desire to submit that under any system of representation extended or limited a community in itself more numerous than the entire population of any first class European power except Russia may justly lay claim to adequate recognition as an important factor in the State.

We venture, indeed, with Your Excellency's permission to go a step further, and urge that the position accorded to the Mahommedan community in any kind of representation, direct or indirect, and in all other ways affecting their status and influence should be commensurate, not merely with their numerical strength, but also with their political importance and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the empire, and we also hope that Your Excellency will in this connection be pleased to give due consideration to the position which they occupied in India a little more than hundred years ago and of which the traditions have naturally not faded from their minds.

The Mahommedans of India have always placed implicit reliance on the sense of justice and love of fair dealing that have characterised their rulers, and have in consequence abstained from pressing their claims by methods that might prove at all embarrassing, but earnestly as we desire that the Mahommedans of India should not in the future depart from that excellent and time-honoured tradition, recent events have stirred up feelings, especially among the younger generation of Mahommedans, which might, in certain circumstances and under certain contingencies easily pass beyond the control of temperate counsel and sober guidance.

We therefore pray that the representations we herewith venture to submit, after a careful consideration of the views and wishes of a large number of our co-religionists in all parts of India, may be favoured with Your Excellency's earnest attention.

European Representative Institutions

We hope Your Excellency will pardon our stating at the outset that representative institutions of the European type are new to Indian people; many of the most thoughtful members of our community in fact consider that the greatest care, forethought and caution will be necessary if they are to be successfully adapted to the social, religious and political conditions obtaining in India, and that in the absence of such care and caution their adoption is likely among other evils, to place our national interests at the mercy of an unsympathetic majority. Since, however, our rulers have, in pursuance of the immemorial instincts and traditions, found it expedient to give these institutions an increasingly important place in the Government of the country, we Mahommedans, cannot any longer in justice to our own national interests hold aloof from participating in the conditions to which their policy has given rise. While, therefore, we are bound to acknowledge with gratitude that such representation as the Mahommedans of India have hitherto enjoyed has been due to a sense of justice and fairness on the part of Your Excellency and your illustrious predecessor in office and the heads of Local Governments by whom the Mahommedan members of Legislative Chambers have almost without exception been nominated, we cannot help observing that the representation thus accorded to us has necessarily been inadequate to our requirements, and has not always carried with it the approval of those whom the nominees were selected to represent. This state of things was probably under existing circumstances unavoidable, for while on the one hand the number of nominations reserved to the Viceroy and Local Governments has necessarily been strictly limited, the selection on the other hand of really representative men, has, in the absence of any reliable method of ascertaining the direction of popular choice, been far from easy.

The Results of Election

As for the results of election, it is most unlikely that the name of any Mahommedan candidate will ever be submitted for the approval of Government by the electoral bodies as now constituted unless he is in sympathy with the majority in all matters of importance. Nor can we in fairness find fault with the desire of our non-Muslim fellow-subjects to take full advantage of their strength and vote only for members of their own community, or for persons who, if not Hindus, are expected to vote with the Hindu majority on whose goodwill they would have to depend for their future re-election. It is true that we have many and important interests in common with our Hindu fellow-country-men and it will always be a matter of the utmost satisfaction to us to see these interests safeguarded by the presence in our Legislative Chambers of able supporters of these interests, irrespective of their nationality.

A Distinct Community

Still, it cannot be denied that we Mahommedans are a distinct community with

additional interests of our own which are not shared by other communities, and these have hitherto suffered from the fact that they have not been adequately represented. Even in the provinces in which the Mahommedans constitute a distinct majority of the population, they have too often been treated as though they were inappreciably small political factors that might without unfairness be neglected. This has been the case, to some extent, in the Punjab, but in a more marked degree in Sind and in Eastern Bengal.

Before formulating our views with regard to the election of representatives, we beg to observe that the political importance of a community to a considerable extent gains strength or suffers detriment according to the position that the members of that community occupy in the service of the State. If, as is unfortunately the case with the Mahommedans, they are not adequately represented in this manner, they lose in the prestige and influence which are justly their due.

Employment in Government Service

We therefore pray that Government will be graciously pleased to provide that both in the gazetted and the subordinate and ministerial services of all Indian provinces a due proportion of Mahommedans shall always find place. Orders of like import have at times been issued by Local Governments in some provinces but have not, unfortunately, in all cases been strictly observed on the ground that qualified Mahommedans were not forthcoming. This allegation, however well founded it may have been at one time, is, we submit, no longer tenable now, and wherever the will to employ them is not wanting the supply of qualified Mahommedans, we are happy to be able to assure Your Excellency, is equal to the demand.

The Competitive Element

Since, however, the number of qualified Mahommedans has increased, a tendency is unfortunately perceptible to reject them on the ground of relatively superior qualifications having to be given precedence. This introduces something like the competitive element in its worst form, and we may be permitted to draw Your Excellency's attention to the political significance of the monopoly of all official influence by one class. We may also point out in this connection that the efforts of Mahommedan educationists have from the very outset of the educational movement among them been strenuously directed towards the development of character, and this we venture to think is of greater importance than mere mental alertness in the making of good public servants.

Mahommedans on the Bench

We venture to submit that the generality of Mahommedans in all parts of India feel aggrieved that Mahommedan Judges are not more frequently appointed to the High Courts and Chief Courts of Judicature. Since the creation of these

Courts only three Mahommedan lawyers have held these honourable appointments, all of whom have fully justified their elevation to the Bench. At the present moment there is not a single Mahommedan Judge sitting on the Bench of any of these Courts, while there are three Hindu Judges in the Calcutta High Court, where the proportion of Mahommedans in the population is very large, and two in the Chief Court of the Punjab, where the Mahommedans form the majority of the population. It is not, therefore, an extravagant request on our part that a Mahommedan should be given a seat on the Bench of each of the High Courts and Chief Courts. Qualified Mahommedan lawyers eligible for these appointments can always be found, if not in one province then in another. We beg permission further to submit that the presence on the Bench of these Courts of Judges learned in the Mahommedan Law will be a source of considerable strength to the administration of justice.

Municipal Representation

As Municipal and District Boards have to deal with important local interests affecting to a great extent the health, comfort, educational needs and even the religious concerns of the inhabitants, we shall, we hope, be pardoned if we solicit for a moment Your Excellency's attention to the position of Mahommedans thereon before passing to higher concerns. These institutions form, as it were, the initial rungs in the ladder of self-government, and it is here that the principle of representation is brought home intimately to the intelligence of the people, yet the position of Mahommedans on these Boards is not at present regulated by any guiding principle capable of general application, and practice varies in different localities. The Aligarh Municipality, for example, is divided into six wards and each ward returns one Hindu and one Mahommedan Commissioner, and the same principle we understand is adopted in a number of Municipalities in the Punjab and elsewhere, but in a good many places the Mahommedan tax-payers are not adequately represented. We would, therefore, respectfully suggest that the local authority should in every case be required to declare the number of Hindus and Mahommedans entitled to seats on Municipal and District Boards, such proportion to be determined in accordance with the numerical strength, social status, local influence and special requirements of either community. Once their relative proportion is authoritatively determined, we would suggest that either community should be allowed severally to return their own representatives as is the practice in many towns in the Punjab.

Fellows of Universities

We would also suggest that the Senates and Syndicates of Indian Universities might be similarly dealt with, that is to say, there should, so far as possible, be an authoritative declaration of the proportion in which Mahommedans are entitled to be represented in either body.

Nomination to Provincial Councils

We now proceed to the consideration of the question of our representation in the Legislative Chambers of the country. Beginning with the Provincial Councils, we would most respectfully suggest that as in the case of Municipalities and District Boards the proportion of Mahommedan representatives entitled to seats should be determined and declared with regard to the important considerations which we have ventured to point out in paragraph 5 of this address, and that the important Mahommedan landowners, lawyers, merchants and representatives of other important interests, the Mahommedan members of District Boards and Municipalities and the Mohammedan graduates of universities of a certain standing, say five years, should be formed into Electoral Colleges and be authorised, in accordance with such rules of procedure as Your Excellency's Government may be pleased to prescribe in that behalf, to return the number of members that may be declared to be eligible.

The Viceroy's Council

With regard to the Imperial Legislative Council whereon the due representation of Mahommedan interests is a matter of vital importance, we crave leave to suggest (1) that in the cadre of the Council the proportion of Mahommedan representatives should not be determined on the basis of the numerical strength of the community, and that in any case the Mahommedan representatives should never be an ineffective minority ; (2) that as far as possible, appointment by election should be given preference over nomination ; (3) that for the purposes of choosing Mahommedan members, Mahommedan landowners, lawyers, merchants and representatives of other important interests of a status to be subsequently determined by Your Excellency's Government, Mahommedan members of the Provincial Councils and Mahommedan fellows of universities should be invested with electoral powers to be exercised in accordance with such procedure as may be prescribed by Your Excellency's Government in that behalf.

The Executive Council

An impression has lately been gaining ground that one or more Indian Members may be appointed on the Executive Council of the Viceroy. In the event of such appointment being made we beg that the claims of Mahommedans in that connection may not be overlooked. More than one Mahommedan we venture to say, will be found in the country fit to serve with distinction in that august chamber.

A Mahommedan University

We beg to approach your Excellency on a subject which must closely affect our national welfare. We are convinced that our aspirations as a community

and our future progress are largely dependent on the foundation of a Mahomedan University which will be the centre of our religious and intellectual life. We therefore most respectfully pray that your Excellency will take steps to help us in an undertaking in which our community is so deeply interested.

In conclusion, we beg to assure your Excellency that in assisting the Mahomedan subjects of His Majesty at this stage in the development of Indian affairs in the directions indicated in the present address, your Excellency will be strengthening the basis of their unswerving loyalty to the Throne and laying the foundation of their political advancement and national prosperity, and your Excellency's name will be remembered with gratitude by their posterity for generations to come, and we feel confident that your Excellency will be gracious enough to give due consideration to our prayers.

APPENDIX C

Lord Minto's Reply to Muslim Deputation

Your Highness and Gentlemen, Allow me before I attempt to reply to the many considerations your address embodies, to welcome you heartily to Simla. Your presence here today is very full of meaning. To the document which you have presented me are attached the signatures of nobles, of Ministers of various States, of great landowners, of lawyers, of merchants and of many others of His Majesty's subjects. I welcome the representative character of your deputation as expressing the views and aspirations of the enlightened Muslim community of India. I feel that all you have said emanates from a representative body basing its opinions on a matured consideration of the existing political conditions of India, totally apart from the small personal or political sympathies and antipathies of scattered localities, and I am grateful to you for the opportunity you are affording me of expressing my appreciation of the just aims of the followers of Islam and their determination to share in the political history of our Empire.

As your Viceroy, I am proud of the recognition you express of the benefits conferred by British rule on the diverse races of many creeds who go to form the population of this huge continent. You yourselves, the descendants of a conquering and ruling race, have told me today of your gratitude for the personal freedom, the liberty of worship, the general peace and the hopeful future which British administration has secured for India.

Help in the Past

It is interesting to look back on early British efforts to assist the Mahomedan population to qualify themselves for the public service. In 1782 Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrasah with the intention of enabling its students to compete on more equal terms with the Hindus for employment under Government. In 1811 my ancestor, Lord Minto, advocated improvements in the

Madrasah and the establishment of Mahomedan Colleges at other places throughout India. In later years, the efforts of the Mahomedan Association led to the Government resolution of 1885 dealing with the educational position of the Mahomedan community and their employment in the public service, whilst Mahomedan educational effort has culminated in the College of Aligarh, that great institution which the noble and broad-minded devotion of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan has dedicated to his co-religionists.

The Aligarh College

It was in July 1877 that Lord Lytton laid the foundation stone of Aligarh, when Sir Syed Ahmed Khan addressed these memorable words to the Viceroy: 'The personal honour which you have done me assures me of a great fact and fills me with feelings of a much higher nature than mere personal gratitude. I am assured that you, who upon this occasion represent the British rule, have sympathies with our labours and this assurance is very valuable and a source of great happiness. At my time of life it is a comfort to me to feel that the undertaking which has been for many years, and is now the sole object of my life has roused on the one hand the energies of my own countrymen, and on the other has won the sympathy of our British fellow-subjects and the support of our rulers, so that when the few years I may still be spared are over, and when I shall be no longer amongst you, the College will still prosper and succeed in educating my countrymen to have the same affection for their country, the same feelings of loyalty for the British rule, the same appreciation of its blessings, the same sincerity of friendship with our British fellow-subjects as have been the ruling feelings of my life'.

Sir Syed's Influence

Aligarh has won its laurels. Its students have gone forth to fight the battle of life strong in the tenets of their own religion, strong in the precepts of loyalty and patriotism, and now when there is much that is critical in the political future of India the inspiration of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the teachings of Aligarh shine forth brilliantly in the pride of Mahomedan history, in the loyalty, commonsense and sound reasoning so eloquently expressed in your address. But, gentlemen, you go on to tell me that since as your belief is in the justice and fair dealings of your rulers, you cannot but be aware that 'recent events' have stirred up feelings amongst the younger generation of Mahomedans which might 'pass beyond the control of temperate counsel and sober guidance'.

Policy in Eastern Bengal

Now I have no intention of entering into any discussion upon the affairs of Eastern Bengal and Assam, yet I hope that without offence to anyone I may think the Mahomedan community of the new Province for the moderation and self-restraint they have shown under conditions which were new to them, and as

to which there has been inevitably much misunderstanding, and that I may at the same time sympathise with all that is sincere in Bengalee sentiments. But above all, what I would ask you to believe is that the course the Viceroy and the Government of India have pursued in connection with the affairs of the new Province, the future of which is now I hope assured has been dictated solely by a regard for what has appeared best for its present and future populations as a whole, irrespective of race or creed, and that the Mahomedan community of Eastern Bengal and Assam can rely as firmly as ever on British justice and fair-play for the appreciation of its loyalty and the safeguarding of its interests.

The Unrest in India

You have addressed me, gentlemen, at a time when the political atmosphere is full of change. We all feel it would be foolish to attempt to deny its existence, hopes and ambitions new to India are making themselves felt. We cannot ignore them—we should be wrong to wish to do so—but to what is all this unrest due? Not to the discontent of misgoverned millions. I defy anyone honestly to assert that—not to say uprising of a disaffected people.

Fruits of Western Education

It is due to that educational growth in which only a very small portion of the population has as yet shared, of which British rule first sowed the seed and the fruits of which British rule is now doing its best to foster and to direct. There may be many tares in the harvest we are now reaping. The Western grain which we have sown may not be entirely suitable to the requirements of the people of India but the educational harvest will increase as years go on, and the healthiness of the nourishment it gives will depend on the careful administration and distribution of its products. You need not ask my pardon, gentlemen, for telling me that 'Representative institutions of the European type are entirely new to the people of India' or that their introduction here requires the most earnest thought and care. I should be very far from welcoming all the political machinery of the Western world amongst the hereditary instincts and traditions of Eastern races. Western breadth of thought, the teachings of Western civilisation, the freedom of British individuality can do much for the people of India, but I recognise with you that they must not carry with them an impracticable insistence of the acceptance of political methods.

Political Future of Mahomedans

And now, gentlemen, I come to your own position in respect to the political future; the position of the Mahomedan community for whom you speak. You will, I feel sure, recognise that it is impossible for me to follow you through any detailed consideration of the conditions and the share that the community has a right to claim in the administration of public affairs. I can at present only deal with generalities. The points which you have raised are before the

Committee, which, as you know, I have lately appointed to consider the question of presentation (? representation), and I will take care that your address is submitted to them, but at the same time I hope I may be able to reply to the general tenor of your remarks without in any way forestalling the Committee's report.

The Question of Representation

The pith of your address, as I understand it, is a claim that in any system of representation whether it affects a Municipality, a District Board or a Legislative Council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organisation, the Mahommedan community should be represented as a community. You point out that in many cases electoral bodies, as now constituted, cannot be expected to return a Mahommedan candidate, and that if by chance they did so it could only be at the sacrifice of such a candidate's view to those of a majority opposed to his own community whom he would in no way represent, and you justly claim that your numerical strength both in respect to the political importance of your community and the service it has rendered to the Empire entitle you to consideration. I am entirely in accord with you; please do not misunderstand me. I make no attempt to indicate by what means the representation of communities can be obtained, but I am as firmly convinced as I believe you to be that any electoral representation in India would be doomed to mischievous failure which aimed at granting a personal enfranchisement regardless of the beliefs and traditions of the communities composing the population of this continent. The great mass of the people of India have no knowledge of representative institutions. I agree with you, gentlemen, that the initial rungs in the ladder of self-government are to be found in the Municipal and District Boards and that it is in that direction that we must look for the gradual political education of the people.

An Assurance

In the meantime I can only say to you that the Mahommedan community may rest assured that their political rights and interests as a community will be safeguarded in any administrative reorganization with which I am concerned and that you and the people of India may rely upon the British Raj to respect, as it has been its pride to do, the religious beliefs and the national traditions of the myriads composing the population of His Majesty's Indian Empire.

Your Highness and Gentlemen, I sincerely thank you for the unique opportunity your deputation has given me of meeting so many distinguished and representative Mahommedans. I deeply appreciate the energy and interest in public affairs which have brought you here from great distances, and I only regret that your visit to Simla is necessarily so short.

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