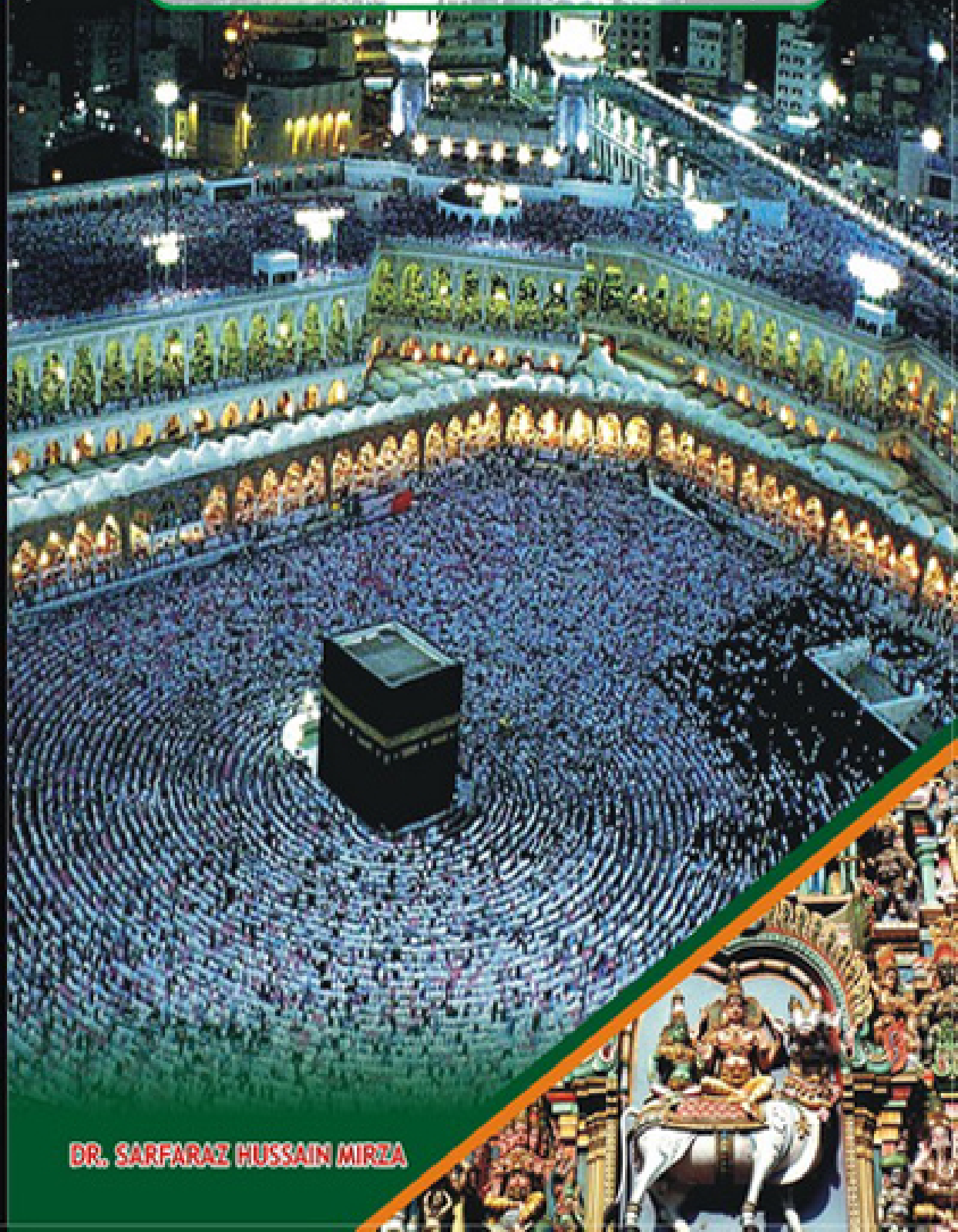


HINDU - MUSLIM CONFRONTATION

A Case Study of Pakistan
(712 - 1947)



DR. SARFARAZ HUSSAIN MIRZA

Hindu-Muslim Confrontation A Case-Study of Pakistan 712-1947

Dr. Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza



NAZARIA-I-PAKISTAN TRUST

Aiwan-i-Karkunan-i-Tehreek-i-Pakistan, Madar-i-Millat Park,
100-Shahrah-i-Quaid-i-Azam, Lahore. Ph.: 99201213-99201214 Fax: 99202930
Email: mail@nazariapak.info Web: nazariapak.info



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Author: Dr. Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza

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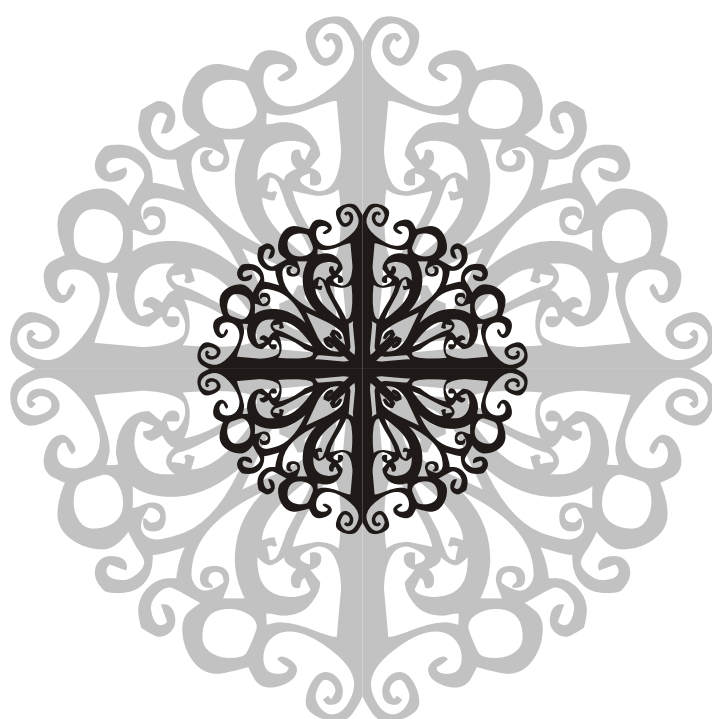




DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to
millions of known and
unknown Muslims of South
Asia who laid their sacred lives
for the creation of Pakistan









Message from the Chairman

Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust is a national academic-cum-research institution for promoting and projecting the ideology of Pakistan as enunciated by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. To fulfill this role, the Trust's programmes aim at highlighting objectives for which Pakistan was established, recalling sacrifices rendered for achieving it, and creating awareness among people, particularly young generations, about its ideological basis and its glorious Islamic cultural heritage. The Trust feels that its efforts can bear fruit if it succeeds in equipping the youth with authentic knowledge about the inspirational teachings and achievements of our Founding Fathers, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. With this aim in view, the Trust carries out multi-faceted activities, one of which is production of literature which not only disseminates knowledge about the great Pakistan Movement but also fills our hearts with feelings of pride on our successful struggle for independence, makes us conscious of our vast national and human wealth, and unfolds our capabilities to face the future with confidence.

It must be admitted that although, after suffering huge losses of life and property, we









ultimately succeeded in achieving Pakistan under the epoch-making leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, we could not make it an ideal Islamic State as visualized by Quaid-i-Azam and Allama Iqbal. After the death of the Father of the Nation, his unfaithful successors deviated from his path and turned Pakistan into a playfield of civil and military dictators. The Quaid-i-Azam delivered us from the slavery of Britishers and Hindus but we have now fallen into the trap of another type of slavery. To free ourselves from its clutches and all other types of overlordships, we must seek guidance from the nation-building thoughts and actions of Quaid-i-Azam and Allama Iqbal who aspired to make Pakistan a truly modern Islamic welfare democratic state.

As pointed out before, our main focus is on younger generations who were in the forefront in the struggle for Pakistan and who can even today play a similar role in building up Pakistan into a modern democratic and welfare Islamic State. The students' favourite slogan during Pakistan Movement was *Pakistan ka matlab kiya: La Ilaha Illallah*. Through this slogan the Muslim youth saw a dream of regaining our past glory and establishing our own free Muslim State in our homelands.

The Quaid-i-Azam was fully conscious of the mighty role which students played in the past and





could play in the future. Addressing a deputation of students on 31 October 1947 he observed: “Pakistan is proud of its youth, particularly the students who have always been in the forefront in the hour of trial and need. You are the nation-builders of tomorrow and you must fully equip yourself with discipline, education, and training for the arduous task lying ahead of you. You should realize the magnitude of your responsibility and be ready to bear it.”

The truth is that we have long neglected the youth and our educational system does not inspire them to give their best in the building up of Pakistan economically, socially, politically and even educationally. Inspiration comes through ideological education, which in our case involves a study of two-nation theory derived from Islamic Ideology which motivated the great Pakistan Movement and on which is raised the edifice of our nationhood. It is this ideological education which the Trust seeks to impart to the Pakistani youth through its publications, including the present one. I hope, this literature will acquaint the Pakistani youth about the separation of East Pakistan and inspire them to rise above provincial, linguistic and sectarian rivalries and make them apostles of national unity and territorial integrity.

Majid Nizami

Chairman
Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust

Contents

Chapter I

Background	01
Muslim's Generosity with Hindus– Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi– Alberuni's Verdict– Sultan Shahab-ud-Din Ghauri and establishment of Delhi Sultanate	
Hindu Revivalist Movements	12
Bhakti Movement– Ibn-e-Battuta's Verdict about Hindus– Babur's Era– Akbar's Era– Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani's Reaction– Farishta's Observance– Shahjahan's Period Aurangzeb's Time	

Chapter II

Downfall of the Mughal Empire	29
The Bengal Scenario	30
Nawab Siraj-ud-Dullah's Period– Hindu Treachery– Hindu Writer's Comments	
Impact of the British Policy on the Muslim Community	36
The Hindu Attitude	
Religious Movements	40
Faraidi Movement– Wahabi Movement	



The War of Independence and Rise of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan.....43

From East India Company to the Rule of British Crown- Atrocities at Muslims The Hindu Attitude- Muslims' Plight- Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan- Hindi-Urdu Controversy and Sir Sayyid's Prophecy- Sir Sayyid's Comments about the Hindu Congress- Sir Sayyid's Comments on Electoral Process- Hindu-Muslim Riots of 1893 and Anti-Cow Killing Movement of Hindus started by Tilk- Communal Riots 1877-1897

Partition of Bengal (1905)71

New Viceroy Lord Curzon- Hindu Congress reaction against the Partition- Hindu-Muslim Unrest- Formation of the All India Muslim League- Demand for Separate Electorates- Annulment of Partition of Bengal (1911)- The Muslim Reaction- Cawnpur Mosque

Chapter III

The Middle Phase: 1906-193594

Minto-Morely Reforms- Khilafat Movement- Gandhi's Treachery- Period of Open Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims- Shuddhi and Sanghatan Movements- Hindu Mahasabha- Hindu Leaders' Hatred against Muslims- Playing of Music Before Mosques- Moplah Incident- Fresh Wave of Hindu Muslim Riots- An Obnoxious Book





The Muslim Majority Province of Punjab112
Brahmo Samaj- Arya Samaj- Simon Commission
and All-Parties Conference- Nehru Report (1928)
- Tension at RTC- Allahabad Address (1930)-
Gandhi's Negative Attitude- The Quaid's Remarks

Chapter IV

From the Elections of 1937 to the
Emergence of Pakistan 1947.....132

Reorganization of the All-India Muslim League-
Congress Rule in Provinces and atrocities at
Muslims- Wardha Scheme- Muslim Demands
(1938)

Struggle For Pakistan.....149

The League's Demand for Pakistan (1940)- Two-
Nation Theory- The Pakistan Resolution- Quit
India Demand of the Hindu Congress- Simla
Conference and Elections (1945-1946)- Bihar
Tragedy- New Wave of Riots- Cabinet Mission
Plan (1946)- League's Direct Action (August
1946)- Great Calcutta Killings- Khizr Hayat
Resigns- The Sikh Barbarism- The Partition of the
Sub-Continent and series of massacres

Index.....176



Preface

This booklet is a humble attempt which focuses centuries-old animosity between the Hindus and Muslims of South Asian Subcontinent. Their animosity is deep rooted rightly believed to be unbridgeable. Ever since the partition of British India into Pakistan and Bharat, the Hindus have unfortunately failed to reconcile to the creation of Pakistan. They are still against Pakistan as they were in the pre-partition days. Their venomous propaganda speaks for itself. The Two-Nation Theory thus appears to be as alive as ever.

In the following pages, the whole narration of Hindu Muslim confrontation revolves round the Two-Nation Theory which throws ample light on the conflicting attitude of the two major nations inhabiting South Asia. It is against this background that the present attempt has been made to acquaint our younger generation about the root cause of Hindu-Muslim rivalry. Our youngsters have not been reasonably educated on the subject which has now been elaborately discussed in the present volume.

Suffice it to say, the Hindus and Muslims could never live side by side with wide divergent views and sharp political animosity. To yoke them together with different cultures, heritage and religions was totally unthinkable and unjustifiable. Their forcible co-existence led to frustration and gave birth to

numerable politico-religious problems. The result was that Muslim India voiced for a separate homeland where they could live an honourable life in accordance with the injunctions of Islam.

I am aware of the weaknesses of my work. For all flaws and drawbacks, I alone stand responsible.

I am grateful to the worthy Chairman of the Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust Mr. Majid Nizami under whose guidance such academic ventures are being undertaken. I must thank Prof. Dr. Rafique Ahmad, Vice-Chairman of the Trust who has been kind enough to have seen through the whole script despite his heavy pre-occupations.

Mr. Shahid Rasheed, Secretary Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust need special mention who agreed to reprint this book which was first published in 1997 by the Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore. Nevertheless, I would like to mention that I have revised the previous text and made some alterations and amendments wherever found necessary thereby presenting it in an improved form.

I should thank Mr. Rifaqat Riaz, Additional Secretary for his personal interest in publishing this work.

I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. Naeem Ahmad for revising the script very minutely.

I must thank my old colleague of the University Mr. Ashfaq Sheikh who prepared Index for me.

Sarfaraz Hussain Mirza

Chapter I

Background

Assumption of power by the Muslims in the South Asian sub-continent indirectly served as a signal for starting of anti-communal feelings between the Muslims and Hindus. It would be wrong to suppose the Hindus and Muslims as people of one nation merely on account of the accident of the Arabs' conquest of Dabul, Nirun and Brahamanabad in the year 712 A.D. Ever since the Muslims came to the South Asian sub-continent as conquerors, their glory and superiority was occasionally vituperated by the non-Muslims in one way or the other. Communalism even before the advent of the Muslims in the sub-continent existed. When the British era began it did subside. Natural relationship between the Hindus and Muslims had been altogether communal and not national. The presence of the past memories of communalism running in the arteries of the two communities is enough to prove that they have never been a single nation. They were two separate nations with remarkably different entities, different episodes, culture, language, literature, customs and traditions. Both have been striving hard to subjugate each other in all fields of life. The defeats of one have been the victories of the other, what one has registered as a wrong against the other, the other has recorded it as its brilliant success. The severe antagonism prevailing in the later period between the two communities had completely brushed aside the friendly relations between the two (which were however short-

lived) while mutual hostilities were remembered and in this war of nerves, the Hindus surpassed the other and ransacked the entire social set up thereof dragging the Muslim community to an utter humiliation. It was against this background of intransigent attitude of the Hindus that the Muslims rose to the occasion, galvanized themselves against the hatred of Hindu mind and threw off the yoke of double chain of slavery, viz, British imperialism and Hindu dominance in the South Asian sub-continent.

To study this phase in its true perspective it is necessary to retrace the era of Muslim rule in this region which was not unfamiliar to the Muslims before the Arab conquest. Formal contacts between Arabian peninsula and the former, date from the ancient times. It was through trade that peoples of these regions came in touch with one another. The first major blow to this relationship was struck in about the year 712 A.D., when some pirates, known to be the subjects of a Hindu Raja 'Dahir', the ruler of Sindh, attacked a caravan of women and children carrying gifts and letters of goodwill for Hajjaj-bin-Yousaf, the governor of Kufa and looted it. On the refusal of Raja Dahir of the demand made by Hajjaj he sent three expeditions against Dahir, of which the first two failed. The last one under the command of young commander Mohammad Bin Qasim, overwhelmed the Hindu forces and its dominance in Sindh was brought to an end.

Muslim's Generosity with Hindus

The new conquerors, the Muslims, instead of pursuing a course of persecution of the conquered people,

set up a broad based and liberal administrative system and gave privileged positions to the Brahmans whose dominance they had supplanted. After completing his mission of subduing the enemy, Mohammad-bin-Qasim made administrative arrangements with non-Muslims, better known as the 'Brahmanabad Settlement.' By virtue of this the Hindus were to be treated as 'the people of the Book' and to enjoy the protection of the Muslim government. The policy adopted by the Muslims in reorganizing the administrative system and in giving an equitable share to the Hindus is well described by a contemporary chronicler:

“Mohammad Kasim maintained their dignity, and passed orders confirming their pre-eminence. They were protected against opposition and violence. Each of them was entrusted with an office, for Kasim was confident that they would not be inclined to dishonesty. Like Rai Chach, he also appointed each one to a duty. He ordered all the Brahmans to be brought before him, and reminded them that they had held great offices in the time of Dahir, and that they must be well acquainted with the city and the suburbs. If they knew any excellent character worthy of his consideration and kindness they should bring them to notice, that favours and rewards might be bestowed on him. As he placed full confidence in their honesty and virtue, he entrusted them with

these offices, and all the affairs of the country were put in their charge. These offices were granted to them and their descendants, and would never be resumed or transferred.”¹ (There can not be any other example of giving extraordinary favour to Hindus by Muslims)

It may be recalled that in religious matters, they enjoyed even far more privileges. They were free to worship religion in accordance with their religious tenets, provided this was done within precincts of their residences or worshipping places. The letter of Hajjaj to Mohammad-bin-Qasim regarding the request of the Hindus of Brahmanabad, seeking permission to repair a damaged temple throws light on the policy of the government in respect of non-Muslims. He wrote: “It appears that the Chief inhabitants of Brahmanabad had petitioned to be allowed to repair the temple of Budha and pursue their religion. As they made submission, and have agreed to pay taxes to *Khalifa*, nothing more can properly be required from them. They have been taken under our protection, and we cannot in any way stretch out our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given to them to worship their gods. Nobody must be forbidden and prevented from following his own religion. They may live in their houses in whatever manner they like.”² (One may like to note the great Caliph Omer-ibn-e-Khatib also passed similar orders for non-Muslims).

Yet more important settlements with the Hindus were made in Malabar where a local Hindu ruler became

convert to Islam as early as the ninth century. Not interfering in the life of the inhabitants the Arabs made them familiar with their religion—Islam. However, it is viewed by some scholars that Shankaracharya's religious movement, certainly a Hindu movement, had its routes in the ninth century at Malabar owing to the 'religious ferment caused by the entry of Islam into that area'. Thus, opened the chapter of Hindus indifference and intolerance towards Muslims despite the fact that they were so humanely treated and duly protected by the Muslim rulers.

Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi

The second phase of the Muslim rule and conquests dates from the entry (towards the end of the tenth century) of Subuktigin and later his son Mahmud Ghaznavi on the soil of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Mahmud's first clash with Jaipal near Peshawar in the later half of 1001 A.D. and then a series of severe conflicts with the Hindu Rajas (of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar, Kannauj, Delhi and Ajmer) exhibited the true picture of Hindu animosity against the Muslims. According to Firishta, the author of *Tareekh-e-Frishta*. "There was great enthusiasm even among the masses. Hindu women sold their ornaments to help the war effort, and sent their savings to the army. The battle was fought at a place between Peshawar and Wahind."³

Alberuni's Verdict

One of the famous historians Al-Beruni in his book "Kitab-ul-Hind" clearly reflected on the Hindu-Muslim differences relating to various aspects of life. His views

are reproduced below, which would help to understand the wide gulf that existed between the Muslims and the Hindus:

“The Hindus entirely differ from the Muslims in every respect which other nations have in common. The first difference was that of language. They totally differ from us in religion, as we believe in nothing in which they believe, and *vice versa*...all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them...against all foreigners. They call them *Mlechaha*, i.e., impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage, or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them, because thereby, they think, they would be polluted. They consider as impure anything which touches the wine and the water of a foreigner; and no household can exist without these two elements. Besides, they never desire that a thing which once has been polluted should be purified and thus recovered, as, under ordinary circumstances, if anybody or anything has become unclean, he or it would strive to regain the state of purity. They are not allowed to receive anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wishes it, or was inclined to their religion. This

constitutes the widest gulf between us and them.”⁴

“In the third place, in all manners and usages they differ from us to such a degree as they frighten their children with us, with our dress, and our ways and customs, and as to declare us to be devil’s breed, and our doings as the very opposite of all that is good and proper.”⁵ The scattered remains of Hindus cherish “the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu science have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places where our hand cannot reach, to Kashmir, Banaras, and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment both from political and religious sources.” In the fifth place, a number of other causes has been identified:

“Peculiarities of their national character, deeply rooted in them but manifest to everybody...the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no science like them. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited, and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is no other country on earth but theirs, no other race of men but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever.”⁶

Sultan Shahab-ud-Din Ghauri and Establishment of Delhi Saltnate

The Hindu-Muslim antagonism did not end with the death of Mahmud (d.1030) but rifts continued even at the later stages. Incursions by the Ghaznavids into Hindu territory continued even during the period of Shihab-ud-Din Ghauri. His most fateful encounter was against Pirthvi Raj, the powerful Raja of Ajmer and Delhi. After the death of Ghauri (1206) Slave Dynasty with Qutb-ud-Din Aibak as the ruler, established its rule over the sub-continent and the Delhi Sultanate was established. Then came the House of Balban, the Khaljis, the Tughluqs, the Sayyids and Lodhis who successfully ruled over India till the break-up of the Delhi Sultanate. During this period we find a number of instances regarding the Hindu-Muslim split.

After the break-up of the Delhi Sultanate, the Hindus reasserted themselves in certain areas. For instance, a big and important Hindu Kingdom namely Vijayanagar was established in 1336. The Southern India at this time was in a ferment. There was a revival of Hindu power in the South and rise of a powerful politico-religious movement in the area. In this atmosphere, Harishan and Bukka, two brothers who had embraced Islam earlier, were reconverted to Hinduism and instead of remaining loyal to Delhi, Harishan declared himself independent and laid the foundation of a new capital of Vijayanagar. The decline of the Muslim empire and the revival of Hindu military power began during this period when Muslims were excluded from the South and

Vijayanagar empire was established. “Thenceforward on the whole Islam steadily lost grounds in India till 1526, as much by the break up and idiosyncrasy of the Delhi empire and the rise of the Hindu States, as by Hindu religious and cultural revival.”⁷ The Kingdom later became so much strong that in 1557, the kings of Bijapur and Golkanda sought her assistance in an attack against Ahmadnagar, but the way the Hindu soldiers behaved shocked even their confederates. They laid waste the entire country. According to Firishta:

“The infidels of Vijayanagar, who for many years had been wishing for such an event, left no cruelty unpracticed, they insulted Muslim women, destroyed mosques, and did not even respect the sacred Quran.”⁸

Another Hindu kingdom sprang up and later became powerful under Rana Sangha at Mewar, a powerful state in Rajputana. He, later on proved a strong enemy against Babar, the Mughal emperor while he was busy establishing his rule in India. Reviewing the general condition of the Hindus during the Sultanate period it can be said without any hesitation that they enjoyed all basic safeguards that minorities could expect and the non-Muslims were allowed to preserve their economic and social structure. But this generosity was misused. It was through this medium that they conducted the policy of suppressing the Muslims in the economic field and this was obviously looked upon by the Muslims with dislike. The position of the Hindu business community was much better. According to Barani, Muslims’ income was

altogether in the clutches of the Hindu money-lenders. “The *Maliks* and *Khans* and the nobles of those days were constantly in debt, owing to their excessive generosity, expenditure and beneficence. Except in their public halls no gold or silver could be found, and they made no savings on account of their excessively licentious livings. The wealth and riches of the Multani Merchants and the Shahs (*Sahukars*), were from the interest realised from the old *Maliks* and nobles of Delhi, who borrowed money from them to the maximum limit, and repaid their debt along with additional gifts from their *iqta*’s. Whenever a *Malik* or a *Khan* held a banquet, and invited notables, his agents would rush to the Multanis and Shahs, sign documents, and borrow money with interest.”⁹

Ala-ud-Din Khalji, too, became conscious to the danger of his government from the position and the defiant attitude of the Hindu rural chiefs and determined to curb their powers. Barani was not at all happy with the infields. His work reflects his “bitterness against Hindus, his extremism and his acute class-consciousness”. He says that by “merely paying a few *Takas* and the poll-tax” the Hindus were able to continue their religious traditions. While, “on the other hand, if the Muslim king, in spite of the power and position which God had given him, is merely content to take poll-tak (*Jiziya*) and tribute (*Khiraj*) from the Hindus and preserves both infidels and infidelity and refuses to risk his power in attempting to overthrow them, what difference will there be in this respect between the kings of Islam and the *Rais* of the infidels? For the *Rais* of the infidels also exact the poll-tax

and tribute from the Hindus, who belong to their own false creed, in fact, they collect a hundred times more taxes.”¹⁰

About the privileges enjoyed by the Hindus, Barani is again far unhappy. Quoting Jalaluddin Khalji, he says, “Every day the Hindus pass below my palace beating cymbals and blowing couch shell to perform idol worship on the bank of the Yamuna. While my name is being read in the *Khutba*, as the defender of Islam, these enemies of God and his Prophet (Peace be upon him), under my very eyes, are proudly displaying their riches and live ostentatiously among the Muslims of my capital. They beat their drums and musical instruments and perpetuate their pagan practices.”¹¹

Criticizing the account of position enjoyed by the Hindus, Barani says:

“In the capital (Delhi) and in the cities of the Musalmans, the customs of infidelity are openly practiced, idols are publicly worshipped *and the traditions of infidelity are adhered to with greater insistence than before*. Openly and without fear, the infidels continue the teaching of the principles of their false creed, they also adorn their idols and celebrate their rejoicing during their festivals with the beat of drums and *dhol*s and with singing and dancing. By merely paying a few *Takas* and the poll-tax they are able to continue the traditions of infidelity by giving lessons in the books of their false faith and enforcing the orders in these books.”¹²

HINDU REVIVALIST MOVEMENTS

Bhakti Movement

In sum, the interaction of Islam and Hinduism created a new feeling amongst the Hindus and some of their religious preachers started defensive religious movements against Islam. Chaitanya's movement in Bengal was a revivalist movement launched to defend the faith of Hinduism against the sweeping success which Islam was gaining. "Thinking Hindus could only see with dismay that their policy of denying spiritual food to the lower classes was, in the changed conditions, driving them into the Muslim fold and they also realized that the *Sufi* approach, with its institutions like *Qawwali*, producing religious ecstasy and fervour, as also the congregational prayers of Muslims made more powerful appeal to the masses than the meditations of the Hindu *Rishis*. *Qawwali* was therefore answered by *Kirtan* processions, which engendered, and all castes amongst the Hindus and even non-Hindus were admitted to the new spiritual life. With the great organizing genius of Chaitanya and able to men to inspire, *the movement soon passed from the defensive to the offensive.*"¹³ According to a modern Hindu scholar: "Vaishnavas who took the lead in converting Muslims achieved considerable success."¹⁴

According to Growse, the historian of Mathura, the role of Hindu Bengal was on the similar pattern. "Similarly in the East, the Muhammadan invasion and the consequent contact with new races and new mode of

thought brought home to the Indian moralist that his old basis of faith was too narrow, that the division of the human species into the four *Manva* castes and outer world of barbarians was too much at variance with facts to be accepted as satisfactory and the ancient inspired oracles, if rightly interpreted, must disclose some means of salvation applicable to all men alike, without respect to colour or nationality...In upper India the tyranny of the hope, or even the wish, that conquerors and conquered could ever coalesce in one common faith.”¹⁵

The attitude of the Bengal Vaishnavas towards Islam and Muslims in the words of Prof. T. Ray Chaudhri was that, “there was an element of opposition to Muslim influence in *Chaitanyaism* seems almost certain. The *Premayilasa* referred to Muslim rule as the root of *Advaitaprakasa*, the spread of Muslim ways of life was deplored. Jayanada mentioned the adoption of Muslim habits by Brahmans as one of the aspects of the manifold degradations characteristic of *Kali* age.”¹⁶ Not only this but they tried to bring economic pressure against the Muslims as well. “Sayamananda, who converted a number of Muslims... asked the Raja of Narayon not to employ Muslim porters as was the usual custom there.”¹⁷ “Even those *Vaishnavas* whom the Muslim rulers had exalted to the highest offices in the state regarded their patrons as ‘*Mlechchas*’ and considered themselves as fallen because of there contract with the Muslim.” According to a modern Hindu writer: As regards their faith and belief the Chatitanyaites ... “were eager to prove the superiority of Krishna to other gods and goddesses of the Hindu

pantheon. As regards their attitude to Islam it was one of contempt, if not of positive hostility.”¹⁸ ...However, in fact, the movement in Bengal was “marked by a comparative indifference to social problems and inequities which were among the chief concerns of the movements originating from the composite influences of Hinduism and Islam.”¹⁹

It is to be born in mind that it was a Hindu revivalist movement, which launched a counter attack against Islam and tried its utmost to slow down the pace of Hindu conversions to Islam, specially in West Bengal. As told by Roy Chaudhri, “In West Bengal the very classes whose counterparts in the east were converted to Islam in large number, remained within the Hindu fold, no doubt to a great extent due to Vaishnava influence.”²⁰ Still more has been said by a renowned scholar, S.M. Ikram, that “... the Vaishnavas was even greater. They not only arrested the spread of Islam in West Bengal, but what was perhaps even more remarkable, the spiritual of the literary renaissance created by the *Vaishnava Sadhus* and poets created an atmosphere in which the local Muslims as contrasted with those in the distant north, where a different situation prevailed, came under Hindu influences, and outside the cities, Muslim orthodoxy did not spread till the nineteenth century.”²¹ Bhakti Movement, to some extent, tried to take up the cause but it ended in failure. A real rapprochement between the Muslims and the Hindus was impossible. “A Chinese Wall divided the two communities, in spite of the work of the saints, the *Sufis* and savants like Amir Khusro.”²²

However, in the words of Dr. I. H. Qureshi: “In the political and administrative sphere, in so far as the Bhakti Movement strengthened the forces of conciliation between the rulers and the ruled, it rendered great service.”²³ “It also made it possible to communicate the main message of Islam to the Hindu masses, but the sum total of a few, small sects, some of which even turned against Islam. The path of sincere syncretism also ended in a blind alley. Although the very two major communities Muslims and the Hindus have lived together on the same soil but interaction of Islam and Hinduism has produced very little effect on the religious life and the aspects of life on each other.” According to Prof. R.C. Majumdar, “It touched merely the fringe and the external elements of life and even as such, the influence was confined to a small section of Hindus and Muslims of India.”²⁴ There was no rapprochement in respect of popular or national traditions, and those social and religious ideas, beliefs, practices, and institutions which touch the deeper chord of life and give it a distinctive form, tone, and vigour. In short, the reciprocal influences were too superficial in character to affect materially the fundamental differences between the two communities in respect of almost everything that is deep-seated in human nature and makes life worth living. So the two great communities, although they lived side by side, moved each in its own orbit, and there was as yet no sign that the ‘twin shall ever meet.’²⁵

Ibn-e-Batuta’s Verdict about Hindus

A renowned scholar, Ibn-e-Battuta, finds the gulf of relationship between the two communities very

distinctively. He accounts: “The Hindus and the Muslims lived in separate quarters and as entirely separate communities. The Hindus maintained no social intercourse (inter-action) with the Muslims by way of inter-dining or inter-marriage. They regarded to touch of the Muslims or even the scent of their food as pollution. If an innocent child happened to eat anything of which Muslim had partaken, the Hindu elders would beat him and compel him to eat cow’s dung which according to their belief purifies.”²⁶ Besides, he suffered many serious inconvenience owing to Hindu attitude towards Muslims and fell victims to this inhuman behaviour at their hands many a time.²⁷

However all efforts at bringing Hindus and Muslims on a united platform by media of even religious activities also failed and, therefore, in such an atmosphere, a real rapprochement between them was impossible. Not much larger number of the followers could be directly attracted by mystic movements and the truth is that both the communities had been divided by a Chinese Wall. In the light of one of the scholar’s approach, “the number dwindled very appreciably in course of time and the two orthodox religions showed no visible sign of being seriously affected by the sudden intrusion of radical elements. They pursued their own tenor, resembling the two banks of a river, separated by the stream that flows between them. Attempts were made to build a bridge connecting the two, but ended in failure. Even if there were any temporary bridge, it collapsed in no time.”

Babur Era

Even during the Mughal regime the broad split of ideological as well as religious differences continued. Babur, the founder of the great Mughal Empire in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent was the foremost King amongst the long Mughal line of emperors who met a tough resistance at the hands of the Hindu Rajas. His achievement in founding the Mughal Empire was not against the last of the line of Lodhi kings in India but it was against the strong headed Rana Sangha and his confederates in which the superiority of the invader was divided in a pitched battle fought at Kanwaha in 1527. During Babur's reign, Hindus imposed their grudge against the Muslims and at one time it is reported that a few mosques were destroyed by them in some parts of the State.

During the period of Akbar, the Hindus enjoyed much powers and other facilities due to his liberal religious policy. He bestowed upon them high offices of responsibility and is considered very often the most liberal Muslim King who ruled over India.

Though the Hindus had been serving under the Muslims at different phases yet in their sect Muslims were universally referred to as *Mlechhas* (unclean) by the Hindus. Here it would be necessary to quote the observations of Firishta. According to him the Brahmans would show reluctance to be employees of Muslims for a long time. While writing about the first Brahmani Ruler's Prime Minister, Firishta says:

“It is generally held that before him the Brahmins would not accept jobs under Muslim rulers, and by engaging themselves in acquisition of knowledge particularly astrology, lived simple lives in villages in out of way places and on the banks of rivers. Considering the service of the worldly people, particularly Muslims, as degrading, they did not accept posts and jobs, and if by chance, anybody associated with the people of position on account of knowledge of medicine, astrology, or preaching or story-telling, he would accept rewards of *farmans*, but would not put yoke of service round his neck....”²⁸

However, the tradition of employing Hindus in the highest offices of responsibility was already in practice before Akbar and one cannot directly hold him responsible for this practice. His religious policy as well as innovations have become a subject of criticism rightly among the scholars. We cannot categorically hold him responsible to justify the balance though indeed his major blunder was his new policy of religious tolerance. His friendliness towards the Hindus in fact did not lead to the growth of general tolerance amongst different religions in India. On the one hand his religious innovations offended the orthodox section of the Muslim community while on the other his general policy encouraged certain sections amongst Hindus to expose their aggressive attitude, defiant and intolerant spirit against Islam. For instance, a

Brahman of Mathura, rich and influential, demonstrated high-handedness against Abdur Rahim, the *Qazi* of Mathura. The Brahman forcibly took possession of the building material which the former had collected for the purpose of constructing a mosque. The Brahman utilized the material for building an idol-temple. On the protest against this aggressiveness, when the *Qazi* attempted to dissuade him from doing so, the culprit instead of hearing to the *Qazi* “in the presence of witnesses opened his foul mouth to curse the Prophet (Peace be upon him), and had shown his contempt for Muslims in various other ways.”²⁹ This Brahman was later executed by the *Sadr* which led to an outcry by the Hindus including Akbar’s Rajput wives who severely criticized the *Sadr*’s action. Here it would not be out of context to mention that this incident could have taken place in connection with the large-scale Vaishnave temple building of which the construction was in progress at Mathura, a great centre of the Hindu revivalist movement referred to earlier.

Akbar’s Era

Akbar’s policy offended the Muslims and a reaction started against it. In the words of a modern Hindu writer, “If Akbar had stopped with the remission of *Jizya*, the prohibition of cow-slaughter, the partial Hinduisation of administration and patronage to Sanskrit Literature without coquetting with Hindu philosophy and religion, history would have exalted him to the rank of the greatest statesman and nation-builder of the world... He created no united nation, but a few Muhammadan hypocrites and a class of slavish Hindu enthusiasts... He did injustice to

Islam. The imperial throne could no longer be the symbol of unity and centre of equal attraction to both peoples. While it attracted the Hindus, it repelled the Muslims.”³⁰

As referred to previously a Hindu religious revivalist movement had also been started. Mathura had become the great centre of resurgent Hinduism under the leadership of the successors of Chaitanya.

Besides the order of *Sanyasis* organized early in the ninth century by Shankra had by now organized on a political and military platform. During Mughal regime numerous instances of conflicts between the Hindu templets and the Muslim *Faqirs* are available. According to Panikkar, “During the early years of Akbar’s reign, armed Muslim *Faqirs* attacked and killed a number of Hindu *Sanyasis* and though the matter was represented to the emperor by Madhu Sudhan Saraswati, the authorities afforded them no redress. Madhu Sudhun Saraswati then initiated large number of *Kashtriyas* in seven out of the ten orders (the three excluded ones being *Tintha*, *Assama* and *Saraswati*) and placed on them the duty of defending religion (*Charma*). In Mughal times we have numerous instances of conflicts in which these Hindus templets fought the Muslim *Faqirs*.”³¹

Such instances can be quoted enormously which were backed up by Akbar’s Hindu officers but all his efforts at religious syncretism ended in fiasco. “Of course roots of this failure went even deeper to the fundamental differences between Islam and Hinduism and the basic reluctance of the two communities to merge. By now the

Hindus and the Muslims had co-existed for centuries occasionally in conflict and generally in peace – but they had never coalesced. The over-ambitious attempt at a merger went against the genius of the two people and could find acceptance only in the circle of the court sycophants. It failed, as it was bound to, but the aggressive attitude of the Hindu revivalists and the offence which some of Akbar’s ill-advised measures gave to the Muslims, compounded the failure. They led to a reaction which was to impair even the existing basis of harmony.”³²

Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani’s Reaction

Akbar’s religious policy was severely criticised by the great saint-scholar of the Mughal period, Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani (1564-1624). His *Maktubat* (letters) throw ample light on the state of the Muslim community and their religion in India. Noting the deplorable plight of the Muslims in the society at the hands of the Hindus he wrote in one of his letters that “the non-Muslims carried out aggressively (*ba-tariq-i-istila*) the ordinances of their own religion in a Muslim state and the Muslims were powerless to carry out the ordinances of Islam and if they carried them out they were executed.”³⁴ With great anguishness he recalls those tragic days saying that those who believed in the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) were “humiliated” and were made powerless, while those who denied his Prophethood enjoyed high position and used to sprinkle salt on the wounds of the Muslims with ridicule and taunts.”³⁵ The revivalist Hindu developments greatly hurt the sensitive mind and soul of the Mujaddid

who was awfully perturbed at the humiliating state of the Muslims and Islam in the country at the hands of the Hindus and non-Muslims who had started the persecution of the sacred religion. In another letter throwing light on the vital issue he writes: “The non-Muslims in India are, without any hesitation, demolishing mosques, and setting up temples in their place. For example, in Karkhet (Khurnks-Hetra) Tank there was a mosque and the tomb of a saint. They have been demolished and in their place a very big temple has been erected.”³⁶ Besides, the Hindus even resorted to enormous interferences in the observations of the Islamic principles by the Muslims who felt themselves powerless to do so openly and freely. In this regard Hazrat Mujaddid gives other practices which hurt the Muslims. “During *E Kadashi*, the Hindus fast and strive hard to see that in Muslim towns no Muslim cook sells food on these days. On the other hand, during the sacred month of Ramzan, they openly prepare and sell food, but owing the weakness of Islam, nobody can interfere. Alas! The ruler of the country is one of us, but we are so badly off.”³⁷

Farishta’s Observance

To give another account if one were to write on this matter of the past history one would come across many similar instances. Firishta, who happened to observe and write on Hindu-Muslim conflict writes in one of his statements that “the Hindus would enter mosques, worship idols there and chant hymns to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The heart of His most Just Majesty was filled with sorrow when news about this reached him.

But since he had no power to stop it, he would act as if such news had never reached his royal ears ...when Ali Adil Shah did not find his forces equal to those of Nizam Shah on the battle field, he had to seek help from Ram Raj on the condition that the Hindus of Bijapur should not be allowed to feed their fanatical grudge on the Muslims and should not be permitted to pollute mosques. But things took quite a different turn. The Hindus stopped at nothing in order to harm and humiliate the Muslims and to bring about their utter ruination.”³⁸ A few incidents in regard to the Hindu-Muslim conflict during the reign of Emperor Shahjahan, have been quoted in *Shahjahan Nama* by Abdul Hamid Lahori. He observed, “when the imperial standards reached the Gujrat suburbs in the Punjab, some Sayyids and holy men of that town made a complaint that some Hindus had released Muslim women in their possession and that some of them had by force converted mosques into their residential houses. On this Shaikh Muhammad of Gujrat, a man of rare intellect was deputed to make inquiries, and in case of the allegations being true, to release the mosques and Muslim women from the possession of the Hindus and were given in marriage to Muslims.”³⁹

Shahjahan’s Period

Another incident of Hindu aggressiveness during this period was the usual conversion of Muslims to Hinduism. Hinduism by then had become quite offensive absorbing a number of Muslims in its fold. On his way back from Kashmir in the 6th year of his reign, Emperor Shahjahan was informed that “Hindus of Bhadauri and

Bhimbar forcibly married Muslim girls and converted them to their own faith. “Shahjahan is said to have ordered to stop this practice and declared it unlawful. According to Sri Ram Sharma “so widespread was this practice of converting Muslim girls to Hinduism that these orders discovered more than four thousand such women.”⁴⁰

On the other hand, it would be surprising to note that the Hindus did not tolerate the conversion of any Hindu to Islam. One who did so was subjected to penalties and had to face economic losses. Until the dawn of Muslim rule, a Hindu who became a Muslim automatically lost all claim to ancestral property.

Aurangzeb’s Time

Emperor Aurangzeb, on coming to the throne, “gave no signs of being adversely inclined towards any class of his subjects.”⁴¹ But he tried to run the country in conformity to the Islamic conjunctions and later the question of non-Muslims attracted his attention. During his eleventh year of reign (1668) he brought forward certain changes in his policy and forbade music display at the royal court and took other drastic steps according to strict Islamic Law and traditions. Next year he made thorough purification of the court life and the *Jiziya* which had been abolished earlier was reimposed. “By now Aurangzeb had adopted the policy of regulating his government in accordance with strict orthodox Islamic Law and many orders in furtherance of this were issued.”⁴²

During Alamgir's regime, incidents of Hindu hatred against Islam are also worthy to be quoted. In 1669, it was reported "that the provinces of Thatta and Multan, and particularly in Benaras, the Brahmans were engaged in teaching unholy books in their schools, where Hindus and the Mussalmans gathered to learn their wicked sciences and were led away from the right path. Orders were, therefore, issued to all the governors of provinces, ordering the destruction of temples and schools and totally prohibiting the teaching and infidel practices of the unbelievers. Later on the procedure was adopted of closing down rather than destroying newly built temples in Hindu localities."⁴³ However, the total ban on construction of the new temples was adopted by later jurists. His policy of ordering the affairs of the country according to the views of the learned *Ulema* was severely resented to by the Hindus as certain orders were against the Hindus like the imposition of higher custom duties. Although they had been exempted from a number of taxes but the reimposition of *Jiziya* was carefully noted by the Hindus who showed their non-cooperation and reluctance. They resented it and even demonstrated against it at Delhi and the rising of the *Satnamis* in 1672, took a religious colour which was primarily agrarian in its origin. However, the emperor dealt with these demonstrators. Some of the religious Hindu uprisings were noticed against him but he was normally successful in cutting them down.

At various places, the Hindus owing to their strong position defied the Emperor's orders to pay *Jiziya*.

For instance in January 1693, when the concerned man in the province of Malwa sent his envoy to collect *Jiziya* from the *Jagir* of one Devi Singh but the poor fellow met a bad incident. “When he reached the place, Devi Singh’s men fell upon him, pulled his beard and hair, and sent him back empty handed...”⁴⁴ “Earlier, another *Amin* had fared much worse. He himself proceeded to the *Jagir* of a *Mansabdar* for the collection of the tax, and in his efforts to do so was killed by the Hindu *Mansabdar*.” Likewise, the Hindus opposed the orders in regard to the newly-build temples. “In March 1671, it was reported that a Muslim officer who had been sent to demolish the Hindu temples in and around Ujjain was killed along with many of his followers on account of the riot that had followed his attempts at destroying the temples there.”⁴⁵ Bhim, a younger son of the Rana of Udaipur, a Hindu state constantly at war against the throne “retaliated by attacking Ahmadnagar and demolishing many mosques, big and small, there in anguish against the destruction of the Hindu temples. But at many places it is reported that very often such incidents occurred without any provocation. During Aurangzeb’s reign in Gujrat, somewhere near Ahmadabad, *Kolis* seem to have taken possession of a mosque and prevented Friday prayers there...”⁴⁶

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Chapter II

DOWNFALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

After Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire gradually headed towards a decline. The later Mughal kings had to face a mounting opposition. During Bahadar Shah's rule, the government was up against Hindus of Rajputan and other rival in the Punjab—the Sikhs. The Sikhs who had seen the utter failure and ineffectiveness of the Mughals in the Decan followed aggressive policy against the throne. "They produced a man who exactly resembled him (Guru Gobind Singh) and secretly sent him to the Punjab, declaring that he was Guru Gobind Singh miraculously brought back to life for leading his followers in a war of independence against the Muslims."¹ He was known as *Banda*, who gathered a large number of his followers, began his campaign and committed worst possible atrocities. In one of his encounters he captured Sirhind which was "pillaged for four days with ruthless cruelty: mosques were defiled, houses burnt, the women outraged and the Muslim slaughtered."² The Marahathas on the other hand had become powerful as a result of their shrewd policy, sometimes siding with the superior to grind their own axes and at time waging war against the ally, frequently indulging in loot, massacre, torture and causing worst possible atrocities on the Muslims but in fact they outrightly sought an opportunity to make their own schemes successful either by means of entering into

friendly pacts or through rough and inhuman tactics. The moment the centre became weak they would renew their aggressive policy and reverse the same when the centre was strong.

THE BENGAL SCENARIO

Nawab Siraj-ud-Dullah's Period

By this time empire was torn into pieces and various chiefs declared themselves independent monarchs of their territories. In these fateful days the East India Company, which was guarding its commercial supremacy on the basis of its territorial sovereignty began to draw benefits from its policies. The Company established a centre at Calcutta which was both commercial and political. The Hindu *zamindars*, bankers and officials who had become quite influential and grown powerful began to dislike their Muslim masters. Hindu Rajas and inhabitants became hostile towards the Muslims and secretly drew plans to put an end to the Muslim rule. Panikkar writes: "When Siraj-ud-Daullah became Nawab Nazim, he had succeeded to a situation which would have taken a far acuter mind to and deal with. That situation was that while the Mughal viceroyalty conferred only the title to power, the actual authority had passed to the great Hindu merchant princes and their allies in the fort that nominated the Hooghly. The quarrel arose between the company and the Nawab about the fortification they were erecting. In fighting that ensued Calcutta was captured and the English

who had remained back were imprisoned. This is the story of the Black Hole, evidence in regard to which is conflicting and scanty. Holwell, an early expert in war propaganda through horror stories, was a born liar and clearly the incident was exaggerated out of all proportion, though, no doubt, the Nawab was not particularly kind in the treatment of the prisoners. A British force under Watson and Clive, when the defence of Arcott had made famous, arrived soon after in Bengal as war had broken with the French. There was as yet no quarrel with the Nawab, whose neutrality the English were anxious to secure. But the Hindu merchants in Calcutta and Murshidabad had made up their minds to engineer a change. Jagat Seth, the first of the great succession of Marwari millionaires whose wealth is still legendary, had been insulted by Siraj-ud-Daulah and he offered through Amin Chand, another Marwari in close relation with the Company, to have the Nawab replaced. An alliance was struck between the head of European *Baniadom*, the English company, and the Marwari *Baniaz* who commanded the wealth of Bengal. The Nawab's fate was sealed.”³

Hindu Treachery

Their treacherous part can well be judged by various other instances which was undoubtedly the death-knell for the stability and prestige of the Muslim rulers. Their loyalty vanished under the weak government of Siraj-ud-Dulah and all of them excluding a few sided with the English. In case of a Hindu *Zamindar*, Nava Kisan, who had been ordered by the Nawab for death penalty

avenged by supplying protection to British refugees at Fulta. The victory of Plassey by the British was nevertheless due to Hindu alliance against the Nawab. Again, some prominent Hindu like Shitab Roy and his son Kalyana Singh, Maharaja Bari Bahadur and Rai Sadhuram played a great part in advancing the cause of the British in the courts of Delhi and Awadh and thereby facilitating the grant of the *Diwani* to the Company. Thus, from the very start “the supporters and partisans of the English were almost all Hindus and portages of the Hindus.”⁴

Similarly, the British had secured the support of Marahathas and Rajas of Cochin and Travancor to isolate Tipu Sultan the mighty ruler of Mysore.

Thus, by the end of the 18th century the Sikhs and Marahathas were supreme at Lahore and Delhi respectively and the British had removed the last barrier in their way—Sultan Tipu of Mysore. Bengal was inhabited with the largest Muslim population which was the first to fall under the British. The relationship of the Hindus and Muslims had started heading towards a crucial rift. Majumdar says that the vernacular newspapers of the early nineteenth century referred to Muslims as ‘*Yavana Jati*’ made a clear distinction between the Hindus and Muslims. Regarding their separation he says:

Hindu Writer’s Comments

“A fundamental and basic difference between the two communities was apparent even to a casual observer. Religious and social ideas and institutions counted a more

in news' lives in those days than anything else: and in these two respects the two differed poles asunder. The worship of images which formed the most cherished element in the religious beliefs of the Hindus was an anathema in the eyes of the Muslims and the long tradition of ruthless desecration of temples by them for nearly a thousand years formed a gulf between the two. The methods of congregational prayer by the Muslims was a thing unknown to the Hindus, and the ceremonial worship of the Hindus to the accompaniment of music, both vocal and instrumental, was not irksome to them. The temples and mosques were built in purely Hindu and Muslim styles and were not influenced by each other to the least degree. As regards social institutions, the cast-ridden Hindu society was an enigma to the Muslims while the food of the latter, particularly beef and onion, was looked upon with aversion by the Hindus and widow-marriage between first cousins among the two. The literary and intellectual traditions of the two communities ran on entirely different lines, and they were educated in different institutions, *Tols* and *Madrassas*. The Muslim drew their inspiration from Qur'an and Arabic and Persian literature. A number of Hindus mind

was nurtured from the boyhood on Sanskrit, particularly religious literature like the Epics and the *Puranas*. It is a strange phenomenon that although the Muslims and Hindus had lived together in Bengal for nearly six hundred years, the average people of each community knew so little of the others traditions.”⁵

Majumdar says that the treatment of the Hindus of the Muslims was strange. The Hindus believed that the majority of the Muslims in Bengal were converts from the lowest strata of Hindu society. How far this belief was correct needs to be discussed in the present context. But the belief was there, and there is no doubt that the upper class Hindus treated the Muslim masses like the low castes of their own society.⁶

Yet another interesting remark of a renowned Hindu poet, Dwarkanath Tagore, may be quoted to show the Hindus’ trend which attributed all their misfortunes to the Muslim. He says:

“The present characteristic failings of natives are a want of truth, a want of integrity, a want of independence. These were not the characteristics of former days, before the religion was corrupted and education had disappeared. It is to the Mahomedan conquest that these evils are owing, and they are the invariable results of the loss of liberty and national

degradation. The Mahomedans introduced in this country all the vices of an ignorant, intolerant and licentious soldiery. The utter destruction of learning and science was an invariable part of their system, and the conquered, no longer able to protect their lives by arms and independence, fell into opposite extremes of abject submission, deceit and fraud. Such has been the condition of the natives of Hindustan for centuries.”⁷

Coming to the Company’s rule, it may be pointed out that the Muslims after the split up of their society and by the end of their rule, faced two bitter rivals at one time. The Hindus who had by now turned as British camp-followers made best efforts to show their fidelity and loyalty to the new master and thereby encashed their loyalty by gaining favour from the British. On the other hand, the British gave more facilities to the Hindus in their own interest to check-mate the advances of the Muslim community in every field. With the advent of the British, the situation changed entirely and under the patronage of the new rulers, Hindus succeeded in all the spheres of life, viz., education, economic and in social field. Gradually they developed an extreme form of aggressive nationalism which was directed against the Muslims. Under the changed atmosphere what Muslims lost the Hindus gained through their notorious tactics as narrated below hereafter.

IMPACT OF THE BRITISH POLICY ON THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

(Agrarian and Educational Policy of the British)

The Hindu Attitude

With the introduction of the Permanent Land Settlement Act (1793), the Muslims were hit hard whereas the Hindus remained unaffected. A. Aziz says in his book *Discovery of Pakistan* “the ‘Permanent Settlement’ of Bengal, enacted in 1793, under the pretence of ‘reforming evils’, snatched from the hands of the Muslim land-owners their lands and vested them in the Brahmanic Revenue Collectors who were hitherto men in employment of the former (Muslim) land-holders.”⁸

According to new developments the superior Muslim revenue officers and actual proprietors of the soil were displaced by the British and the Hindus. Resumption proceedings of the government were another great blow to the fortunes of the Muslim upper class. Previously in the judicial department, the Muslims mostly conducted the affairs but now the administrative reforms of Lord Cornwallis dealt the first major blow to this monopoly because all the higher executive posts were reserved for the British and rest for the natives. Another step of the British to curb the Muslims was the replacement of English for vernacular languages and Persian in the offices and courts which gave a severe blow to the Muslim community. This change of language was too sudden and as a result a large number of Muslims were

thrown out of services whose income merely depended on the government's salary.

This change was welcomed by the Hindus who reaped maximum benefit of the opportunity and caught unaware and unprepared, the remnant of the Muslim upper class that had sought to adjust itself to new regime, was "ousted from every grade of official life."⁹

Similarly, Dr. Hunter says, "The panic and hatred which ensued have stamped themselves for ever on the rural records. Hundreds of ancient families were ruined, and the educational system of the Musalmans, which was almost entirely maintained by rent-free grants, received its death-blow. The scholastic classes of the Muhammadans emerged from the eighteen years of harrying, absolutely ruined...The panic of those days (Resumptions) is still remembered, and it has left to us a bitter legacy of hatred. Since then the profession of a Man of learning a dignified and lucrative calling under Native Rulers, has ceased to exist in Bengal...There can be no doubt whatever, that from those Resumptions, the decay of the Muhammadan system of education dates."¹⁰

The consequences of these changes were a rude shock to the Muslims who were once superior to the Hindus and had now become their inferiors. The Mussalmans were gradually ousted from their lands, their offices—in fact everything was lost that could save their honour. The Hindus, from subservient state, came into the lands, offices and other worldly advantages of their former masters. Their exultation knew no bounds, and they

followed the footsteps of their former masters. They were soon reduced to a state of utter poverty. The year of 1838 is a landmark in the history of East India, when under orders from the East India company's Government, *Waqf* lands attached to the Muslim *Madrassahs* were snatched away and the Muslim *Madrassahs* were allowed to die a natural and an instantaneous death. After the failure of the War of Independence (1857) when the sovereignty of East India extended to the whole of India, this order was made applicable to all corners of the country whenever Muslim *Madrassahs* flourished on *Waqf* lands or property. The net result was that Muslims of the sub-continent were drowned in the ocean of ignorance, illiteracy and what not.

The fate of the Muslims was further sealed when the Resolution of October 1844 was passed to give preference to the knowledge of English in all the Government departments. As a result the names of the Muslims disappeared from the subsequent lists of qualified candidates when it was drawn up for the selection of candidates till 1855 or so. In the colleges too, the position was so miserable that no Muslim name could be found whereas the Hindus were found every where. In fact the standard fixed up for the test was so high that it barred all chances of a Muslim receiving elementary English education in the Judiciary and other departments particularly the education department was practically closed to the Muslims except for a very few who were detained for teaching oriental studies in *Madrassahs*.

As a result "the Muslim upper class found its sources of income dried up; the rising Hindu middle class

ousted them from almost all employment under Government. The change, thus, in the new political setup, adversely affected the leading Muslim families, the great majority of whom were either stranded or wrecked.”¹¹

Another contrast thus caught the attention of Buchan, which reflects the Muslim’s down-trodden position as compared to that of the Hindus. He says: “In almost all districts that he surveyed, the Muslims formed the poorer class of society, In Dinajpur, first two classes of society...principle and subordinate government employees of land holders, agents and employees of land holders, merchants and manufactures....were almost all Hindus: the large proportion of poor Cultivators in the district being subjected to uncontrolled oppressions of Hindu landlords...”¹³

“Similarly, in other districts as well Muslims were lowered down by the Hindus...The Hindus on the other hand fared better and, generally speaking, the first century of British rule in India was undoubtedly to the great advantage of that community...There was a revival of Hindu feelings of antagonism against the Muslims coincident with the gradual weakening of the Mughal power...”¹⁴

As referred to earlier, Hindus in this atmosphere were duly patronized by the British whose policy of conciliating the Hindus injured the feelings of the Muslims. “As late as 1842, Lord Ellenborough had openly

tried to please the Hindus, even to the extent of wounding the sentiments of the Muslims, by reinstating the supposed gates of Somnath and by giving wide publicity to his action.”¹⁵

In the year 1843, Ellenborough wrote to Duke of Wellington, “I cannot close my eyes to the belief that race (Mohammedans) is fundamentally hostile to us and our true policy is to reconcile the Hindus.”¹⁶

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

1. Faraidi Movement

Against the economic depression and other evils that had crept into the Muslim community, the Muslims began to consider improve their position in every aspect of life. It may be recalled that as *Zamindars*, their employees and their agents were all Hindus. Obviously the Muslims began to consider them as their enemies. Thus a religious movement in Eastern Bengal popularly known as ‘*Faraidi Movement*’ began under the leadership of Haji Shariattullah of Faraidpur district. In Bengal, originally this movement was one of reform movements with the soul aim to purge Indian Islam of the then existing corrupt and un-Islamic practices, but later, during the time of Dadu Miyan, it took a different shape and concentrated mostly on the economic aspect. It appeared as a positive threat to landlords and Indigo Planters as the landlords of Bengal were mostly Hindus and the Indigo Planters and their staff were either Hindus or Christians. It was

altogether a movement launched against the illegal cesses levied against the Muslim tenants by the Hindu landlords. Dadu made a determined stand and further proclaimed that the Earth belonged to God and that no one had any right to inherit ownership of land or to levy any tax on it. During the same period another reformer from West Bengal namely Titu Mir, a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad was also putting in his efforts to take up the cause of Islam. He aimed at purging the faith of various idolatrous and superstitious practices...

In short the entire Hindus community in their eyes was their enemy. Thus the movement that started in religious colour now took an intense communal form aiming at oppressing the members of the other community at whose door they laid the cause of all their sufferings in the past.

2. Wahabi Movement

Another important religious movement other than those headed by Shariatullah and Titu Mir was started by Sayyid Ahmad commonly known as *Wahhabi* apostle of India. Unlike the first two, it stirred up Indian Muslim society throughout India with a historical notion of fighting against the Sikhs in the North West Frontier Province with its main recruiting ground in Bengal and Bihar. Primarily it was religious war against the Sikhs, in vindication of the rights of the Muslims under the Government. Sayyid Ahmad was greatly disappointed by the degraded position of the Muslims in India, in various fields like politics, social set up and on the religious

ground. It was his primary object to establish an Islamic state....the Kingdom of God on earth and to achieve this end he chose up the medium of *Jihad*. This was to be done to pull the Muslims out of their degradation and degenerated condition. His inner reflection can well be assessed from his letter addressed to Nawab Sulaiman Ja. He wrote:

“During the last few years fate has been so unkind to the Government and the empire in India that the Christians and Polytheists have established their ascendancy over a greater part of India and have started oppressing people. Atheistic and Polytheistic practices are openly indulged in and the Islamic observances have disappeared. This unhappy state of affairs filled my heart with sorrow and I became anxious to perform *Hijrat*. My heart is filled with shame at the religious degradation and my head contains but one thought how to organize *Jihad*”¹⁷ Although Hunter regarded Sayyid Ahmad as an impostor, he could not help the conviction that there was an intermediate time in Sayyid Ahmad’s life when his whole soul yearned with a great pain. For the salvation of his countrymen, his hear turned solely to God.¹⁸

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND RISE OF SIR SAYYID AHMAD KHAN

The year 1857 was a great national awakening amongst the Indians which convulsed almost the entire sub-continent. The uprising from the ranks of soldiers spread in no time into the civil population. Great massacre took place and thousands of people were butchered by the British. The main feature of this tragedy was the loss of human life. But no less significant was the destruction of the historic buildings. The mosques were occupied by the British troops and at one time it was proposed to sell the Grand Mosque of Shah Jahan and another was used as a barrack for the European troops and parts of Fatehpuri Masjid remained under the occupation of the non-Muslims till 1875. Besides this, Hindu-Muslim tension also developed. Sometime during this period, communal riots were also at rampage resulting into heavy casualties. The Muslims were particularly the main victims in the Hindu-Muslim riots that occurred at Bareilly and other localities in U.P.

The severe atrocities were inflicted on the Muslims. They were blamed to have been responsible for the 1857 Independence Movement. Sir Colin Campbell writes in his book *Narrative of the Indian Revolt* that “the revolt is Mahometan and not Hindoo; and therefore has little to do with Hindoo fanaticism. The fact may prove to be that the discontent of the Hindoo furnished fuel, while

the restlessness and ambition of Mahometan supplied the fire.”¹⁹

“The pamphlet of Henry Harrington published in 1858, reflects the mind of the furious bigotry raging in the minds of the usurpers...I have stated that the Hindus were not the contrivers, the primary movers of the (1857) rebellion; and I now shall attempt to show that it was the result of a Muhammadan conspiracy, which had been in agitation for a longer period than was generally suspected, though it was developed somewhat sooner than its authors had intended. Left to their own will and to their own resources, the Hindus never would, or could, have compassed such an undertaking...No, it is amongst the Muhammadans, not the Hindus, that we must look for the real originator of this terrible plot...but, in order to comprehend in their full force the motives which induced the Muhammadans, more particularly than necessary to consider the character and tenets of the Muhammadans in general. They have been uniformly the same from the time of the first Caliphs to the present day, proud, intolerant and cruel, every time aiming at Muhammadan supremacy by whatever means and over fostering a deep hatred of Christians. They cannot be good subjects of any government which professes another religion; the precepts of the Koran will not suffer it. They deem themselves placed in false position under any but a Muhammadan dynasty. For this reason, no favours nor honours can conciliate them...they can dissimulate to perfection, until the opportunity presents itself; and then their true character manifest...But in India the Muhammadans had

other motives for seeking our destruction besides their rooted anti-Christian feeling. They could not forget that they had been the masters of the country for many generations, and they never ceased to persuade themselves that if the British power were thoroughly destroyed they would recover their lost position, and once more over the Hindus. They perceived the disaffection which had been spreading among the native regiments and fanned the plan by their intrigues. Well aware that no decisive blow could be struck without the cooperation of the Hindu troops and that the swift means of urging them to desperate measures was to convince the Brahmans, in the first place, that their religion was in danger, the Muhammadans artfully circulated a report which was echoed by the Brahmans, that the British Government was undermining the Hindu faith. In their determined character, their education and mental capacity, the Muhammadans are vastly superior to the Hindus who, comparatively speaking are mere children in their hands. The Muhammadans, moreover, on account of their higher qualifications for business, have been more generally taken into public employment, which afforded the facilities for becoming acquainted with the measures of Government and gave weight and importance to their assertions...the Muhammadans planned and organized the rebellion (or other revolution) for their own aggrandizement alone, and that the Hindus sepoy of the Bengal Army were their dupes and instruments.”²⁰

From East India Company to the Rule of British Crown

The rule of the Company came to end and the administration was transferred to the British Crown who

for the first time took up the responsibility to direct the system of administration of the country.

With the end of the struggle, the last glimpse of the Muslim supremacy also disappeared and the Muslim community sank into despair and humiliations. The rulers, following their customary policy of holding Muslims responsible for every evil, labelled them for instigating the uprising and followed a vindictive policy towards them and subjected them to indiscriminate seizure, confiscations and executions. A detailed account of their sufferings and degradations seems feasible to be elaborated here.

Atrocities on Muslims

A. Aziz, in his famous book titled “Discovery of Pakistan” writes that: “The sins of the Brahmans were too quickly forgotten; while the guilt of the Muslims was too deeply remembered. A breath of prejudice fanned the centuries-old vengeance into a mighty devouring flame and unfortunate nation was pursued with an implaceable hatred...the British who hated the valour of the Muslims, disdained their religion and considered their existence a challenge to the British Imperialism. A storm of terrible race-hatred, incapable of compassion or humanity, burst forth with and unrelenting and atrocious fury. Without the distinction of age or sex, Muslims were massacred and mown down like hem or grass. From Ambala and Meerut to Delhi to Jhansi, and Patna, the countryside was stripped of its Muslim inhabitants and both the living and the dead were abandoned to the wild beasts of the wood. The

streets of Delhi, Patna, Lucknow, Allahabad, Jhansi and other centers streamed with blood and echoed with the shrieks of the raped women, and lamentations of the mothers and children. The mosques and the tombs, the huts and palaces, the houses and habitations were all alike the scene of ghastly slaughter and rapine, and no place, however sacred or sequestered, could protect the person or property of a Muslim.”²¹

A. Aziz further remarks: “Their mean fanaticism plunged the tyrants into the enjoyment and display of the various species of their cruelty...The fate of the important patriots was perhaps worse; some were plunged into cauldrons of boiling oil; other flayed alive and their skins, stuffed into human form, were mounted on scaffolds and exposed to trembling public as a dreadful warning to those who might entertain the sentiments of patriotism; others again smeared over with combustible material, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of night.”²²

About the sack of Delhi, A. Aziz says that: “In the sufferings of the prostrate India, the name of Delhi awakens solemn and mournful recollections. Furious bigotry of the enemy, educated in the prejudices and religion of Peter the Hermit and nurtured and shaped amidst the traditions of the Crusades, pillaged, defiled and defaced the mosques, tombs and the houses of prayer and slaughtered with ‘pious’ zeal the tumbling multitudes of women and children and of the innocent and defenceless population who had sought protection of the houses of God. The holy books were profaned in the name of Christianity and burnt by their sacrilegious hands. The

principal mosques all over the country were seized and confiscated. Licentiousness polluted the prayer hall of the famous Jamia Masjid of Delhi; prostitutes were brought in to sing and dance amidst the deep and silent curses of the chained and helpless spectators (Muslims) who were brought to witness their God humbled and their women violated. From brothel house, it was later turned into a stable. The house of God suffered the vices and indignities for seven years up to 1865 when ‘Clemency’ of the rulers decided to auction the mosque. The Fatehpuri Masjid (Delhi) experienced yet a worse fate; stained with the blood of thousands of innocent lives, it was turned into a military barrack; its quadrangle and shops were auctioned to a Brahmanic *Bania*; and for over thirty years this house of worship endured the scandals and licentiousness of the British troops. The beautiful ‘Ornament of Mosques’ in the Dariyaganj Quarter (Delhi) built by a daughter of Aurangzeb and famous for its beauty and the taste of its builder, after having been stripped of its gold and silver, was delivered to flames and all that breathed therein perished. Thus defiled and defaced the famous mosque was turned into a bakery store and was peopled by rats and pigeons for about fifty years.”²³

A. Aziz further writing on the destruction describes:

“Fire and sword, gun and bullet and digging and demolition scattered destruction and ruin. The disaster was unparalleled both in enormity and extent. The barbarians of Britain surpassed, beyond measures, Attila

in his tyranny, massacres and ravages and befittingly deserved the epithet of the ‘Scourge of God’.”²⁴

The Hindu Attitude

The Hindus played a sinister role in the further destruction and humiliation of the Muslim community. They now sided with the British.

A. Aziz says:

“The numerous Brahamanic community which covered the face of the country and had, by the change of fortune, at once deserted the sinking cause of patriotism, discharged with devout fury the office of spies to dig out the Muslim revolutionaries and zealously observed and reported every action, word or look of the unfortunate people to their victorious masters. Every hamlet suspected to harbour the fugitives was searched and every house likely to shelter them was condemned to flames; and anyone suspected of giving shelter was flogged to death.”²⁵

A. Aziz further writes:

“Trade and commerce was thrust upon the Hindus and the Government services were entrusted to those who professed an ardent hatred against the Musalmans; and the future of his posterity was brightened by the

declared partiality of the rulers. The Brahman began to sing the countless blessings of the British Raj and the service under the British became the object of his fondest devotion.”²⁶

“Not only that they praised the British Raj but did their utmost in ruining the Muslim masses by every means. They played a distinctive role of spies and supplied every possible information to their new masters.”²⁷

A. Aziz remarks:

“The country was littered with hordes of ‘Brahmanic’ delators, detectives, informers, reporters, eavesdroppers and philosophers of falsehood who exploited the distress of the Musalman and chased him like the troops of ghosts. Intrigue and treacherous conspiracies were the breath of those people and violation of plighted words and perfidy to involve the Musalman in trouble were the characteristic features of their life. The usurpers indeed thanked their gods who had provided them with such subject people, as the ‘Brahman’—so serviceable and so pliant and servile. The Englishman’s claim to glory exclusively unto them of founding the British Empire in India is meanly selfish. A lion’s share belonged to the Brahman.”²⁸

After the failure of the Independence Movement, when excessive atrocities were committed on the Muslims, the British crushed them economically and educationally as well by bringing forward the Hindu community in place of the Muslims. Muslim estates and *Zamindaris*, snatched from their Muslim owners, were granted to the Brahamans. Sir Percival Griffith, in his book *British Impact on India* says:

“A main element in Clives after Plassey was the maintenance in power of the Nawab, Hindu officials very much against the wishes of the Nawab himself. This considerably strengthened the influence of the Company and was unjustified by the loyalty and ability, with which Ram Narayan, the Hindu Deputy Nawab of Bihar, resisted the attacks of the Emperor’s eldest son until the English came to the rescue. By this policy which perhaps provides part of the foundation for the modern Indian political belief that the general policy of the English in India was to divide and rule—Clives succeeded in keeping himself strong and the Nawab weak.”²⁹

Russell in his book *My Diary in India*, also admits that “Our siege of Delhi would have been quite impossible if the Rajas of Patiala and Jhind had not been our friends and if the Sikhs had not recruited in our battalions and remained quite in the Punjab. Sikhs at Lucknow did a great and good service.”³⁰

Besides above, the following few quotations from the work of one of the British official deputed in Bengal (1872) would also show that how the Muslims fell victim to the repressive policy of the British and their protagonists—the Hindus. These references draw the picture of Bengal but it is interesting to note that there was almost similar condition of Muslim community in other areas as well.

Muslims' Plight

Dr. Hunter in his book *Indian Mussalmans* says:

“At Murshadabad a Muhammadan court still plays its force of mimic state, and in every district the descendents of some line of princes sullenly and proudly eats his heart out among roofless places and weed-checked tanks. Of such families I have personally known several. Their houses swarm with grown-up sons and daughters, with grand children and nephews and nieces, and not one of the hungry crowd has a chance of doing anything for himself in life. They drag on a listless existence in patched-up verandas or leaky out houses, sinking deeper and deeper into a hopeless abyss of debt, till the neighbouring Hindu money-lender fixes a quarrel on them, and then in a moment a host of mortgages foreclose, and the ancient Mussalman family is suddenly swallowed up and disappeared for ever.”³¹

Discussing the position of Muslims in public services, the author says:

“It was impossible for a well-born Mussalman to become poor; at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich...there is no Government office in which a Muslim could hope for any post above the rank of a porter, messenger, filler of inkpots and mender of pens.”³²

It is further added:

“All sorts of employment, great and small, are being gradually snatched away from the Mohammadans, 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 Muhammadans in its Gazettes for exclusion from official post. Recently, when several vacancies occurred in the office of the Sunderbans Commissioner, that official in advertising them in the *Government Gazette*, stated that the appointment would be given to none but the Hindus.”³³

About the economic depression and poverty of Muslims in Bengal, Delawar Hussain, once a Deputy Magistrate, said in one of his statements that “I fear their case is nearly hopeless. In one of their large population,

they are without influence. The mass of them are extremely poor, mere peasants, or in the town, day-labourers. They have no commercial connection, and some of the few rich men are obliged to look to Government employment for a living, whereas the Hindus are rich and pushing. It is a struggle for existence, in which the Mohammadans are the weakest and so are going to the wall.”³⁴

One of the example is traced below to pen-picture the state of affairs in Orissa where the Muslims were economically ruined. In one of the petitions addressed to the Commissioner of the Division the Muslims of this area wrote:

“Truly speaking, in Orissa Mohammadans have been levelled down and down, with no hope of rising again. Born of noble parentage, poor by progressive, and destitute of patrons, we find ourselves in the position of a fish out of water... We would travel into the remotest corners of the earth, ascend the snowy peaks of Himalayas, wander the forlorn regions of Siberia, could we be convinced that by so traveling we could be blessed with a Government appointment of ten shillings a week.”³⁵

Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan in *The Communal Triangle in India*, further elaborate the socio-educational position of the Muslims. It is stated that:

“Not only were the Muslims economically crushed, but educationally and socially also their position was deliberately depressed by the Government. In 1870, the Mohammadan pleaders presented two memorials to the High Court pointing out that while closed days allowed to the Christians were sixty-two, and those to the Hindus fifty-two, only eleven were granted to the Muhammadans. The petition was called for by an order that the ‘native holidays’ observed by the High Court should be the same as allowed in the Government offices. In the government offices no Mohammadan holiday was sanctioned at all.”³⁶

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan

At this critical juncture when Muslims were at the mercy of their rulers and underlying motives of their sister community—the Hindus, a great Muslim reformer in the person of Sayyid Ahmad Khan appeared on the socio-political scene of Muslim India. He took up the cause of the Muslims and made his strenuous efforts to dispel all clouds of doubts one by one. “In fact the narrative of the later half of the nineteenth century seems to be woven round his personality. He awakened the communal consciousness of the depressed Indian Muslims and propagated the impulses that ultimately broadened into the demand for a separate Muslim homeland in the sub-continent.” Observing the heart-rendering sufferings of the Muslims, he dedicated himself to the political

rehabilitation and social regeneration of the Muslim community. According to Sayyid Tufail Ahmad, “the Indian Muslims realized their decay and down fall only about 1870, and this was the time when Sayyid Ahmad started his movement of reform. At that time the Indian Muslims realized for the first time that the responsibility for their progress and welfare, which was being formerly shouldered by the Muslim government, had now to be discharged by themselves, and their self-conscious, and they began to use their limited sources to regain their lost glory.”³⁷

In the words of S.M. Ikram. “Sayyid Ahmad filled a big void created in the life of the Muslim community by the disappearance of Muslim rule. But he did more. His long life, spanning almost a century, bridged the gulf between the medieval and the modern Islam in India. Himself a relic of the palmy days of the Great Mughals, he ushered in a new era. He gave the Indian Muslims a new cohesion, a new political policy, a new educational programme, a new prose, a new approach to their individual and national problems and a build up organization which could carry on his work. Before him there was all disintegration and decay. He rallied together the Indian Muslims, and came the first prophet of their new nationhood.”³⁸

Sir Sayyid besides his other pre-occupations, was also at one time led towards the path of reconciliation between the Hindus and the Muslims but in the course of time he was rather forced to believe that it seemed well nigh an impossible task. His efforts were directed towards

the advancement of all his people. The school at Gazipur (1863) and the British Indian Association was primarily set up for the benefit of both the communities. Besides, the Scientific Society was also financed by Sayyid Ahmad himself and his very close friend, Raja Kishan Das but his views took a slight turn in 1867 when at Benaras, he noticed with surprise, the advancement of the cause of Hindi by some Hindus. Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali in his book *Hayat-e-Javaid* writes:

Hindi-Urdu Controversy and Sir Sayyid's Prophecy

“In 1867 some Hindu leaders of Benaras resolved that, as far as possible, the use of Urdu language written in Persian script, should be discontinued in courts and should be replaced by the Hindi language, written in Devnagri script. This was the first occasion that Sayyid Ahmad felt that “it was now impossible for the Hindus and Muslims to progress as a single nation and for any one to work for both of them simultaneously.”³⁹

Sir Sayyid himself says:

“During those days when Hindi-Urdu controversy was going on in Benaras, one day I met Mr. Shakespeare who was posted there as the Divisional Commissioner. I was saying something about the education of the Muslims, and Mr. Shakespeare was listening with an expression of amazement, when, at

length he said, this is the first occasion when I have heard you speak about the progress of the Muslims alone. Before this you were always keen about the welfare for your countrymen in general. I said, “now I am convinced that both these communities (nations) will not join whole-heartedly in anything. At present, there is no open hostility between the two communities but on account of the so-called ‘educated’ people, it will increase immensely in future. He who lives, will see.” Mr. Shakespeare, thereupon, said, “I would be sorry if your prophecy were to prove true.” I said, “I am also extremely sorry, but I am convinced about the accuracy of this prophecy.”⁴⁰

When Hindu members of the Scientific Society made a move to bring Hindi in place of Urdu in its publication programme, Sir Sayyid was grieved to learn it and thereafter while writing to Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk in one of his letters said:

“I have learnt another news which has caused me so much grief and anxiety. At Babu Shev Parasad’s instigation, Hindus have generally resolved to do away with the Urdu language and Persian script, which is a monument of the Muslim rule in this country. I have heard that they have moved the Hindu members of the Scientific Society to see that Hindi should replace Urdu in the

Newspapers as well as books published by the Society. This is a proposal which will make Hindu-Muslim unity impossible. Muslims will never agree to Hindi, and if Hindus, also following the new move, insist on Hindi, they also will not agree to Urdu. The result will be that the Hindus and Muslims will be completely separated.”

“So far there is no danger on the other hand, I think that if the Muslims start business separately from the Hindus, they will gain and the Hindus will lose but there are two considerations against this course. One objection from my own temperament, which is keen for the welfare of all Indians—Hindus as well as Muslims—and the other fear is that at present the Muslims are under a cloud of ill-luck and adversity. They are under the influence of false and meaningless prejudices, and do not understand their vindictive than the Hindus and suffer much more from a sense of false pride. They are also poorer, and for these reasons, I fear that they may not be able to do so much for themselves.”⁴¹

About the same time, Urdu received a serious setback in Bihar where in the law courts, Bihari replaced Urdu. This encouraged Hindus’ efforts and they held several meetings in the Punjab and the North Western Provinces (later named U.P), signing memorials and

praying for the suppression of Urdu. They presented these memorials to the Government. This engaged the mind of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who began to devote the pages of his *Insititute Gazette* to the Urdu-Hindi controversy. In a letter addressed to Mahdi Ali, he wrote:

“It is quite disquieting for me to learn that on Babu Shiv Prasad’s initiative Hindus are determined to discard the Urdu language and the Persian script. There are a precious legacy of our glorious past. We cannot agree to their suppression. I also understand that Hindu members of the Scientific Society are asking for publication of its journal in Hindi instead of Urdu and also desire the translations to be made in Hindi. This is the way to a rift. If it comes to be, it would open an unending vista of split and strife between Hindus and Muslims. The rupture would never be healed...The two communities would be irrevocably rent asunder...So far so good...I am quite confident that if the two peoples ordered their affairs separately, Muslims stand to gain everything and Hindus to lose much...”⁴²

Sir Sayyid’s Comments about the Hindu Congress

Pondering over the aims and objects of the Indian National Congress, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan was alarmed as the Muslim community would be thrown into oblivion if they did not take any decisive step to safeguard their

interests in India. By 1887, the Congress had become centre of attention of all the high officials under the leadership of an influential Government official—Allan Octavian Hume. Sir Sayyid persuaded his people to keep aloof from the Congress and warned them of the consequent results of its basic demands. He was of the view that the Muslims would suffer a lot due to the Congress majority and thus shall be dominated and crushed in political field. According to him “the congress is in reality, a civil war without arms.”⁴³

Thus, in a speech delivered in December 1887 he made it clear to the Muslims that if higher services were to be filled after competitive examinations, they would all go to the community which had an early start in education, *viz*, Bengalis. Criticising the second demand of the Congress he said that they say “that the people should elect a section of the Viceroy’s council. They want to copy the English House of Lords and the House of Commons. The elected members are to be like members of the House of Commons. Now let us imagine the viceroy’s Council made in this manner, and let us suppose, first of all, that we have universal suffrage, as in America, and that all have votes. And let us also suppose that all the Mohammadan electors vote for a Mohammadan member...It is certain that the Hindu member will have four times as many because their population is four times as numerous. Therefore, we can mathematically prove that there will be four votes of the Hindu to every one vote for the Mohammadan. And now how can the Mohammadan guard their interests. It will be

like a game of dice, in which one man had four dice and the other only one.”⁴⁴

This speech left a lasting impression on the mind of the Muslim community of which a large majority welcomed it and generally kept aloof from the Congress. His speech at Merrut on March 14, 1888, also attracted the attention of Muslim India when he clearly disassociated himself and his community from the Congress. He said that “let the delegates of the National Congress become the state of heaven, or the sun itself I am delighted. But it was necessary and incumbent on me to show the falsity of the impression which by taking a few Mohammadan with them by pressure or by temptation they wished to spread that the whole Mohammadans nation had joined them.”⁴⁵

Again Sir Sayyid, as member of the Legislative Council, realized fully the implication of the democratic system of representative and very keenly observed the temperament and abilities of his Hindu colleagues. He was alarmed and his fears increased lest in this proposed system the Muslims might not once again be led to sweat, toil and tears.

Sir Sayyid’s Comments on Electoral Process

While speaking on Lord Ripon’s Local Self-Government Bill, he clearly expressed his thought-provoking views and speaking on the goal of the Congress he remarked:

“The system of representation by election means the representation of the views and

interests of the majority of the population and in countries where the population is composed of one race and one Creed, it is no doubt the best system that can be adopted. But my Lord, in a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourish, where there is no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education in its modern sense has not made an equal or proportionate progress among all the sections of the population, I am convinced that the introduction of the principle of election, pure and simple, for representation of various interests, on the Local Boards and District Councils would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations. So long as difference of race and creed and the distinctions of cast form an important element in the socio-political life of India, and influence her inhabitants in matters connected with the administration and welfare of the country at large the system of election, pure and simple cannot be safely adopted. The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community and the ignorant public would hold government responsible for introducing measures which might make the difference of race and creed more violent than ever.”⁴⁶

The same opinion of Sayyid was expressed by Theodore Beck, the Principle of the Muslim Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh in some articles of the *Pioneer*. In one of his articles he wrote that the parliamentary form of government was “unsuited to a country containing two or more nations tending to oppress the numerically weaker.”⁴⁷

Hindu-Muslim Riots of 1893 and Anti-Cow Killing Movement of Hindus Started by Tilk

Sayyid’s views for separation became clearer when during his life time an anti-Muslim movement started in various parts of the country resulting into Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay in 1893. He was deeply perturbed at this sphere of communal antagonism which had support of Tilak in Deccan and Bankim Chandar Chatterjee in Bengal and began to turn to an Anglo-Muslim alliance to save his community from the subjugation of the Hindus. This anti-Muslim movement convulsed a vast majority for playing music before mosques and laid greater emphasis on the Hindu celebrations. This system of *Ganapati* festivals and *Tilak’s* anti-cow killing society established in Deccan spread over the vast area of the country leading to far-reaching consequences. This was in response to the riots of Bombay referred to above.

Serious riots broke out in Bombay and Poona in 1893 and 1894 in which 75 persons were killed and 300 wounded.⁴⁸

“The movement effected a breach between the two communities was suggested by the riots that broke out

over the *Eid* celebrations of the Muslims all over the country. The riots at Azamgarh in June 1893, according to the official opinion of the Government of that province was “a direct result of the activities of the cow protection societies in that area...”⁴⁹

Tilak made these anti-cow-killing societies “one of his most potent tools” in order to rouse his co-religionists to energetic political action.

“Soon after the riots of 1893, the Hindus of Poona celebrated the first public *Ganapati* festival in 1893. Before that, the worship of this elephant-headed god of wisdom and prosperity was household ceremony. But after that it took the shape of a community worship, thus providing an ideal background for the nationalist agitation. The introduction of *Ganapati* festival was an expressive of Hindu revivalism with a political aim.”⁵⁰

“In 1894, the celebration of the *Ganapati* festival took place with more pomp and show. It lasted for ten days during which groups of persons paraded the streets of Poona, singing hymns and verses which intensified feelings against the Government and the Muslims.”⁵¹

It would be interesting to read the report of the Sedition Committee set up by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Justice Rowlatt in 1918:

“Public *Ganapati* festivals appear to have arisen out of an anti-Mohammadan movement started after riot which broke out in the city of Bombay in 1893 between

Hindus and Mohammadans. Agitators who were interested in widening the breach between Hindus and Mohammadans encouraged the holding of public celebrations in honour of *Ganapati*, the elephant-headed god of wisdom and success, on a much large scale than in previous years. The idea appears to have been to make the procession in which the god is carried to his final resting-place in the water as offensive as possible to Mohammadans. During the ten days celebrations of the festival, bands of young men paraded the streets of Poona, recited the verses calculated to intensify the feelings against Mohammadans and Government...on one occasion the police came in conflict with a melee estimated at from fifty to seventy men which deliberately provoked disorder by passing in procession a mosque in which Mohammadan religious gathering was assembled.”⁵²

Likewise the anti-cow-killing society of Tilak started violent opposition against the slaughter of cows. In pursuance of this policy the Hindus organized cow-protection societies in various parts of the country. They would send out groups of propagandists who would go from town to town and village to village to distribute pamphlets and leaflets called ‘The Cry of the Cow’. Their activities though directed towards Muslims and the British

but the Muslims being weak and less powerful fell victim to their agitation.

D.V. Jahamankar wrote:

“From 1893 to 1905, he devoted his energies reminding the Hindus of Maharashtra of the legacy of their past struggle against the alien Moslem rulers of India and the British who had replaced them. Tilak accused the British Government of having instigated the Moslem attacks on the Hindus.

On August 15, he wrote that “the Moslems have assumed a boorish and arrogant attitude which is the result of the encouragements they receive from the Government.”⁵³

In 1893, he advised his countrymen to reorganize the festival of *Ganesh*, “the Elephant God,” which included theatrical performance and religious songs based on the legends of Hindu mythology.⁵⁴

They were skillfully exploited to stir up hatred of *meleocho*, a term applied equally to the English and the Moslems. The festivals usually lasted for ten days. An American student of anthropology, Victor Barnouw, remarks that:

“First of all, he (Tilak) thought that a public ten-day festival would provide a good occasion for lectures and anti-British propaganda. Second, Tilak hoped that a public *Ganapati* festival would bring the Hindu

community together *vis-à-vis* the Moslems and provide a sense of Hindus solidarity.”⁵⁵

The societies known as *Gaurakshini Sabha*, were closely related to *Arya Samaj* for their founder was Dayananda himself. They began with the aim of the preservation and improvement of cattle. According to the opinion of the government of the North Western Provinces and Oudh, by the beginning of 1893, “by their activities they become instrumental in creating Hindu-Muslim bitterness, thus developing themselves into a monstrous vegetarian crusade, which sheds a great deal of blood in order that blood may not be shed.”⁵⁶

Until the Hindu-Muslim riots in Poona, the Hindus had always taken part in the annual *Muharram* festival of the Muslims. But after that Tilak advised his co-religionists not to take part in the celebrations or contribute towards their expenses, for he thought that the authorities were encouraging the aggressive behaviour of the Muslims and that it was time that the Hindus took a firm stand against this policy.⁵⁷

By doing so Tilak had two aims, one to serve as a tool against the British and secondly, he hoped that the annual observance of such a festival would help to organize the Hindu community against the Muslims.⁵⁸

In this movement Congress also took part. “That the Congress also took an interest in the movement is evident from the fact that after the Poona session of the Congress in 1885, Surendranath Banerjee, and other Congress delegates from various parts of India, attended a

crowded gathering in connection with the *Shivaji* memorial, and the former gave speech in which he requested the people to join the *Shivaji* festival inaugurated by Tilak.”⁵⁹

As a result Hindu-Muslim riots occurred at many places and many more Muslims who refused to abide by the Hindu sentiments in favour of the cow were subjected to a severe economic boycott. During this period the Mohammadan Defence Association was organized in December 1893 to protect the rights of the Muslims. This was done under the impression created by the communal frenzy and aggressiveness of the Hindus, who were exercising such a pressure against the civil rights of the Muslims.

It is worthy recording the fact that Hindu-Muslim tension had reached a climax in the nineteenth century. In addition to other developments, both the communities were occasionally seen in an open war against each other, particularly in religious field which was essentially the major cause of their continuous conflicts resulting into bloody communal riots. Before passing on to describe the crucial events of Hindu-Muslim cleavage occurring in the following century, it seems feasible to bring into account some of the communal riots which took place in the nineteenth century. In 1809 an angry Hindu mob in Banaras stormed the great Mosque of Aurangzeb. Besides, other fifty mosques were also destroyed and “the city was given up to pillage and slaughter, and a large number of Muslims were put to death.”⁶⁰

Communal Riots 1877-1897

A brief description of communal riots during the great struggle of 1857 has been given previously. In 1877 a series of riots took place between the Hindu and Muslim subjects of Nawab of Janjira. Communal disturbances increased at a tremendous rate in the year 1885 and 1893. Some serious riots occurred at Lahore and Karnal in 1885 which were very cruel. Later in 1886, Delhi also witnessed the same scene. In 1889 riots broke out at Dera Ghazi Khan, Ambala, Ludhiana and Hoshiarpur. Two years later Madras was also convulsed in the Hindu-Muslim riots and in 1893 worst type of riots occurred in Azamgarh, Bombay and Isakhel. During these series of riots, *Muharram* and *Dusehra* processions and cow-slaughter on the occasion of *Bakar Id* were the major causes of riots in which several Muslims were murdered and the Hindu mobs desecrated or destroyed the mosques. In 1893-94 riots occurred in the province of Bihar and in 1897 some bloody riots took place at Calcutta. Various Hindu organizations which had been founded to protect cattle forcibly from the Muslims led to serious conflicts between the two communities. Muslim butchers were occasionally attacked by large mobs of Hindus armed with *Lathis*. In the Calcutta riots, the controversial issue was the notorious act of demolishing a mosque.

In fact these communal riots may be justly regarded as an outward manifestation of that communal spirit which grew in intensity throughout the nineteenth century and eventually drove the Muslims and Hindus into two hostile camps in the arena of politics later on and

thereby the hovering giant clouds of antagonism and rivalry soon overcast the whole sky and brought rain, thunder and storm which drenched the whole country with blood and tears in less than half a century.

PARTITION OF BENGAL (1905)

As referred to previously the underhand activities of the anti-Muslim Movement gathered greater momentum under the leadership of Tilak, the first strategist of this political movement who was convinced that the only way of extracting concessions from the British was by exhausting them with unending agitation and believed that Hinduism was strong enough to afford to alienate Muslims. A series of shocks caused great resentment in the ranks of Muslim community, i.e., the Hindi-Urdu controversy, the riots and *Ganapati* festivals with a more tantalizing communal issue brought forward by Bankim Chandra Chatterji's novel *Amanda Math* which preached hatred against the Muslims in India and inspired the leader with religious fanaticism of the vilest form. This novel centered round the process of routing out the *meleche*, the Muslims. This notorious song of the *Banda Matram* was sung on each and every occasion when fresh recruits were enlisted in order to raid and destroy the Muslim inhabitants. The Congress raised anti-Muslim cry from its platform with this song and greatly agitated the feelings of the Muslim community.

New Viceroy Lord Curzon

Meanwhile, Lord Curzon, the new Viceroy had come to India in 1899 who framed a scheme which was purely on administrative basis of partitioning of Bengal and was to a great extent in favour of the Muslims. This scheme was implemented in October 1905. But this was looked with anguish by the Hindus particularly those of West Bengal who charged the Government with having favoured the Muslims. The educated Hindu class feared that the creation of a Muslim majority province would tend to deprive them of their existing monopoly of influence in offices. The same was the position of personal interest in other sections of the Bengali Hindu classes. Gradually this feeling spread to other provinces of the country. The Muslims on the other hand interpreted this resentment was nothing less than an attempt to maintain their (Hindus) superiority over Muslims in all fields particularly in public services. The seeds of Hindu-Muslim discord which had been sown long before, now grew up in a full-fledge piousness tree laden with hatred bitter feelings in the core of Hindu community against the Muslims. This was essentially the signal and the major installment of a series of measures adopted later on leading to the consequent partition.

Hindu Congress Reaction against the Partition

Before the partition, when the Government was working on the Plan, the Congress became active to prevent the Government materializing the Plan. In the

annual session of 1903, the Congress passed a resolution and protested against such a “preposterous scheme.”⁶¹

In 1904, in the annual session of the Congress it (partition scheme) was severely criticized and was condemned as “a most arbitrary and unsympathetic evidence of irresponsible autocratic statesmanship.”⁶²

The Hindus began to organize their opposition, volunteers were recruited, papers were circulated and a vigorous propaganda campaign initiated. The All-India Congress supported the move against the partition of Bengal.”⁶³

In the Congress session of 1905 a storm of protests was raised against the partition. Gokhale in his presidential address remarked: “The question that is uppermost in the minds of us all at this moment, is the partition of Bengal,” and a “cruel wrong has been inflicted on our Bengali brethren and the whole country has been stirred to the deepest depths of sorrow and resentment, as had never been the case before.”⁶⁴

After the implementation of the scheme by Curzon, the President of the Congress declared that the scheme was carried out in the “fiercest opposition that any government measure has encountered during the last half a century.”⁶⁵

In the same session, Banerjee claimed that a reversal of the scheme should be made by Government. “He claimed that the Congress had organized 500 protest meetings during the past two years.”⁶⁶

Besides Congress protests, several meetings were held in Calcutta where almost always, prominent Congress leaders took part. A large meeting held on March 18, 1904, under the auspices of the British Indian Association at the Calcutta Town Hall with Raja Pearsy Mohan Mukherjee presiding. Prominent Congress leaders attended this gathering and gave speeches in which they vehemently criticized the partition scheme.⁶⁷

Another protest meeting was held on August 7, 1905, at the Town Hall. It was also attended by prominent Congress leaders. Resolutions were passed which protested against the procedure of the partition scheme. It was resolved that the whole thing was “unnecessary, arbitrary and unjust” and had aroused a “feeling of distrust against the present administration.”⁶⁸

Hindu Press played a unique part. Prominent were *Bengalee* and the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* papers through whose columns Surenderanath Banerjee carried on the agitation and declared “we are truly on the eve of a revolution involving a disruption of existing ties and a thorough dislocation of current business.”⁶⁹

The partition at length produced an outburst of anger amongst the Hindus. Hindu leaders described the partition scheme as unwise and unfortunate measure. Surenderanath Banerjee, the ‘trumpeter’ of the anti-partition movement, said that the announcement fell like a bombshell. We felt that we had been insulted, humiliated and tricked.

Talking on the partition question, he said:

“...A cruel wrong has been inflicted on our Bengalee brethren, and the whole country has been strived to its deepest depths in sorrow and resentment, as had never been the case before. The scheme of partition, concocted in the dark and carried out in the face of the fiercest opposition that any government measure has encountered during the last half-a-century, will always stand as a complete illustration of the worst features of the present system of bureaucratic rule—its utter contempt for public opinion, its arrogant pretensions to superior wisdom, its reckless disregard of the most cherished feelings of the people, the mockery of an appeal to its sense of justice, its cool preference of service interests to those of the governed”...As soon as it was known that partition of some sort was contemplated, meeting after meeting of protest was held, till over five hundred public meetings in all parts of the province had proclaimed in no uncertain voice that the attempt to dismember a compact and homogeneous province, to which the people were passionately attached and of which they were justly proud, was deeply resented and would be resisted to the uttermost.”⁷⁰

Referring to the partition question, Rash Behari Ghose said:

“...this brings me to the unrest in Bengal, the partition of which has led to tragic resentment which ought to have been foreseen by the author of that measure. One of its objects was to strengthen the Mahamedan influence in East Bengal. The influence has been strengthened; but its strength has been manifested in a peculiar way...I wish to speak with moderation but what are we to think when a Session Judge divides witness into two classes, Hindus and Mahamedans, and prefers the evidence of Mahamedans to Hindus, because they are Mahamedans. This awed bias has naturally alienated Hindus who are burning with resentment.”⁷¹

Commenting on the partition question Rash Behari Ghose again remarks, that:

“If the Punjab is quite it is only because the grievances of the people have been redressed. If Bengal is still in a disturbed condition, it is only because the partition of Bengal is a festering sore which will not be healed. Let the Bengali speaking people be placed under a Governor with an Executive Council, and you will see the winter of discontent made glorious summer. Force is

no remedy, and the least security for the peace of the county is the conviction that all real grievances will be redressed; not deportations or coercion acts; and I have no hesitation in saying that timely concessions alone can arrest the progress of the discontent which, though at present is a cloud, not bigger than a man's hand, may in time overshadow the whole land.”⁷²

Criticising the partition of Bengal, Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya said:

“It is unnecessary for me to say what an amount of discontent bitterness this question has created in Bengal. That discontent and that bitterness has travelled far beyond the limits of Bengal, and has produced a most deplorable influence in the country...The partition as it has been made cannot be defended. It ought therefore to be mended. If the Government will modify the partition it will restore peace to Bengal, and win the goodwill and gratitude of millions of men there...”⁷³

A contemporary Hindu observer remarked that “it was from the end of 1906 the Hindus became conscious of a new kind of hatred for the Muslim. We began to hear angry comments in the mouths of the elders that the Muslims were coming out quite openly in favour of partition and on the side of the English...A cold dislike

for the Muslims settled down in our hearts, putting an end to all real intimacy of relationship.”⁷⁴ The same author again says that “even before we could read we had been told that the Muslims had spread their religion in India with the Quran in one hand and the sword in the other, that the Muslim rulers had abducted our women, destroyed our temples, polluted our sacred places.”⁷⁵ On the very day when partition was to be implemented, the Hindus observed the day of national mourning in Calcutta, wore black clothes, covered their heads with ashes, suspended business and observed fast while far-numbering amongst them brought out a huge procession shouting piercing cries condemning—and in the evening held a meeting where vows were made to undo the dismemberment of their province.

On the partition day, the foundation stone of the Federation Hall in Calcutta was laid by Anand Mohan Bose a former President of the Congress. A proclamation signed by him was read in English and Rabindranath Tagore followed him with a Bengali translation. It reads:

“Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the Partition of Bengal, in spite of the universal protest of the Bangalee nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our province, and to maintain the integrity of our race.”⁷⁶

The Hindus gave religious colour to this issue. The anti-partition agitation found Sivaji, the Marahatta hero, as

a national hero in Bengal and Tilak started fair in honour of the Marahatta leader. In fact the Bengali Hindus miscalculated and misunderstood the partition and stigmatized it as selfish, unpatriotic and treacherous on the part of the Muslims and the British. To express their resentment the agitators started *Swadeshi Movement*, or the boycott of the British goods. The Hindus insisted the Muslims to participate in this movement but this was distasteful and unacceptable to them. The Hindus even used physical coercion against those Muslim shopkeepers and traders who showed reluctance to follow. This kind of restless atmosphere resulted into some communal riots in some parts of the province.

With the passage of time after the division of the province the Hindu leaders continued their nefarious activities mobilizing their community against the Muslims in one or the other. “The use of prejudiced epithets towards Muslims became common in the press as well as on the platform. Pseudo-historians retailed stories of Muslim vandalism in the past. Sayyid Ahmad was branded as a traitor to the country and the Muslims as the tools and puppets of the government. Constant efforts were made to irritate and provoke the Muslims. Every day the Hindu newspapers reported that the Government supported the Muslims and was inciting them to attack Hindus to whom rightful protection was refused. They urged the Hindus to arm and drill for self-protection.”⁷⁷ One of them went so far as to say that “the desire for revenge on the part of the Hindu community will not be satisfied even with the burning alive of all Muslim

goondas (rascals) and of all the officials who are assisting them.”⁷⁸

Hindu-Muslim Unrest

This vindictive language and anti-propaganda movement caused great unrest amongst the Muslims. They resented it and at some places Hindu-Muslim conflict seemed inevitable. In May 1907, the Muslim peasants rose against their Hindu landlords and creditors at Mymensingh. At Calcutta a similar riot broke out. “Hysterical Hindu youth, trained in physical culture clubs and armed with sticks (*Lathis*), picketed Muslim shops whose owners refused to join hands with the *Swadeshi* cause. In the thick of this fight it appeared that the Muslims found themselves entirely at the mercy of Hindus. A telegramme from Simla to London stated that the Hindu leaders had permitted the Muslim traders to buy and sell English goods as a gesture of good-will. Hindu dispatches to British journals attributed the unrest to the belief that the government was out to aid and abet the Muslims against the Hindus. The Muslim Leader and Jurist, Ameer Ali, pointed out that: “This was very much like the proverbial red herring trailed across the path of the timorous administrator to frighten him lest justice to the Muslims be construed as favouritism. The embittered feelings between the Hindus and the Muslims were no longer confined to Bengal. Other parts of the country were also affected. Thus in the Municipal elections of 1909 in the United Provinces, the Hindus were opposing all those Muslim candidates who would not pledge loyalty to the Indian National Congress.”⁷⁹

In the words of N.C. Chaudhuri, “the partition of Bengal left a permanent legacy of estrangement between the Hindus and the Muslims.” This was observed in every field, in streets, in schools the Hindu students refused to sit with the Muslim students and as a result to meet in Hindu demand each class was divided into two sections for each community’s students.⁸⁰ The bitterness against the Muslims had increased so violently and was so deep that the Hindus could not tolerate the Muslims at any cost. “Thus the minds had been divided long before the territories were partitioned.” Hindu papers condemned them as traitors and about the same time Tilak and Hindu nationalists of the Punjab were heard of expelling Muslims from India as had been done in Spain several centuries back. In this context it would be necessary to present a true picture of the feelings of a Hindu Prince, Maharaja Sir Pertab Singh of Indor as told by Sir Walter Lawrence, one of the members on the personal staff of Lord Curzon. Walter says that:

“Tolerant as he was he hated Muslims. But I never realised the depth of his hatred till I was leaving India. Sir Pertab had come up to Simla to be present at a farewell dinner Lord Curzon gave to my wife and myself the night before we left, and after dinner Sir Pertab and I sat up till two in the morning, talking of his hopes and ambitions was to annihilate the Muslim people in India. I deprecated this prejudice and mentioned Muslim friends known to both of us. ‘Yes’

he said, I like them, too, but very much liking them 'dead'. I have often thought of this conversation. One may know Indians for years and suddenly a time comes and they open their hearts and reveal what is in them..."⁸¹

The Muslim leaders of the period were compelled to conclude that the absorption of Muslims into Indian nationalism was out of question. As a result the Muslims conscious of their declining position became alarmed and desired to protect their rights. The partition though a beneficial measure for the Muslims yet it caused immeasurable suffering and dragged the Muslims into the arena of politics and brought the two communities into open rivalry. In fact, it shook the Muslim community out of their political lethargy and the Muslims began to assert their views and demands forcefully.

Formation of the All India Muslim League

During this period of great unrest the Muslim notables set up a purely Muslim organization known as the All-India Muslim League in Bengal in 1906. The League can be claimed as the child of four important factors. "Sayyid's views of Muslims as a separate entity, the Hindu character of the Indian National Congress which did not allow the Muslims to associate themselves with other Indians, the agitation of Bengal which conveyed to the Muslims the Hindu designs of domination and the Muslim desire to have their own exclusive electorates for all representative institutions." This period is predicted to be a

spell in which the Hindu-Muslim conflict increased at a tremendous rate and their rift and enmity continued to widen and deepen with the passage of time.

In 1908, dealing with the subject in the session of the League, Sir Ali Imam in his presidential address said, “We, the educated Muslims of India, have no less love for the land of our birth than the members of other communities inhabiting India. India is not only the land of our birth; we are tied to her by the sacred associations of ages. We yield to none in veneration and affection for our motherland...But when I find the most advanced province of India put forward the sectarian cry *Bande Matram* as the national cry, and the sectarian worship of Sivaji as the national hero-ship and the sectarian *Rakhibandhan* (a Hindu Sacrament) as a national observance my heart is filled with despair and disappointment.”⁸²

Early in 1907, Mushtaque Hussain expressed his fears in the session of the Mohammadan Educational Conference at Karachi. He said, “Muslims in India constitute about one-fifth of her population. It is clear, therefore, that with the lapse of British rule, authority should pass on those who are four times as numerous as we. What is going to be our lot then? Our honour, life, religion and belongings would all be endangered. Even under the powerful arm of the British we have our difficulties with our neighbours.”⁸³

Demand for Separate Electorates

It was due to sheer devotion of enthusiastic Muslim leadership that the partition of Bengal came to stay and

their pray for separate representation was answered by the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 but to a great surprise to the Muslims, the Hindus saw it with great disliking. They did not appreciate their inclusion and, thinking in a different attitude, felt that the essence of reforms had slipped out of their grasp. Bengali Hindus were the first to organize an impassioned protest against autonomy in Muslim franchise.

Annulment of Partition of Bengal (1911)

The reversal of the partition was a severe blow to the Muslim community and their suspicion at length proved true. The Muslims were greatly perturbed at the declaration of the Annulment of the Partition of Bengali. While the Muslims were shocked, irritated and alienated giving rise to distrust in the future promises and actions of the Government, the Hindus on the other hand lighted bonfires triumphantly throughout the two Bengals. The Congress expressed its full throated gratitude. The Hindu press wrote columns after columns in appreciation of the decision of the British Government and the new Viceroy, Lord Harding.

In the Twenty-Sixth Congress Session held at Calcutta in 1911, Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar talking on the Annulment of the Partition said that “The greatest wound in the heart of India was the Partition of Bengal—a measure which more than anything else contributed to the general unrest of recent years, which inflicted a grievous wrong upon the Bengali race and helped to implant those feelings of racial and religious antagonism between

Hindus and Mahamedans which we all deplore and which have given rise to some most unfortunate troubles in the administration of the county. The leaders of Bengal from the very beginning had warned the Government against the evils that were sure to follow in the track of that illustrated measures but for years these warnings were addressed to deaf ears...”⁸⁴

The Muslim Reaction

The Muslims took this decision with great dislike and cursed the Government for her false practice. While the Muslims were left completely sullen and disillusioned, the Muslim leaders and intelligentsia reviewed the situation which can well be assessed from the writings of Mushtaq Hussain. He wrote:

“Muslims detest this measure. Crown in Britain had, from time to time, declined to reopen Curzon’s decision. The reunion of two Bengals proves that the authority is crippled. In future no one can trust the pledged word of British Government...We shall not agitate for the reversal of the fateful verdict...But we do insist that East Bengal Muslims should be assured (in one form or another) the benefits which the partition brought them...Muslim patience has already been tried to the limit by hostile British policies towards Tripoli and Persia...This latest knock merely heightens our frustration and deepens our despair.

“...This drastic measure has embittered our people. They are beginning to see that they do not gain much keeping away from the Congress. Some would even wind up the League, and join the Congress *en bloc*. This is exactly what the Congress has wanted all along. But we do not agree with this. This is no point in sacrificing our own communal organization and getting swallowed up in a powerful majority. This is the way to self-destruction. The rivulet loses its identity in joining the ocean. We are not averse to the Congress on account of our loyalty to the Government. Loyalty is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end. Loyalty is always conditional. It cannot stand impossible strains...It is clear as the day that Muslims can no longer put their faith in the Government..... We have to learn a lesson from all that has happened...The Government deems it unnecessary to talk to us about our future. Thus (i.e., the Royal announcement) was like an artillery cavalcade ruthlessly trampling over Muslim corpses.”⁸⁵

Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, observed in 1912 in the session of the League held at Calcutta that:

“No responsible person could discover a valid reason for reopening the issue since the agitation against partition had almost

died out. The partition lasted till 1911. Our adversaries felt sore at the prospect of Muslims coming into their own. Actually, we got nothing substantial out of it. But whatever little we secured was lost to our compatriotism, who moved heaven and earth to wrench it back from us. They boycotted British goods. But all this meant nothing to the Government. The Muslims did not participate in their carnival of crime...They remained loyal as a community...Muslim cultivators stood to gain by the partition. Their Hindu landlords tried to drag them into the battle. But they did not respond. This caused Hindu-Muslim tension...The Government restored to a repressionist policy. But that did not mend matters. On the one hand, there was a wealthy and disaffected community. On the other hand, there were poor Muslims who had sided with the authority. All this went on (for years). Suddenly the Government revoked the partition for administrative reason...We were not consulted about it. But we bore it with patience...”⁸⁶

In this angry chorus though quite late but with great bitterness, Maulana Mohammad Ali said, “The Muslims of East Bengal had been made to fight the battles of their rulers...and now it was no longer convenient for the rulers to continue the fight, they made their own peace with all

convenient speed...It would be hard to discover in history a more ignoble instance of betrayal, in which loyalty had been rewarded with deprivation of recently recovered rights, and contentment had been punished as the worst of crimes..." He further said in the special session of the Congress held at Coconada in 1923 that "the emancipated slaves were, so to speak, once more sold into bondage, and *who dies not know that revenge is sweet?* Their old masters could have been excused if in being placed once more in the position of a slave-driver they used the lash and the bastinado a little too lavishly...This left the Muslims to the mercy of those against they had been as auxiliaries."⁸⁷

After the Annulment of Partition when the Government in order to console the inhabitants of East Bengal to establish a University at Dacca to bring higher education to its backward people the Congress leaders again showed their customary jealousy and indifferent attitude as the scheme lowered the prestige of the Calcutta University, which was predominantly Hindu in its influence. They organized a deputation under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjee to wait on the Viceroy. They brought forward a usual logic and argued that "another University in the province would destroy the harmony of national life, and accentuate the existing differences between the inhabitants of the areas served by the two different Universities: they warned that the new University would make a poor start for want of sufficient academic talent and doubted the value of an institution of

higher learning for a primary agricultural people like the Muslims.”⁸⁸

Cawnpur Mosque

The communal feelings because of the reversal of partition had not died down that a new development of cleavage was created by the Hindus. The Muslims were once again hit hard and expressed their resentment. To add to the sufferings of the Muslim community another issue further agitated the Muslim India. In July 1913, a mosque in Cawnpur was demolished by the City Municipal Board. This incident aroused strong feelings amongst Muslims who immediately called for redress. They started vehement protests against it but the authorities continued to ignore their feelings. At large the Muslims of Cawnpur gathered at the *Id Ghah* in August and agitated procession estimated to be over 20,000 marched towards the place with bricks in order to reconstruct the mosque. The police in the meanwhile approached headed by Magistrate namely Tylor and opened fire on the mob in which numerous Muslims were killed on the spot and many more received heavy injuries. These events proved that the Hindus were not willing to tolerate anything that could help the Muslims towards their material advancement. They were out to destroy even their self-respect by pulling down their places of worship. This attitude created a gulf between the two communities which became virtually unbridgeable.

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Chapter III

The Middle Phase: 1906-1935

Minto-Morely Reforms

As stated earlier, the period between 1906-1911 was marked by a rift between the Hindus and Muslims but later from the outbreak of the World War I, till 1922, the two communities were seen some what cooperating on some issues but these hours of friendly cooperation were merely momentary and short-lived. When the war broke out, the country was in state of political uncertainty. There was growing discontent with the working of the Minto-Morely Reforms crystallized into an insistant constitutional movement. Both the communities had for a moment found a common political platform and spoke the same political language. They cooperated against what they considered a common enemy—the British. They met in a joint session at Lucknow in 1916 and formulated common reform proposals for the authorities for implementation. The highlights of this pact commonly known as the Lucknow Pact, were that it was the first Hindu-Muslim pact, in modern history and the first occasion when the Hindus not only conceded separate electorates to the Muslims but agreed to the quantum of Muslim representation in different provincial legislatures and at the centre.

Khilafat Movement

During this period another issue brought the two communities a bit closer (for a short span) and that was the *Khilafat* question. The British had as usual repeated their practice of making and breaking promises with the Muslims. After the war as against the promises made with the Muslims, the British showed scant regard for the sanctity of the holy places and they made a strong plea for the virtual British suzerainty over Hajaz. But the Muslims desired that the custody of the holy places should be vested back in the Khilafat which was essentially a religious institution for the Muslims. To voice these grievances, a Muslim deputation left for England headed by Maulana Mohammad Ali. It is interesting to note that the Hindus, also joined the Muslims in this agitation under the leadership of M.K. Gandhi but he had his own motive of advancing the cause of non-cooperation. In other words he wanted to use the Muslims as useful instrument in this war of nerves while some other Hindu leaders were openly critical of what they called the unwisdom of mixing up the *Khilafat* issue with that of national freedom.

Gandhi's Treachery

Later as expected by the hatred of Hindu mind, they deceived their sister community. When agitation was in it's full swing and the 'Ali Brothers' were jailed, Gandhi, the leader of the non-cooperation movement receded his steps and called off his movement abruptly and un-expectedly. Thus the end of this movement automatically brought about an end of the *Khilafat*

Movement as well as that of the Hindu-Muslim momentary alliance and obviously old pattern of inter-communal relations were revived.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in his *Thoughts on Pakistan* writes that "...those who have studied the course of Hindu-Muslim politics for the last twenty years cannot but admit to a feeling that this transformation, this parting of the two, was on the way. For the course of Hindu-Muslim politics has been marked by a tragic and ominous parallelism. The Hindus and Muslims have trodden parallel paths. No doubt they went in the same direction. But they never travelled the same road. In 1885, the Hindus started the Congress to vindicate the political rights of Indians as against the British. The Muslims refused to be hired by the Hindus in the Congress posing for and speaking in the name of all Indians. Between 1885 to 1906, the Muslims kept out of this stream of Hindu politics. In 1906, they felt the necessity for the Muslim community taking part in political activity. Even then they dug their own separate channel for the flow of Muslim political life. The flow was to be controlled by a separate political organization, called the Muslim League. Ever since the formation of the Muslim League the waters of Muslim politics have flown in this separate channel. The Congress and the League have lived apart and worked apart. Their aims and objects have not always been the same. They have even avoided holding their annual sessions at one and the same place lest the shadow of one should fall upon the other.

The two have met but only for negotiations, a few times with success and most times without success. They met in 1916 at Lucknow and their efforts were crowned with success. In 1925 they met last without success. In 1928 a section of the Muslims were prepared to meet the Congress. Another section refused to meet...The point is that they have met but have never merged. Only during the *Khilafat* agitation did the waters of the two channels leave their appointed course and flow as one stream in one channel. It was believed that nothing would separate the waters which God was pleased to join. But that hope was belied. It was found that there was something in the composition of the two waters which would compel their separation within a few years of their confluence but as soon as the substance of the *Khilafat* cause vanished, the water from the one stream reacted violently to the presence of the other, as one does to a foreign substance entering one's body. Each began to show a tendency to throw out and separate from the other. The result was that when the waters did separate they did with such impatient velocity and determined violence—if one can use such language in speaking of water—against each other that thereafter they have been flowing in channels far deeper and far more distant from each other than those existing before. Indeed the velocity and violence with which the two waters have burst out from the pool in which they had temporarily gathered have altered the direction in which they were flowing. At one time their direction was parallel. Now they are opposite. One is flowing towards

the east as before. The other has started to flow in the opposite direction towards the west.¹

Period of Open Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims

The twenties represent a period of transition, conflict, and civil strife in the Indian sub-continent. The two communities were now openly on war against each other and the story of these years is largely a record of free fights, arson, pillage and desecration. Planned rioting caused by efficient organizations flared up at the slightest provocation, leaving behind a legacy of bitterness and a passion for reprisals.

The Hindus by this time dismissed the Muslims' demands as extravagant whereas the Muslims had come to look upon separate electorate as their life line. According to K.M. Pannikar: "...by this time Hindus had come to regard India as their country in special sense, and looked upon all Muslims as foreigners, believing that by conversion to Islam a Hindu ceased to be an Indian."² As referred to earlier about the activities of Arya Samaj (founded in 1875), it had become very active and making scurrilous attacks on Islam and perturbing the Muslim community to a great extent. It launched an ambitious scheme of political emancipation of the Hindus based on inculcating a deep enmity and hatred against the Muslims and their religion. Being a deadly foe of Muslims and their religion its' main preaching was that Hindu Nationalism cannot thrive unless Muslims as a distinct entity in India are totally eliminated. Hardayal, its foremost leader, did not believe in Hindu-Muslim unity and wanted the Hindus

to be the leaders and the Muslims to act as their camp-followers alone. The following version of the leader reflects his trend of thinking about the position of the Muslims.

“In using the word *Sawarajiya* and appealing to the people we arouse *Hindu Associations*. We would ask the Muhammadans to join us but we must *keep their masses under Hindu leadership*. If you give them Muhammadan leaders you tread on dangerous grounds.” Again, he was not in favour of any joint Hindu-Muslim state in India and was of the view that state must belong to the Hindus and the Muslims may live in it as serfs. He said:

“To attain *Sawaraj* we do not need Muslim assistance, nor it is our desire to establish a joint rule...If you attain *Sawaraj* with Muslim help, eternal will be your dependence on the Muslims. Leave them, therefore, all alone.”³

Shuddhi and Sanghatan Movements

This organization was reorganized in early twenties with a double programme of *Shuddhi* founded by Swami Shardhananda and Sanghatan. *Shuddhi* literally meant purification as orthodox Hinduism regarded all non-Hindus as unclean. Their aim was to bring Indian Muslims back to Hinduism. They started a campaign of conversion in selected areas.

The fact that the movement shed a distinct political bias made the tension worse. “In a country like India,

Shuddhi ceases to be merely theological or dogmatic one, but assumes the wider significance of a political and national movement.”⁴

Hindu Mahasabha

The other Hindu organization known as Hindu Mahasabha was started as a multi-purpose body to take care of the Hindu's socio-religious interests but in 1924 its sphere had extended to political field as well.

After the reorganization of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1923, a three-fold programme was launched for the aim of establishing Hindu Raj.

The Hindu Mahasabha, when it adopted its new ideology in 1923, struck upon a novel plan for creating the spirit of aggressiveness among the Hindus and raising the fear that the name of the Musalman inspired in the Hindus nothing but hatred. It started a series of well-planned riots through the length and breadth of the country, staging small battle-fields in the streets of cities where the Hindu could learn how to face the Muslim in the game of bloodshed... “So long as the Hindu retained a whole-some fear of the Musalman there could be no riots. The riots were the course of training by which the Hindus were to be militarized.”⁵

This body started a battle for Hindu-rights, and began mass conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism and left no stone unturned in making country-wide arrangements for the instruction of the Hindu youth in the art of self-defence. Though founded in early twenties it

gathered momentum and in due course overshadowed the Hindu Congress. It was in fact the philosophy of the Mahasabha to form a united front against the Muslims and its forum was undoubtedly a graveyard of Hindu-Muslim unity. Below is the analysis of a few instances of this body's principal objectives against the Muslims from 1924-27.

While Muslim interests were being treated as a class by themselves, Hindu rights were nowhere safe. The Hindu community was faced with total extinction; while *Sawaraj* was desirable which would remain a dream so long as Hindus did not unite among themselves. The Hindus had helped the Muslims in the *Khilafat* Movement and braved many a tribulation, but the result was Malabar, Multan and Kohat. If the Hindus were strong and well-organized, the Muslims would woo them. Unity would never be brought about by pacts. Daily riots in the country were a clear evidence of Muslim high-handedness. The Hindus must be supreme over the land in which they have lived for centuries. In order to achieve this supremacy every Hindu must strive hard to make success of *Shuddhi* and *Sanghatan*. *Shuddhi* was not a modern concept, but as old as Hinduism itself. Even if Hinduism had never been a proselytizing religion in the past, it might become one under the new stresses. If Muslims converted other people to their faith, there was no harm if the Hindus did the same; *Swaraj* was not worth having if it had to be purchased at the cost of Hinduism. The Hindus should rid themselves of an innate feeling of inferiority and should teach their children to be lion-hearted in the defence of

their faith. It was their sacred obligation to protect their women and children. If they had true Brahamans among them, the ghastly cow-slaughter would have ceased for ever. Untouchability, which only helped to swell the number of Muslims in India must go. The moment an untouchable embraced Islam, he ceased to be an untouchable. The numerical strength of the Hindus should be increased by every possible means.

It was further stated that the Muslims with their connections and attachments outside India had managed to keep in touch with what was happening in other Muslim countries. Anxiety was expressed particularly over the Hindu minority in the North West Frontier Province. The best guarantee for the protection of its non-Muslim population and otherwise against foreign aggression lay in keeping the province without representative institutions. India should have unitary government with provincial and local governments deriving their power from the central government. There should be no redistribution of provinces for the purpose of manufacturing majorities. Separate electorates were productive of sectional jealousies and should be discontinued. *“The playing of music before mosques was an inherent Hindu right and must not be interfered with.”*⁶ Punjab and Bengal mattered specially to these Hindu nationalist movements. The only remedy for them was to cut the Muslims’ number short by means of conversion. Hindu nationalist leaders like Pandit Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Raja Narindra Nath and others played a distinctive role in suppressing the Muslim

community at a tremendous rate by means of their repressive policies.

Hindu Leaders' Hatred against Muslims

The following are the few utterances of certain Hindu leaders who openly preached their views condemning the Muslims. The Editor of the *Daily Paratap*, said:

“The question of *Shuddhi* is a matter of life and death for the Hindus. Muslims have grown from zero to 70 million and Christians are 4 millions. It is difficult for 220 million of Hindus to live in the face of 70 million Muslims...A religion should be propagated for the sake of religion but Hindus are forced to adopt this procedure on account of several other reasons.”⁷ Another Hindu nationalist leader spoke in same tone in Delhi:

“Hindu-Muslim unity is impossible without *Shuddhi*. When all Muslims will be converted to Hinduism, everybody in India would be Hindu and then no power on earth can thwart our march to freedom.”⁸

This programme was even taken up by Hindu poets who incited the Hindu masses as such:

“Our mission of *Shuddhi* should in no way be made to suffer. This golden opportunity is God sent. *O Hindus!* If there is any faith in you, let there remain not a single Muslim in this world.”⁹

Rajendra Prashad in defence of *Shuddhi* said:

“The *Shuddhi* movement of Swami Shardhananda has come in for a great deal of criticism both from the nationalists and Musalmans. Whatever one may have to say about its opportuneness at that particular moment, it is difficult to understand how Christians and Musalmans can object to it on merits. They are constantly engaged in their proselytizing mission and converting Hindus to their own faith. 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...”¹⁰

A few other statements of prominent Hindu leaders (delivered between 1906-27) are given below to comprehend their intentions.

“Just as England is for the English, France for the French, so is India for the Hindus...If the Muslims wish to cooperate with us unconditionally, we shall welcome them; otherwise Hindus should march on alone.”¹¹

“The *Swaraj* movement has been started by the Hindus for the last several hundred years. The Hindu *Sanghatan* is to give a practical shape to the law of *Manu*.”¹²

“When Hindus *Sanghatan* will result in attaining *Sawarajya*, then we shall turn towards Muslims and Christians. Our policy shall be declared. There shall be no need of mutual understanding or compromise. The Hindu *Mahasabha* will proclaim its decision defining the right and duties of Muslims and Christians in the new National Government of India and announce the conditions of *Shuddhi*.”¹³

“I think that the future of Muslims will be very dark unless they become nationalist. If they are willing to remain religious fanatics and agents of British Government then people of India (i.e. Hindus) would rise against them. Their salvation lies only on the path of nationalism.”¹⁴

“If India can attain *Sawaraj*, it is possible only through culture...Hindus alone are the torch-bearers of the ancient culture of India. Some people ask, should, then, Muslims leave the country? I do not subscribe to this thesis. Just as small rivulets join the Ganges and still it does not change its name, similarly the basic culture in India shall be only Hindu...The real quarrel is not of religion but of culture.”¹⁵

“The fundamental principle of the *Sawaraj* Party should be that every Indian child

should study only Indian literature, adopt only Indian culture and follow only faiths of Indian origin. If any community refuses to accept it, then it should be turned out of India to the desert of Arabia.”¹⁶

“Hindus should try to get British patronage and keep the key posts of the administration in their hands. Their first duty is to weaken the Muslims with the help of the British and strengthen the Hindus. It is only when this step has been fully carried out that *Sawaraj* can be attained.”¹⁷

Playing of Music Before Mosques

During this period public peace was shattered over some trivial questions like playing music before mosques and the slaughter of cow, which let loose intense rivalries resulting to blood-shed. In twenties it had become so prominent that the Hindus would insist on doing this practice and on the other hand the Muslims would not surrender. They would not tolerate Hindu musical processions passing their mosques and causing interruption in their prayers. The other problem confronting the Muslim community was that of cow-slaughter. It was difficult for them to avoid the religious ceremony of *Bakr Eid* on which they used to slaughter cows. This would cause a trouble to the Hindus and clashes occurred.

According to A. Aziz:

“These riots dominated the Indian scene from 1920 to 1928 and gave ample foretaste of the *Ram Raj* (the Brahman Rule). The riots, however regrettable and ugly, had their importance; they unveiled the fate of the future had in store for Muslims, tore up the mark of ‘self-government’ and held out a storm warning to the Muslims who, deceived by the ‘One-National Theory’, were prepared to accept a servile existence under the domination of Brahminic majority. The riots shocked their ‘unrealistic approach’, destroyed their imaginary basis of unity or freedom and rekindled the spark of reason and analysis.”¹⁸

Moplah Incident

The most gruesome of the long drawn-out incidents of conflicts was during the Moplah incident (1921). Hindu-Muslim relations received a severe blow on this occasion. Moplahs were severely criticized by the Hindus for causing atrocities on the Hindus. In support of it pamphlets were written and an anti-propaganda was brought into force against them. One of the pamphlets, written in those days read that: “Moplahs have committed incredible excesses in their own land. The details must be made known even if it leads to Hindu-Muslim rupture and even if it put an end to the dream of *Sawaraj*. A true follower of Gandhi is bound to speak the truth without calculating consequences. Truth is more precious than Hindu-Muslim unity. It is even above *Sawaraj*.”¹⁹

“...Hindus woke up. Your slumber is fatal. Gird up your loins in self-defence. Your weakness is your undoing. Death at times is better than ignoble existence. The woes of your brethren are your own.”²⁰

During the clash with the Moplahs, the Hindu played a spy's part to the police. The Araya Samajists worked as auxiliaries. The Moplahs suffered much at the hands of the government and secondly the Hindus. The Hindu press and leadership made full-throated shouting for revenge against them. During these days of turmoil the peace of the country was disturbed. In the words of Gandhi himself:

“In one place Hindus pulled down the wall of a mosque, drove Muslims out of the village, informing them that they must desist from building the mosque if they wished to live in the village. In another place, Muslims objected the playing of music before a mosque. Upon this Hindus desecrated the mosque, beat Muslims and had them prosecuted....In some instances Hindus played music before mosques with the set purpose of irritating Muslims at the prayer time. In numerous cases women were abducted and converted to the other religion under duress. Hindus established *akhadas* for physical culture and means of self-defence....In Government offices Hindu-Muslim tension assumed a discriminatory character. Whenever a Hindu happened to be the head of a department, he carefully excluded Muslims from Government posts.”²¹

In short tension increased and two communities were busy picking quarrels “over trifles and in all places, in streets, on the public roads and in railway trains.” The period of twenties, however, was full of atrocities and sufferings for the Muslims at the hands of Hindus. Picture of the communal riots is drawn below:

Fresh Wave of Hindu Muslim Riots

“The first outbreak of new series occurred at Multan....In September 1922 on the occasion of the Muharram festival, and the celebrations in 1923 were marked by serious collisions, of which the most formidable occurred at Saharanpur.....where the casualties exceeded 300. The year 1924 had still blacker record with 18 serious riots, in which 86 persons were killed and 776 wounded, the worst storm centre was Kohat.....where terrible disturbances arose out of the publication of an un-Islamic poem of Hindu authorship. The roll of two days casualties amounted to 36 killed and 145 wounded. Extensive looting took place in the bazaars, and house property valued at Rs. 70,000 was destroyed. The riots were followed by a temporary exodus from the town of the entire Hindu population.....There was some improvement in 1925, but it was short lived, for all previous records were surpassed in 1926 with 36 serious riots and a causality toll of 2,000. In this years Calcutta took the lead with disturbances which started over the old trouble of music before mosques and developed into an orgy of murderous attacks of hooligans.....Before peace was finally restored 200 shops were looted, 12 sacred buildings were desecrated or destroyed, there were 150

cases of incendiary fire and 1,450 casualties, including 140 deaths.....The tension had now become so great that the most trivial incidents sufficed to start trouble.....and communal disorder had become the dominant factor of Indian political life.....the year 1927 was as black as its predecessor. Thirty – one serious riots occurred with a casualty roll exceeding 1,600.”²²

Communal riots were much less frequent in 1928 than in the two previous years, but between February and May 1929 there occurred serious disturbances in Bombay city, which began with collisions between Hindus and Pathans and continued, as in Calcutta three years before, with murderous assaults on individuals and wholesale looting of shops by the criminal classes. Before the disorder finally subsided there had been over 1,100 casualties, including near 200 deaths. The significance of these riots was that their proximate cause was economic rather than religious.

“...(In) march, 1913....the Cawnpore tragedy shocked the whole of India. In the course of enforced closing of shops, in honour of a Hindu assassin, the Hindus and Muslims of Cawnpore came to blows. This developed into a riot of unprecedented violence and peculiar ferocity....Murders, arson and looting were widespread for three days. The death toll was probably between four and five hundred – a large number of mosques were desecrated or destroyed, and a very large number of houses were burnt and pillaged.....”²³

An Obnoxious Book

A most tantalizing event was that of later twenties when a Hindu author namely Rajpal wrote a condemnatory book called *Rangila Rasul*. This was greatly resented by the Muslims all over the country and a resident of Lahore, namely Ilm-ud-Din in anguish attacked the culprit and stabbed him to death. This Ghazi was executed by the government and his grand funeral procession was taken out by the Muslims at Lahore, the kind of which perhaps Lahore had never witnessed before.

During this period the Muslim leaders were gradually drifting away from the Congress. Speaking of Maulana Muhammad Ali, Nehru said:

“After his year of (Congress) Presidentship (i.e., 1923 – 24), Muhammad Ali gradually drifting away from the Congress.....The process was slow.....But the rift widened, estrangement grew. Perhaps no particular individual or individuals were to blame for this; it was an inevitable result of certain objective conditions in the country.”²⁴

It is interesting to note that during this period of uncertainty, Gandhi, the master-mind to play up with the passions of the weak-charactered masses would say to the Muslims in this way “.....Do not be perturbed over music before mosques. Your protests make no sense. Virtue lies in being absorbed in your own prayers in the midst of *din* and noise. You cannot and must not stop music by force. Depend on good neighbourly feelings of Hindus.”²⁵

Again while proving Hindus innocence he threw the entire guilt on the Muslims and very unfairly censured the Muslims community in the following words:

“There is no doubt in my mind that in the majority of quarrels the Hindus come out the second best. My own experience but confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a ruler is a bully, and the Hindu as a ruler is a coward. Where there are cowards there will always be bullies.”²⁶

The Muslim Majority Province of Punjab

While discussing the general rift between the two communities it would be of interest to give some account of the Hindu-Muslim activities and the role of their organizations in the Muslim majority province – Punjab. This was actually the main centre of trouble as it was populated by three communities – Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs and each one of the communities was trying to surpass the other.

Brahmo Samaj

In the Punjab a rift had developed in later decades of the nineteenth century. Brahmo Samaj (1863) had created a rift in the province by carrying an agitation in favour of Hindi against Urdu. This move was led by its most prominent leader Navin Chander Roy. Later, Arya Samaj was founded (1877) which made the matters worse as the latter inculcated a spirit of militancy amongst the Hindus and the conflicts became inevitable. They made

frequent attacks on Islam and the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and adopted an anti-Muslim attitude on all issues. One of its leaders, namely Rai Bahadur Mul Raj, was by no means in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity. Under his leadership “not only attempts were made for promotion of Hindi and revival of Hindu religion, but the Hindus were organized as distinct form and, in fact, in opposition to the Muslims in all spheres – economic, political, etc.

Arya Samaj

The Muslims were systematically excluded from even those public institutions which came to be dominated by the Arya Samajists. One such institution was the University of the Punjab, Lahore, which had been established with the financial contribution of all communities and was maintained out of public funds, but when the (Arya Samajists) D.A.V. College gained a controlling influence, no Muslim could hope to find a place in its vast organization – except, perhaps, in Arabic and Persian departments. The position was even worse in the institutions like the Punjab National Bank, (started in 1895 under the influence of Rai Mul Raj and other) and the private – or semi – private – organizations which controlled the new economic life of the Province.”²⁷ This organization followed the policy of aggressive Hindu communalism – in religions, cultural and economic spheres which was later on adopted by other sections of the community as well. They not only created fuss in the Punjab alone but spread the germs of rift and cleavage in other parts of the country. Lala Lajpat Rai, one of its

spearheads, was particularly responsible for the failure of the All-parties Conference in 1925 meant to evolve a National Pact in place of the Lucknow Pact. It was Lala Lajpat Rai, “who was the principal Arya Samajist leader as Hans Raj was in education, was the first to suggest (in December 1924) a partitioning scheme of the Punjab (and of Bengal), though he presumed that Hindu and Muslim Governments would be united under a National Federal Government.”²⁸ It was the Samajists who led the agitation against the Nizam of Hyderabad and in the Punjab they were out and out practising to exclude Muslims in all spheres of life.... “They even tried to take over from Muslims the few professions – like the leather business – which remained open to them owing to the Hindu orthodoxy.”²⁹ “A great economic conflict was observed between the two which was later made very clear by the author of *Consequences of Pakistan*, Gauba. As stated by him:

“Hindu directors of companies may denounce Mr. Jinnah for promoting the Two – Nation Theory. If Mr. Jinnah lays emphasis upon this by words, they prove it by conduct. Take great commercial institutions like the Punjab National Bank, the United Commercial Bank, the Lakhshami Insurance Company, the Bharat Bank and the Bharat Insurance Company. You will hardly see a Muslim anywhere. The Lahore Electric Supply Company, a company to whose property Muslim consumers have contributed as much as Hindu consumers, employed no Muslim in its executive or clerical staffs, until faced with the pressure of acquisition by the Punjab Government.³⁰”

Bal Raj Madhok, the Jan Sangh leader, in biography of Dr. *Shyamaprasad Mookerjee*, says with regard to the position of the Hindus of East Bengal in 1947 that: “They owned nearly 80 per cent of the national wealth of East Bengal. Majority of buildings and properties in each town of Bengal, in some cases more than 85 per cent of town holdings, were owned by Hindus. 95 per cent of the 1290 high schools and 47 colleges in East Bengal were privately organized and financed by them.....The Hindus were not more than 25 per cent of the population of East Bengal and the Muslim struggle against them was, broadly speaking, the struggle of the ‘have-nots’ against the ‘haves’. Lord Casey, Governor of Bengal, who was very friendly to Gandhi and Congress leaders, points out in his *Personal Experience*, 1939-46, that the struggle between the Hindus and Muslims in Bengal was ‘primarily economic’. Writing about his *Experience* in Bengal, he says, “Another factor which obstructed good administration was Hindu – Muslim rivalry and distrust, which was known as Communalism. The reasons for this rivalry were many, but in their modern form I believed that they were primarily economic. The Muslims in Bengal outnumbered the Hindus, but they were generally poorer and less well educated. The Muslims were energetic in their efforts to improve their economic position, which stimulated them to be abnormally active in the search of jobs in the Government services.”³¹ The Hindus always practised to exercise their economic supremacy over the Muslims and

gradually with the span of time practically crippled them to economic depression.

To understand the mental trends of different Hindu leaders it would not be out of context to give an account of the objective of their policies against the Muslims. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, a distinguished leader of Hindu India was the most orthodox Brahman. He dedicated his life to the promotion and interests of the Hindus and was greatly adorned by the Hindus. He sought to base Hindu solidarity on the Hindu hatred of Islam and the Muslims. After the Multan riots as referred to earlier, his party came out with the slogan 'Multan must be avenged'. He, in other words, provoked his followers' sentiments to follow the war path and "nearly carried the country to the brink of calamity." The following is the address of Malaviya which shows his clear-cut grievances against the Muslims in which he calls upon his men to do away with their enemies:

"If I live on, I shall see to it that every (Hindu woman) learns the use of fire-arms, so that she can give fight for her honour. But O men! How dare you face your women-fold? If you have any stuff in you, you should know how to keep the enemy at bay."³² "Gentle folk, so long as you fear rascals, they will continue to be impudent. They only dread the big stick. Give them a hard fight....This is the first post of *Sawaraj*."³³ This man continued his practice of repeating the Muslims' acts of omissions

and commissions and thereby kept alive the feelings of enmity amongst his followers.

Another Hindu leader, Bhai Permanand of Arya Samaj was of the view that “.....advent of Islam inflicted a deep wound on India and that Hindu history since the Muslims incursion was a long and dismal story of suffering and sacrifice. A true history of India will have to be a record of the Hindu struggle against foreign tyranny.”³⁴ This doctrine of Permanand had been taken from an Urdu book, *Arya Samaj aur Hindu Sanghatan*, Lahore, published in 1923, and propagated daily by his paper, *The Hindu* of Lahore. According to his philosophy unity between the two communities of Hindus and Muslims was out of question. Parmanand, like Malaviya, encouraged Hindu – Muslim trials of strength but he directly preached the utility of war.

Shardhanand, another Hindu leader, steered the vessel of *Shuddhi* and *Sanghatan* and after the disturbances as stated earlier, he gave up all hopes of unity between the two and fought for the cause of Hindu interests.

The interest of both the communities were so different and their problems so vital that only the time could realise their depth and intensity. At the hands of the antagonistic attitude of all the Hindu organizations and their leaders with their particular ideology and philosophy the Muslim community appeared to be thinking for a suitable solution for their peaceful existence in India. It

was amidst these continuous affrays that the League President for the year 1925, Abdur Rahim said:

“There are some Englishmen unable to realize the need for separate Indian organizations for Hindus and Muslims....they are possessed with the idea that what differentiates Hindus and Muslims is merely religion, and differences of religion should not interfere with the consideration of political problems. How we all wish that it were so.

The Hindus and Muslims are not two religious sects like the Protestants and Catholics of England, but form two distinct communities of peoples, and so they regard themselves. Their respective attitude towards life, distinctive culture, civilization and social habits, their traditions and history, no less than their religion, divide them so completely that the fact that they have lived in the same country for nearly 1,000 years has contributed hardly anything to their fusion into a nation.....the English panacea of nationalism has brought not more unity, but worse disunion.....The mischievous activities of a certain class of Hindu politicians.....unfortunately appeal to the lower instincts of the community, their professed object being to convert Muslims in millions into Hindus, and to train Hindus in self-defence. The Muslims regard these movements as the most serious challenge to their religion which they have ever had to meet. I doubt if at any time in the history of India the relations between the two communities generally were so severely strained as at present. In fact, some of the Hindu leaders have talked of driving out the Muslims from India, as Spaniards expelled

the Moors from Spain, that is unless they perform *Shuddhi* and become Hindus, or submit to their full political programme.”³⁵

“Any of us Indian Muslims, travelling for instance in Afghanistan, Persia, Central Asia, among Chinese Muslims, Arabs, and Turks would at once be made at home and would not find anything to which we are not accustomed. On the contrary in India we find ourselves in all social matters aliens when we cross the street and enter that part of the town where our fellow townsmen live.”³⁶

By the year 1927, there was great unrest and it was marked by turmoil and gloom. The conflict appeared to be more constitutional than religious as previously it seemed in some form. Many changes occurred in the country and history of the struggle between the two communities to safeguard their communal interest passing through innumerable vicissitudes took a new turn.

Simon Commission and All-Parties Conference

By this time the Indian demand for the revision of the constitution was forcefully presented and it was desired that the Government of India Act of 1919 be amended. A Commission under Sir John Simon was appointed to investigate the problems for finding solutions to the constitutional problems of India. The Commission was boycotted by the Indians as it had no one from the people of India as its member. It was regarded as direct insult to the Indians.

An All-Parties Conference was convened to bring together all the non-cooperating groups together to deliberate over the matter. A Committee out of this Conference drew a draft for the proposed constitution reforms which later became known as 'Nehru Report'. On the eve of its publication, a Hindu-Muslim clash was inevitable as it recommended a fully responsible system of Government in which the majority would be sovereign and separate Muslim electorates were to be abolished. The fundamental Muslim demand for separate representation as enunciated previously in 1909 and 1916 was out rightly rejected by the Report. Muslims were shocked and the leaders wondered if any serious – minded Muslim could imagine to accept this degradation. With this Report the prospects of Hindu-Muslim unity further worsened. The damage done by this Report was irretrievable.

The Muslims were completely disillusioned and they were forced to believe that the Congress was its arch-enemy. Among the Muslims feelings of separation became the 'major cry'. It was strengthened with the passage of time.

Nehru Report (1928)

Commenting on the Report, C.S. Ranga Iyer says: "To avoid *Sawarajists* being 'dished' at the next general elections their leader surrendered the Congress programme and abandoned the old nationalist policy which believed in healthy compromises with Muslims with the view to creating confidence in an important minority, without which all national endeavours must end

in fiasco. The spirit which animated the old Congress and gave India what was known as the Lucknow Pact was banished from the Congress owing to the lack of faith and lack of courage of its leader who could not forget the heavy casualties of the 1926 elections. A constitutional scheme of reforms (i.e., the Nehru Report) which was acceptable to the Hindu *Mahasabha* was produced by the Congress leader with the help of Liberals to the disgust of Muslims....who openly rebelled against it. The incident shows that organized communalism can confuse and overwhelm professing nationalism.”³⁷ “The Nehru Report not only repudiated the Muslim claims, but also the Hindu-Muslim Pact of C.R. Das. It was becoming clear that the power of the electorate was being felt by the leaders. Its communalism became contagious. The Congress became tainted with communalism because it believed in council entry.”³⁸

A. Aziz writes that “the Nehru Report, a draft constitution prepared by the All-India Congress in 1929 for the future of India, boldly offered to Muslim India the alternative of a naked servitude or conversion into the *Brahmanic* religion as price of living in India, and added fresh provocations to the self-respecting people.”³⁹

On this crucial occasion Mohammad Ali Jinnah, (later on Quaid-i-Azam) felt greatly wounded and shattered. It was this critical juncture which made him to say frankly and openly that the ‘parting of ways’ had come. Maulana Mohammad Ali was compelled to sever all connections with the Congress and while condemning the negative and selfish attitude of Gandhi, he said:

“Gandhi had defeated all Muslim attempts for compromise. He wants to kill communalism by ignoring it. He is giving free reins to the communalism of the majority. (The Nehru Constitution) is the legalized tyranny of numbers and is the way to rift and not peace. It recognizes the rank communalism of the majority as nationalism. The safeguards proposed to limit the high-handedness of the majority are branded as communal.”⁴⁰ From thenceforward Maulana Mohammad Ali warned his people to keep aloof from the Congress gatherings.

The gulf further widened. The Hindus and Muslims cleavage became irreparable. In the words of Coatman:

“From 1928 onwards there is quite definitely a new model of Hindu-Muslim antagonism which shows itself in organized political action for political ends. It is something deeper, more enduring, more embracing in its objectives than the old traditional, semi-instinctive antagonism which vented itself in street-fighting and stone-throwing...on the days of religious festivals.”⁴¹

“The position reached by the early days of 1929 in Hindu-Muslim relations...may lead to the literal disruption of India...The gulf dividing them is so deep that no reunion will ever be possible.

...It seems that there may be brought into being a powerful Muslim state in the north

and north-west, with its eyes turned away from India.”⁴²

Tension at RTC

After a year or so the Hindus’ attitude was the same during the session of the Round Table Conference held in London in 1930. The Hindus wanted a powerful central government occupying a position of dominance over provincial governments, whereas the Muslims demanded the maintenance of the separate electorates and weightages. They claimed statutory majorities in the Punjab and Bengal, while the Hindus resisted their ‘imposition’. This was the essence of their demands.

Allahabad Address (1930)

It was during this period that Allama Muhammad Iqbal envisaged the idea of a plan for an independent Muslim state on the north-west of India in his historical Presidential Address in the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League held at Allahabad in 1930. He observed:

“...The political bondage of India has been and is a source of infinite misery to the whole of Asia. It has suppressed the spirit of the east and wholly deprived her of that joy of self-expression which once made her the creator of a great and glorious culture.”⁴³

“...We are 70 millions and far more homogeneous than any other people in India. Indeed the Muslims of India are the

only Indian people who can fitly be described as a nation in the modern sense of the word. The Hindus, though ahead of us in almost all respects, have not yet been able to achieve the kind of homogeneity which is necessary for a nation, and which Islam has given you as a free gift.”⁴⁴ ...The Prime Minister of England apparently refuses to see that the problem of India is international and not national...Obviously he does not see that the model of British democracy cannot be of any use in a land of many nations. And that a system of separate electorates is only a poor substitute for a territorial solution of the problem.”⁴⁵

“...It is clear that in view of India’s infinite variety in climates, races, languages, creeds and social systems, the creation of autonomous states based on the unity of language, race, history, religion and identity of economic interests is the only possible way to secure a stable constitutional structure in India.”⁴⁶ “...The Muslims’ demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India is, therefore, perfectly justified...I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh 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 North-West India.”⁴⁷ This idea was later on propagated by Chaudhri Rahmat

Ali, who wrote a historical pamphlet in support of the cause of separate homeland for the Muslims of India entitled *Now or Never* in 1932.

A. Aziz in *Discovery of Pakistan*, commented that “the Pakistan Scheme, as proposed by Iqbal in 1930 appeared to the Hindu as obnoxious as “it rose to prevent the imposition of his domination on the entire sub-continent and offered to save the Muslim land (those provinces where Muslims were in majority) from the chains of the proposed Brahmanic Imperialism.”⁴⁸

At the time of 1937 Elections, M.A. Jinnah desired for a coalition with the Congress but...”his arguments could not reach the understanding of the Brahman who, swollen with the power he had obtained, unhesitatingly appeared in the naked shape of his Aryan ancestors and looked upon the Muslims as the “Vanquished Dravadians.”⁴⁹

A. Aziz remarked further about the refusal of the Congress that:

“It exposed to the public eye the hollowness and falsehood of the Brahmanic profession of Indian nationalism, unmasked the dangers inherent in Indian Federalism and unveiled the character of the reflections wolf in the shape of the Brahman; it excited regret and provoked the indignation and fears of all those who had as yet indulged themselves in the lofty speculations of ‘Nationalism’, ‘Brahman-Muslim Unity’ and ‘Coalitions’ and reunited almost all those who were so far disunited;

and finally it turned the Muslim League for the first time in its history into an effective political force.”⁵⁰

Gandhi's Negative Attitude

Next time, Gandhi's attitude in the Conference was vividly anti-Muslim. He was reluctant to talk to the Muslim leaders for the solution of the communal issue before the constitutional procedure was set up...” “He fretted at the absurdity of constitution making at the wrong end and called for a reversal of the procedure. Instead of requiring Hindus and Muslims to make up their differences before determining the measure of constitutional advance, he asked the British Government to come out with concrete proposals of its own without waiting on communal hair-splitters.”⁵¹ Speaking on the subject he further said:

“...You will allow me to say that the solution of the communal tangle can be the crown of *Sawaraj* constitution and not its foundation. Our differences have hardened, if they have not arisen, by reason of foreign domination. I have not a shadow of doubt that the iceberg of communal differences will melt under the warmth of the sun of freedom.”⁵²

During these days of the Conference, the Agha Khan, had an interview with Gandhi which is reproduced below and reflects his views regarding his negative thinking against the Muslims and their demands. In the words of Agha Khan:

“We posed together for the Press photographers, and then settled down to our conversation. I opened it by saying to Mahatmaji that, were he now to show himself a real father to India’s Muslims, they would respond by helping him, to the utmost of their ability, in his struggle for India’s independence. Mahatmaji turned to face me. ‘I cannot in truth say’ he observed, ‘that I have any feelings of paternal love for Muslims. But if you put the matter on grounds of political necessity, I am ready to discuss it in a cooperative spirit. I cannot indulge in any form of sentiment’. This was a cold douche at the outset; and a chilly effect of it pervaded the rest of our conversation. I felt that, whereas I had given prompt and ready evidence of a genuine emotional attachment and kinship, there had been no similar response from the Mahatmaji.”⁵³

The Conference, however, led to deeper conflicts and parties became more estranged and divided than ever before. In the words of Agha Khan:

“Always the arrangement returned to certain basic points of difference: was India a nation or two nations? Was Islam merely a religious minority, or were Muslims in those areas in which they were in a majority to have and to hold special political rights and

responsibilities?...However close, therefore, we might come to agreement on points of detail, this ultimate disagreement on principle points could not be bridged.”⁵⁴

The Quaid’s Remarks

On the failure of the Conferences and the reflection of the hatred Hindu mind, Mohammad Ali Jinnah observed, though long after, that:

“I received the shock of my life at the meetings of the Round Table Conference. In the face of danger, the Hindu sentiment, the Hindu mind, the Hindu attitude led me to the conclusion that there was no hope for unity...the Muslims were like the dwellers in no man’s land.”⁵⁵

The Agha Khan remarked:

“Muslim India is now at the parting of ways...On the one hand they are profoundly affected by the current of nationalism which has swept over India with a momentum and force that would have seemed impossible a few years ago. On the other, they are conscious of a need which in the past was but dimly comprehended—that of the preservation of their political identity and cultural existence.”⁵⁶

The Conferences at last failed one after another and no concrete constitutional proposals could be framed. This

was undoubtedly due to the selfish and distorted attitude of the Hindu leaders. There were the Hindus who did not wish the problem to be solved. 'They were merely making time so that the British may be to part with power and then they would be free to deal with irreconcilable elements of the country as they had been doing with the untouchables since centuries'. In short, their dishonest attitude was laid open during these Conferences.

After the last Conference held in November-December, 1933 was of least importance. Of all the three Conferences the result was—White paper, in which a strong centre was proposed whereas the Muslims demanded that the provinces should be granted maximum fiscal, administrative and legislative autonomy. Moreover, they had also demanded the provincial government to control the public services adequately. However, by virtue of it, a Federation was set up by the Act of 1935. The League found the federal structure of the Government given by the Act, 'fundamentally bad', 'most reactionary, retrograde, injurious and fatal'...and rejected it. However, it undertook to work the provincial part of the constitution 'for what it is worth'. On the other hand the Congress rejected it altogether but decided to contest the elections and to wreck the constitution from the inside.

To all appearances, indeed, the Muslim attitude was still what it had been at the Round Table Conferences where Muhammad Ali Jinnah had accepted the principle of an all-India federation, when Maulana Mohammad Ali had intimated that a Hindu majority at the centre would be in some degree offset by Muslim majorities in certain

provinces, and when Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan had declared that the Muslims had never wished to create an ulster in India.

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Chapter IV

From the Elections of 1937 to the Emergence of Pakistan 1947

Reorganization of the All-India Muslim League

After the failure of the Round Table Conferences, came a crucial period for the Muslim masses in India. The All-India Muslim League had virtually lost its hold on the community which was in utter darkness in the absence of a leader of eminence and high calibre. The Quaid-i-Azam had stayed in England after the failure of the Conferences. Maulana Mohammad Ali was dead. Sir Mohammad Shafi also died. Iqbal, in this state of affairs, persuaded the Quaid to steer the vessel of the League who had already been elected President of the All-India Muslim League at a meeting held in March 1934 at New Delhi. The Quaid, not discouraged by the state of Muslim politics, undertook the responsibility of reorganizing Muslims under the League to forge a united front of the Muslim community to enable it to fight the coming general elections. This was the most crucial decision of the Quaid, at the most fateful time in the history of Muslim India.

The Congress realized the new position of the Muslim League and adopted attitude of hostility towards the Muslim League. The Hindu leadership refused to recognize its claim of being the only representative organization of the Muslims. The Quaid asserted that the Muslims were a separate entity and the League was their

only representative body. However, the League's gains in the elections of 1937 were, not encouraging. The low achievement of the League encouraged the Congress to refuse to form a coalition ministry with the League in the United provinces. In this state of affairs even the Quaid made his efforts to continue his endeavours to settle the Hindu-Muslim differences. But his overtures to the Congress leaders ended in fiasco and no agreement could be reached.

The Congress exhibited its usual hostile attitude during this phase of political rivalry. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru took initiative during elections and denounced the League without provocation by a rash declaration that there were only two forces in India—the Congress and the British Government. This was an open challenge to the League and the Quaid at once retorted that in spite of the wishful thinking of Mr. Nehru, Muslims constituted the third important factor in politics. Another attack on the solidarity of the Muslims was made through the 'Muslim Mass Contact Campaign.' Taking full advantage of the propaganda value of socialistic class-war technique, the leaders of the movement appealed to the economic sense of the Muslims with the intention of driving a wedge into the solidarity of the Muslim nation and thus to make it ineffective in the political life of the country. It would not be a wrong claim to declare that, in fact the 'Congress Mass Contact Movement' launched in 1937 was essentially the opening of another chapter at a mass reconversion of the Muslims of India to Hinduism. By

means of this thesis, they started a campaign of terrorizing the minorities.

Reviewing the statement of Nehru, regarding the Muslims and their religion, he always felt pride in condemning religious institutions. He was suspicious of Islamic culture and laughed at those who talked of preserving it in the modern age in spite of the fact that he knew fully well the sentiments of the Muslims and their strictness in the religious susceptibilities. The way he dealt with religion and culture and the space which he devoted to analyzing and criticizing only Islamic culture in his book, betrays his deep hatred against Islam. He writes:

“Those who are desirous of preserving Muslim culture, whatever that may be, need not worry about Hindu culture, but should withstand the giants from the west.”¹

His fascist inclinations can well be assessed from his statement after the elections when he said: “There are only two parties in the country, the Congress and the Government, the rest must line up, and ‘those who are not with us are against us’. The same attitude was typified by Gandhi’s statement, who while talking to a press representative said:

“...There was only one party which could deliver the goods and that was the Congress. I would not accept any other party except the Congress. Damn it by whatever name you may, there can be only one party in India and that is the Congress.”²

Congress Rule in Provinces and Atrocities at Muslims

The period under the Congress rule (1937-1939) was most crucial for the Muslims and it must be described in detail to show how the Muslims were victimized under the Congress governments. The Hindus behaved arrogantly and this caused the 'phenomenal growth of Muslim nationalism'. The policy of the Congress during this period in the Hindu provinces was to fulfill the mission set before it by the founder of *Arya Samaj* and it was therefore, not unnatural that communal riots during those years were as numerous as those inspired by the Hindu Mahasabha in 1923-1927. The Muslims faced innumerable upheavals and were reduced to humiliation in political, social, religious and economic life. The Muslim masses fell victim to their high-handedness and the excesses of the administrative machinery.

F.K. Durrani wrote that "the Congress rule was extremely unjust and oppressive to the Muslims...The Hindus of the provinces in which they are in majority felt and began to behave as if Hindu Raj had come...The Congress Ministries issued orders that the Congress flag should be flown on all public buildings and schools...They ordered or printed the singing of *Bande Mataram*, the symbol of the restoration of Hindu sovereignty and hatred of the Muslims on all public occasions. Even some Assemblies in the Congress governed provinces began their proceedings with the *Bande Mataram* song."³

“In certain localities in the Central provinces, the houses of the Muslims were set on fire and their women-folk molested or abducted. In one instance, the entire Muslim male population of a village, numbering about one hundred and fifty was collectively accused of murder, summoned to the police station, kept without food and water, subjected to indignities during the inquiry, subsequently found innocent and acquitted by the court. In the Central provinces legislature, the Ministers freely expressed opinions on subjudice cases in which Muslims figured as accused, seriously embarrassing the judges in the performance of their duties. In one of his outspoken judgements, the Chief Justice of the Nagpur High Court described indignantly how the police, the Congress notables, the magistracy, the judiciary and even the Ministers had joined hands and nearly succeeded in sending innocent persons to the gallows, the only reason being that they were Muslims. In different towns in the United Provinces, the Muslims ‘voluntarily’ consented to music being played before mosques at the prayer hour and abandoned cow slaughter in deference to the Hindu religious feelings. These agreements appeared to have closed long-standing

disputes, but in fact they were achieved by threats.”⁴

One of the League workers, Jamil-ud-din Ahmad holds the Congress responsible for all this and says:

“In the provinces with large Hindu majorities the Congress held sway, and found itself installed in absolute power. The character of the Congress as a purely Hindu body was thoroughly exposed, for purely Hindu governments were established in these provinces. The inclusion in the Congress ministries of one or two Muslims who deserted their own parties from motives of self-aggrandisement did not in any way alter the exclusively Hindu character of these ministries. The safeguards provided in the constitution for the protection of interests of the minorities were left in cold storage as a result of the ‘Gentleman’s Agreement’ between the Congress and the British Government. The Congressmen were given a long rope to pursue their nefarious designs of establishing their domination and reducing the Muslims and all other non-Congress elements to the position of helpless serfs. Thus the Muslims and other minorities were kept out of all share in administrative power and governance.”⁵

In fact, the policy of the Congress government was inspired by the ambition of the Hindu majority to dominate the Muslim minority thereby forcing them to recognize their superiority. When the Muslims resented against injustices and discriminatory treatment at the hands of the Hindus they were bullied and in many instances rioting and disorderly atmosphere was created. As remarked by Coupland, “the worst and most dangerous cause of disorder was, as it had always been, communal strife. The barometer of rioting and fighting, which had stood so steady for some years past, began to fall again. When the Congress ministries resigned in the autumn of 1939, there had been 57 communal outbreaks in their provinces and more than 1700 casualties of which over 130 had been fatal...By the end of 1939, it was widely believed that, if the Congress Government had lasted much longer, communal fighting would have broken out on an unprecedented scale.”⁶

Further more atrocities were committed on poor villagers and defenceless Muslims who constantly lived in a dreadful state. According to Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, “they were even subjected to forcible conversion to Hinduism. They dared not perform cow-sacrifice on the occasion of ‘*Id-ul-Azha* or even call *Azan* (Call to prayer), and sometimes the mosques were desecrated. Civil liberties for which Congressmen used to agitate before coming into offices were denied to the Muslims. Their meetings were spied upon; their freedom to hold meeting, to take out processions or perform cow-sacrifice as a religious rite was often circumscribed by promulgation of orders under

Section, 144, Cr. P.C. The exercise of civil and religious rights by Muslims was made conditional on 'custom' and 'law and order'.”⁷

A few other incidents of Congress highhandedness against the Muslims are given below to make the narrative more authentic.

“In a small village, called Chandur Biswas with a tiny Muslim population in the old Central province of India, there lived a man Jagdees, who was notorious for his anti-Muslim activities and writings offensive to Muslim sentiments. He took out a procession playing music and shouting anti-Muslim slogans before a mosque at the time of prayer. The Muslim worshippers protested and in the melee that followed many Muslims and Hindus were injured, Jagdees succumbed to his injuries a few hours later. The Premier of C.P., Mr. Sukla, visited the village and made irresponsible speech charging the Muslims with conspiracy. Under his orders the entire adult Muslim male population totalling 157 persons was arrested for the alleged murder of one Hindu. In the hot weather they were locked up in a small room. The Sessions Judge, Mr. Clarke referring to this lock-up remarked: “this is more suggestive of the conditions in Nazi Germany at the present

time than in any enlightened portion of the British Empire.”⁸

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, a staunch supporter of the Congress commenting on the issue of firing which took place in August 1938 in the town of Tanda in Eastern U.P. remarked:

“In front of the Chowk Mosque runs a lane along which a procession of Hindus with music came towards the mosque and wanted to pass in front of it. Some Muslims stopped them and asked them to go back as it was against custom; the Hindus insisted on passing and the crowd increased. In order that the processionists might not turn back, some Hindu ring-leaders barricaded the road at the rear of the procession. Discussion continued for two hours after which the Tehsildar said that he would see the records whether there was any precedent; saying this he went away. The crowd did not attack the police nor did they indulge in any violence.

After sometime suddenly the S.D.O. and Sub-Inspector of Police came to the scene. He asked the police to surround the crowd and ordered firing without warning. Although the first shot dispersed the crowd yet 18 or 20 rounds were fired. Wherever a few Muslims were seen together they were fired upon. Afterwards there was

indiscriminate *lathi-charge*. All Muslims who could be caught hold of, were tied with ropes and assaulted with kicks and fists. Some of the officials of Faizabad were among the assailants. The wounded were not attended to for a long time after the firing. Some people were inside the mosque for prayers before the firing had begun and they had closed the door when they heard firing. The police bolted the door of the mosque from the outside; the Muslims inside the mosque were brought out and mercilessly beaten. The arrested persons were taken to the police station, tied with ropes, again assaulted and packed into small rooms. When they were thirsty and asked for water they were told to drink their urine.”⁹

Yet another typical barbarous treatment which the Muslim of Tikori in the province of Bihar met under the Congress rule is cited below:

“A Muslim villager had purchased some beef to entertain his friends on the occasion of the wedding of his daughter. Suddenly the Hindus accused him of having killed a calf belonging to a Hindu villager. In spite of the Muslim villager’s protest and although the butcher testified that they had purchased the beef from him; the Hindus attacked him and his guests. The hand and feet of the Muslims were bound and tied to their necks. Then the

Hindus brought a pig from the house of a Harijan and rubbed the beast's mouth against the mouth of the Muslims, saying; "*this is the revenge of our eating beef.*" The Hindus entered the *zenana*, pulled away the clothes of the Muslim women, assaulted and dishonoured them" ...This case shows that under Congress rule the law of civilization ceased to operate and the law of the jungle prevailed so far as the Muslims were concerned."¹⁰

Commenting on the Congress treatment of the Muslims of Bihar, Lt. Gen. Sir Francis Taker in his book *While Memory Serves*, remarked:

"During October and November, in Bihar...great moles of Hindus turned suddenly, but with every preparation for the deed, upon the few Muslims who had lived and whose forefathers had lived, in amity and trust all their lives, among these very Hindu neighbours...The number of Muslim dead men, women, and children, in this short, savage killing was about seven thousand to eight thousand. In the United Provinces even pregnant women were ripped up, their unborn babies torn out and the infants' brains dashed out on walls and on the ground. There was rape, and women and children were seized by the legs by burly friends and torn apart."¹¹

In regard to the inhuman atrocities of the Hindus under the patronage of the Congress rule one can undoubtedly say that it was wrapped in a thick blanket of barbarous outrages, utter discrimination and inhuman tyranny and oppression. The Muslims were provoked and oppressed; if they resisted, they were subjected to *Lathi-charge*, firing and arrest; if they protested against injustice and highhandedness, they were accused of fanning communalism and dubbed as ‘communalists’ and reactionaries. A vivid analysis has been made by E.W.R. Lumby, in this regard when he remarks:

“The policy of the Congress Governments had the effect of intensifying Muslim fears. Just as the Congress Party had already become penetrated with the ideas and methods of Gandhi, so now the same philosophy began to colour the policy and administration of the Governments which the Congress controlled...No doubt there were a number of cases of greater or less importance where local Congress bosses or Congress-minded Government officials acted unfairly or tactlessly emphasized those aspects of the policy of their Party or their Government which were most likely to give offence to the Muslims and the Congress educational policy certainly had a marked Hindu and Gandhian aspect.”¹²

In addition to the cases cited above, there were other factors also that led the Muslims to utter

humiliations owing to the oppressive policy of the Congress Governments. The Hindus in order to deprive the Muslims of their legitimate rights adopted peculiar policy in regard to some of the important matters like language, education and economic aspect. It is worth recording the fact that by the time the Congress came into power, Urdu was thrown into the background and Hindi was patronized, promoted and extended at the expense of Urdu. In one of the Congress governed provinces, Madras, the Chief Minister ordered for the teaching of Hindi as a compulsory language. The association of the *Vidya Mandir* education scheme along with the teaching of Hindi was obviously another irksome issue for the Muslims.

Wardha Scheme

A scheme of primary education popularly known as the ‘Wardha Scheme’ was introduced which Gandhi had drawn up and the Congress Ministries implemented in their respective provinces. This scheme was another instance of the fundamental clash of national ideals between Hindus and Muslims.

El Hamza writes about Wardha Scheme that “the Wardha brand of Imperialism is of a peculiarly insidious and dangerous nature. Compounded of cunning hypocrisy and metaphysical *hocus-pocus*, it has a monstrous texture. Its exponents profess altruism and tolerance but bigotry and selfishness is the very substance of their being. After centuries of application the Europeans have made the practice of hypocrisy a fine art but even with them

hypocrisy is after all a pose. The hypocrisy of Wardha politicians had weird and terrifying aspects. It blasphemes the heavens with its assumption of an air of spirituality; it dumbfounds these against whom it is practised by appearing as an incarnation of protest against falsehood and insincerity, it defies analysis by entering the very being of its perpetrators, it ceases to be a pose and assume objective existence.”¹³

It was essentially a communal scheme which preached Hindu ideals. To Muslims, the teaching of religion was completely ignored in order to keep the Muslim children away from the faith. They were persuaded to honour the Congress flag and to recite the notorious verses of *Banda Mataram*. In addition, they were obliged to wear *Khaddi* cloth and even to perform *Pooja* ceremony like Hindus specially the Gandhi's portrait. The Gandhite educational scheme had a definite political and religious motive behind it which would obliterate Muslim culture and prepare absolutely a different type of Muslim generation shaping to be of non-Muslim character, thought and action. The insistence on the doctrine of *Ahinsa*, the fundamental philosophy of the scheme, clearly meant to root out from the Muslim youths their martial spirit and traditions. Besides, emphasis laid on nationalism in the scheme was calculated to destroy the distinctive identity of Muslims and to merge them in the nationalism of the Hindu majority. In short, it was the first practical step towards the creation of a new generation of Indians who would be able to live according to Gandhian religion and thus bring about a new social order of his

pattern. “The whole trend of the Wardha Scheme was to impress on the mind of the Muslim child the supremacy of the primitive Hindu culture of vedic times. Textbooks were prepared with this end in view. The Muslim children were taught, under the scheme, to believe that all religions were equally true and to study the life of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) only as an Arabian apostle in the setting and background of Arabia, so that they might cease to hold the cardinal Islamic belief that Islam is the final truth and their Prophet is a Universal Teacher, and then the process of merger of Muslims in the Hindu fold might be facilitated.”¹⁴

On the impact of the Wardha Scheme on the Muslims, Coupland remarked: “Ironically enough, it was one of the best features of the Congress regime, its active interest in popular education, which excited most suspicion. It was not only Mr. Gandhi’s notorious enthusiasm for the teaching of basic handicrafts; Hindu faith, to accord ceremonial *almost a religious, reverence* to the Mahatma. Some of the text books too seemed to glorify Hinduism at the expense of Islam. Were not Muslim children being insensibly and insidiously indoctrinated with Hindu ways of thought.”¹⁵

In regard to third aspect, that of economic, the Muslims suffered heavy losses under the Congress rule. They were hit hard by the Congress economic policy. Heavy taxes were levied on such trades as were in the hands of the Muslims. In many of the government departments, Hindus dominated the Muslims who were excluded from all the key-posts. Muslim Schools and

other institutions received no patronage from the Congress Government. Penderal Moon, the author of *Divide and Quit*, remarked, “they (Hindus) might say the Muslims were their brothers but would in fact treat them as less than step-brothers. A few leaders might be sincere in their intention, but the ingrained exclusiveness of most of the high-caste Hindus were bound to assert itself, so that at most only a few hand-picked Muslims would be embraced as brothers and the rest relegated to the position of out-castes.”¹⁶

The labourers and peasantry which was mostly Muslim was also left at the mercy of the Hindu capitalists and money-lenders. The Congress Ministries in fact adopted ruthless measures to crush the Muslims in all walks of life with an avowed object to demonstrate Hindu domination and retention of power.

Muslim Demands (1938)

Muslim leaders became highly depressed because of Congress’s arrogant attitude towards the Muslims. The Muslim League asserted that under the Congress rule, the Muslim masses were tyrannized and oppressed. In June 1938, the League presented the following eleven demands to the Congress:

1. The *Bande Mataram* song should be given up.
2. Muslim majorities in the provinces where such majorities exists at present must not be affected by any territorial redistribution or adjustment.

3. Muslim practice of cow-slaughter should not be interfered with.
4. Muslim's right to call *Azan* and perform their religious ceremonies should not be interfered with in anyway.
5. Muslim's personal law and culture should be guaranteed by statute.
6. The share of Muslims in the state services should be definitely fixed in the Constitution by a statutory enactment.
7. The Congress should withdraw all opposition to the communal Award, and should not describe it as a negation of nationalism.
8. Statutory guarantee should be given that the use of Urdu should not be curtailed.
9. Representation in local bodies should be governed by the principles underlying the Communal Award, that is, separate electorates and popular strength.
10. The Tri-Colour Flag should be changed or alternatively the flag of the Muslim League should be given equal importance.
11. Recognition of the League as the one and only authoritative and representative organization of the Indian Muslims."¹⁷

The Muslim League also constituted committees to review the situation. As a result, the following reports

were prepared; Pir Pur Committee Report; Fazal Haq Report and Sarif Pur Report.

Over the Congress tyrannies in C.P., a book consisting of 360 pages was also published by Hakim Israr Ahmad Kararvi.

During the World War II (1939) the Congress Ministries decided to withdraw from legislatures and to quit the offices. Accordingly, the Ministers in all Congress provinces resigned *en bloc* leaving the provincial administration in the hands of the Governors. The Muslims, at that, heaved a sigh of relief. The League marked the occasion by observing a 'Deliverance Day' expressing its relief at the termination of the torturous Congress rule.

STRUGGLE FOR PAKISTAN

The League's Demand for Pakistan (1940)

It was against this background of Muslim sufferings at the hands of their sister community—the Hindus, with a traditional long account of their inhuman atrocities committed on the Muslims, that the League, the only representative spokesman of the Muslim India for the first time declared its independent goal—Pakistan. The annual session of the Muslim League held at Lahore in March 1940 in which the ultimate aim of the League was declared. It was of unique importance and in retrospect a historic landmark in the struggle for freedom of Muslim India as for the first time declared to have a separate

homeland for the Muslims of India. The League for the first time adopted the idea of the achievement of an independent homeland for the Muslims in the sub-continent as its political objective. The Quaid-i-Azam, on this historic occasion clearly defined the Two-Nation Theory in his philosophical Presidential address. While advocating the cause he declared “Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homeland, their territory and their state.”¹⁸

The Quaid clearly stated that “Notwithstanding a thousand years of close contact, nationalities, which are as divergent today as ever, cannot at any time be expected to transfer themselves into one nation merely by means of subjecting them to democratic constitution and holding them forcibly together by unnatural and artificial methods of British Parliamentary statute.” While talking on the strict difference between the ideology and spirit of Islam and Hinduism he said that they were in fact, “different in distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality, and this misconception of one Indian nation has gone ‘far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of your troubles...” Continuing he said:

Two-Nation Theory

“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 civilizations which

are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their concepts on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and different episodes...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.”¹⁹

The Pakistan Resolution

The main resolution of the Session was then moved by Maulana A.K. Fazl-ul-Haque, Premier of Bengal on March 23, 1940. It reads:

“That it is the 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 constituted, with such 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.”²⁰

The Session authorized the Working Committee 'to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary.’²¹

It would be necessary to note that Muslim tendencies towards separation had become evident over a long time as referred to in the previous chapters. But it was the first official occasion in the history of the League that it declared as its final goal from the political platform. This view-point of the Muslims quite obviously created great unrest in the Hindu quarters. In the irrational excitement caused by the Muslims' demand for a separate homeland, Hindu leaders seem to have lost their mental balance and the utterances which followed later, vividly reflected the Hindus' hidden hatred against the Muslims. They started violent attacks on the Muslim leadership and their scheme of separation. The Hindu Press distinctively played a vindictive role in this hour of trial and quite surprising, as it is believed, gave the scheme the name of 'Pakistan' which was thereafter accepted by the Muslims.

Soon the controversies began regarding the practicability and advisability of the partition scheme as enunciated in the spirit of the resolution. The Hindus

made their best efforts to kill the Muslim demand of the self-determination with ridicule.

“The Congress opposed the League thesis with a different set of theories. It argued, in the first instance, that the achievement of Pakistan was an ambition of fanatics and maniacs and that an independent Muslim state in the sub-continent would be an eternal menace to India. Different Muslim races had forced their way into the country through the North-Western passes and history might yet repeat itself with the new state developing extra-territorial affinities. A whisper in Assam would be undesirable, as it would deny equal citizenship to Hindus.”²² Gandhi, criticized the partition scheme as ‘vivisection of motherland’, ‘cutting up a baby into two halves, and the cutting of mother cow’.

Nehru, commenting on the issue launched forward another attack against the separate Muslim nationality and said:

“Mr Jinnah’s demand was based on a new theory he had recently propounded—that India consists of two nations, Hindus and Muslims. Why only two I do not know, for if nationality was based on religion then there were many nations in India. Of two brothers one may be a Hindu, another a Muslim, they would belong to two different nations. These two nations existed in varying proportions in most of the villages in India, they were nations which had no

boundaries; they overlapped...Probably the essential characteristic of national consciousness is a sense of belonging to one another and of together facing the rest of the mankind. How far that is present in India as a whole may be a debatable point.

...Religious barriers are obviously not permanent, as conversions take place from one religion to another, and a person changing his religion does not thereby lose his racial background or his cultural and linguistic heritage.”²³

Meanwhile, the political deadlock in India was heading towards uncertainty. The war had entered a new phase. The British Government once again tried to call upon the political leaders of the League and the Congress to secure their cooperation within the Government but the attitude of the Congress was the same as demonstrated earlier and insisted on the assurance of complete control. The League, on the other hand, did not accept to brand itself with inferiority by accepting a position rejected by the Congress. At length, a Mission under the leadership of Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India to take up the constitutional hurdle. The Congress reply to the Cripps offer was the ‘Quit India Revolt’. They also rejected the offer for their own reasons and at the same time the Quaid-i-Azam called upon his people “to abstain from any participation in the movement” started by the Hindus. The Hindu-Muslim relations thus became further strained and the already wide gulf existing between them continued to

widen and deepen. The gulf, which seemed at one time likely to be bridged turned to be absolutely unbridgeable practically owing to the designs of the Congress.

Quit India Demand of the Hindu Congress

On this occasion the Congress in August 1942 adopted a resolution of 'Quit India' demanding the end of British rule in India, sanctioning a mass struggle on the largest possible scale. On the other hand the League's reaction to this resolution was different as the Quaid characterized the 'Quit India' demand as fantastic, only having the subject, of coercing Britain into leaving the minorities to their fate, and thereby gave a new slogan 'Divide and Quit'.

Simla Conference and Elections (1945-1946)

In June 1945, the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, convened a Conference of the League and Congress leaders at Simla to solve the constitutional problem. The Conference, however, failed to achieve its object because the Congress leaders refused to accept the Muslim League's claim of the sole representative body of the Muslims. Therefore on 21st August the Viceroy announced that the general elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies could be held in the coming winter. In the elections that followed were fought on the issue of 'Partition' expressing the Muslim enthusiasm for a separate state.

The Muslim League captured all the thirty Muslim seats in the Central Legislature and 428 out of a total of 492 Muslim seats in the Provincial Legislatures.

Amazingly, even after the election results the Hindu leadership was reluctant to admit the League's superiority and entity which had now been clearly established. The Congress leaders still castigated the League as reactionary and medieval body, regretting the reverses of nationalist Muslims. The Congress leader, Nehru, did not accept the elections as decisive complaining that the Muslims, swayed by a religious hysteria, did not know what they were voting for whereas the Muslim community was fully aware of the consequences of the election results in which lay their religious, economic, cultural and political salvation. The statements of the Hindu leaders after elections clearly showed that the enemy was out and not prepared to bar the Muslims' sole demand—Pakistan. However, from the election results, partition of the sub-continent seemed inevitable and the Muslims' long awaited goal appearing, just ahead. This was undoubtedly the great achievement of the League in the country-wide contest against the Congress whose claim of sole representative body of India was frustrated and thereby changed the entire political scene. The Congress, who had full support of outer elements, and other anti-Muslim League parties could not prove her worth at large and neither the gold nor the money of Birlas and Dalmias could distract the Muslims from their demand for Pakistan.

Bihar Tragedy

It was most irritating that hardly *had the echo of election died down* that another gruesome chapter of Hindu-Muslim conflict resulting into riots was opened in

Bihar by the Hindus. A large number of Muslims fell victim to the inhuman atrocities and barbaric treatment of the Hindus. As reported by Mahbub Waris, then Joint Secretary of the Bihar Muslim League, “not a single Muslim was left alive in an area of 300 square miles Ponpooon to Teregna in Bihar. Dead bodies were lying everywhere, railway platforms were littered with them.”²⁴

This situation created a wide spread resentment amongst Muslims all over India. The Development Minister of Bihar, a Hindu of course, reflected the attitude of the Congress Party when he refused to furnish any help to Muslims by saying “I cannot do anything to protect the lives of Muslims. I can give you no help.”²⁵

The barbarities committed by the rivals and the tortuous sufferings which the Muslims experienced on this occasion are analysed by one of the contemporaries as follows:

“...Much of the butchery of hopelessly outnumbered Muslims bore every sign of careful prior planning, the first to several such abominations to occur during the next twelve months...The casualties were huge. A rough preliminary military estimate at the time put them, injured as well as dead, at 5,000. According to a subsequent statement in the British Parliament, the death toll amounted to 5,000. The *Statesman's* estimate was between 7,500 and 10,000; the

Congress party admitted to 2,000; Mr. Jinnah claimed about 30,000.”²⁶

Again:

“Of all the terrible doings of 1946, this was the most shocking. Great mobs of Hindus turned suddenly, but with every preparation for the dead, upon the few Muslims who had lived, and whose forefathers had lived, in and trust, all their lives among these very Hindu neighbours. It has never been ascertained who was the organizing brain of this well laid, widely-planned plot of extirpation. All that we do know is that it went to a fixed plan and schedule. Had it not been so, such large mobs, fully armed with prepared weapons, would never have collected in time and moved with such obvious, fiendish intent from victim to victim. The number of Muslim dead, men, women, and children, in this short, savage killing was about 7,000 to 8,000. Women and their babies were cut up, butchered, with an obscene devilry.”²⁷

The same author characterizing the events as barbaric says, “Historians may reckon the Bihar calamity to have been decisive in its effects on the Partition controversy. After so huge a slaughter, which bore signs of cold-blood preparing, possibilities of getting India’s Hindu and Muslim populations to live together

harmoniously under a single independent, post-British Government shrank towards zero.”²⁸

“But the savageries had been too clearly a result of organization, under Hindu communal leadership, for their effect on Muslim sentiments elsewhere through the sub-continent to be other than final...Thus the Bihar calamity, and the widespread popular knowledge of the appalling things done by a Hindu majority over hundreds of square miles within ten days or so, particularly to helpless women and children, brought to the surface such profound ancient fears and hatreds, such vivid historical recollection of former unavoidable.”²⁹

New Wave of Riots

The atrocities of the Hindus did not end here. The inhuman process continued and only after a few days of the Bihar calamity, there occurred the horrible rural slaughter at Garmukteswar in U.P. “where Hindu pilgrims, at the annual religious fair set upon and exterminated Muslims, not only on the festival grounds but in the adjacent town...The dead were estimated at between 1,000 and 2,000. The U.P. Ministry succeeded in wrapping a heavy blanket of silence round the whole business...How far it was a planned butchery of the Bihar type must remain conjectural. And then, there were the cities, particularly Calcutta, in which afflicted place, for twelve months, scarcely a day passed without ‘incidents’,

from obscure stabbings and burnings in buy-lanes to bomb-throwings and sten-gunnings in the main streets.”³⁰

Woodruff, who was District Officer in the U.P. describes his experience in the following words:

“...In ordinary communal trouble there was usually some point of focus, a mosque or temple, or a *pipal* tree. In a city, main thoroughfares could be petrolled. But this was unaccountable; no one could foretell where it would come next. In a village where Hindus and Muslims had lived for centuries, sudden fear would blaze up, and the weaker would be slaughtered with every kind of barbarity, babies being killed before their mothers’ eyes, women and children burnt in their huts.”³¹

After the elections Provincial Ministries were formed. Muslim League Ministries took office in Bengal and Sindh, but the North-West Frontier Province had a Congress Ministry. In the Punjab the Congress entered into a coalition with a handful of Unionists and Akali Sikhs to strengthen the anti-League front although the Muslim League Party constituted the largest single group in the legislature and included over eighty-five per cent of Muslim legislators—again an example of Hindu treachery.

Cabinet Mission Plan (1946)

Meanwhile, in March 1946, British Government sent a Cabinet Mission, under Sir Stafford Cripps, to

examine the constitutional problems in India and propose remedies. The Congress and the League at large accepted the Plan. But meanwhile when Nehru in a speech stated that the Plan could be altered after the constitution-making body was set up, the League was alarmed and compelled to revise its previous decision. The League withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan and passed the historic 'Direct Action' resolution which read:

Now the time has come for the Muslim Nation to resort to Direct Action to achieve Pakistan, to assert their just rights, to vindicate their honour and to get rid of the present British slavery and the contemplated future caste-Hindu domination. The Quaid on this occasion said what we have done today, is the most historic act in our history. Never (hitherto) have we in the League done anything except by constitutionalism. But now we are forced against constitutional methods.

Abul Kalam Azad, the Nationalist Muslim Leader threw the burdon of disrupting the unity of India on the killing of the Mission Plan. He said:

“Now happened one of the most unfortunate events which changed the course of history, On 10th July, Jawaharlal held a Press Conference in Bombay in which he made a statement which in normal circumstances might have passed unnoticed, but in the existing atmosphere of suspicion and hatred, set in train a most unfortunate series of consequences. Some press representatives asked him whether with the passing of the Resolution by A.I.C.C. (All-India Congress Committee) the Congress had

accepted the Plan *in toto*, including the composition of the Interim Government. Jawaharlal stated in reply that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly, 'completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situation as they arise.'

Press representative further asked if this meant that the Cabinet Mission Plan could be modified.

Jawaharlal replied emphatically that Congress had agreed only to participate in the Constituent Assembly and regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought best.

I must place on record that Jawaharlal's statement was wrong. It was not correct to say that Congress was free to modify the Plan as it pleased. We had in fact agreed that the central government would be federal. There would be the compulsory list of three central subjects while all other subjects remained in the provincial sphere. We had further agreed that there would be three sections; *viz.* A, B and C in which the provinces will be grouped. These matters could not be changed unilaterally by Congress without the consent of other parties to the agreement. The Muslim League had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan, as this represented the utmost limit to which the British Government would go. In his speech to the League Council, Mr. Jinnah had clearly stated that he recommended acceptance only because nothing better could be obtained."³²

League's Direct Action (August 1946)

In response to the League's declaration of 'Direct Action' titles and honours conferred by the British Government were renounced by the Muslims to express their resentment and a full-fledged country-wide strike was observed on August 16, 1946 and passed away peacefully except in Calcutta where ferocious Hindu-Muslim riots occurred.

Great Calcutta Killings

According to a British contemporary account the following is the analysis of the fateful happening:

"In the event, what happened in that one city, Calcutta, was utterly appalling...this was something unique what a local commentator aptly termed a 'new order in disorder' and no anti-western riot but a communal one, of an intensity, size, and savageness that no one had imagined possible...The scenes of butchery and destruction, in what soon came to be called the 'Great Calcutta Killing', were indescribable. At the end of three dreadful days, corpses bestrewed the town. Borne everywhere on the warm moisture monsoon breeze came the stink of human putrefaction. In Shampuker and similar squalid outlying parts, on plots of waste ground, you could see mounds of decomposing, liquefying bodies, heaped as high as the second floors of the nearby houses because of lack of space elsewhere. A visit to the police morgue necessitated use of respirator; unremoved rotting cadavers were stacked to the ceiling. If you wished to watch how a vulture opened up a dead man's abdomen, you could see it

on the pavements of wealthy park street...We had seen more horrors than most modern soldiers ever do on the battlefield...About 100,000 people were rendered homeless, mainly by arson. So great was the confusion, that all possibility of a detailed numbering of the dead and injured was ruled out.

“...Even perhaps during the first days fighting, and certainly during the second and third, Muslim losses were the worst. Apparently local Hindu organizations, hearing rumours that some sort of Muslim attack was contemplated, had made up formidable counter-preparations. But what may decisively have tipped the scales was not the massive retaliatory Hindu onslaughts but the intervention during the second afternoon of the Sikhs, who had in the main held aloof on 16th August.”³³

Khizr Hayat Resigns

The situation in the Punjab, in January 1947, deteriorated against the pro-Congress Ministry and large scale demonstrations began to be organized by the Muslims to vindicate their civic rights. This was followed soon after in the North-West Frontier Province and later on in Assam as well. The narrative of what occurred in these provinces during these demonstrations is too unhappy. In the Punjab, however, the Chief Minister, Khizr Hayat had to bow before the League demand and resigned in March and the new Governor Sir Evan Jenkins

took over the charge. This move resulted in riots—between the Sikhs and the Muslims. On 3rd March the Sikh leader Master Tara Singh declared:

The Sikh Barbarism

“Let the Khalsa Panth now realize the gravity of the situation. I expect every Sikh to do his duty. We shall live or die, but shall not submit to Muslim domination. Oh Khalsa! Rise and gird up your loins. The momentous hour has approached. May God be our guide and guard us.”³⁴

Again, on the following day coming out of the Assembly Chambers, he brandished his sword and declared:

“The time has come when might of the sword alone shall rule. The Sikhs are ready. We have to bring the Muslims to their senses.”³⁵

These statements foretold which way the winds were going to blow. The Sikhs and Hindus organized themselves in *Jathas*, founded secret guerilla troops and Master Tara Singh’s words were the signal to go ahead. They launched a united encounter against the Muslims and disturbances broke out in Lahore on March 5, 1947, spreading quickly to all the major districts of the Punjab including the Sikh citadel—Amritsar. Thus a gruesome chapter of riots opened resulting in the destruction of

property, large scale murders, loot and arson and in this *while* barbaric scene, the Muslims were the main victims.

Within a few hours, Multan was involved in these riots and on 6th March, Amritsar too came in its fold. Damage in these cities proved even worse than in Lahore. About 750 houses were destroyed in Multan, and 40,000 inhabitants (of course Muslims) became homeless. The following day witnessed ferocious rioting in Gujranwala spreading quickly to Sialkot, Jullundhur and Ferozpur, where majority of population was of Muslims. On 7th March, Murree also witnessed such happenings and later, Rawalpindi district was also at the mercy of the hooligans. It is difficult to calculate the release, it amounted to 2,049 but as estimated by non-officials of standing were much higher. It should not be forgotten that throughout this period of barbarities, Hindus and Sikhs were the main aggressors in the cities of central and eastern Punjab. Quite obviously, history a century or more old, had become active again; traditions of bitter resentment against the injustices and humiliations of the *Sikhashahi* of Ranjit Singh's time about which some account has been given in the previous chapter were revived.

The Partition of the Sub-Continent and series of Massacres

Meanwhile the partition of the sub-continent was looming large over the Indian horizon. In February 1947, the Prime Minister Lord Attlee had made a historic statement in the House of Commons in regard to the intention of the British Government to transfer of power in

India by June 1948. Lord Mountbatten, the new Viceroy of India, arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1947, and soon after his arrival started to consult leaders of different political parties. After long negotiations and discussions a Plan was prepared which was approved towards the end of May by the British Cabinet. The Plan was published on 3rd June and this came to be known as the '3rd June Plan'. It laid down the procedure of transfer of power in detail and the Viceroy, in a Press Conference on the following day, announced that the transfer of power would take place by 15th August, 1947.

It was after this announcement that communal tension increased enormously. Violence, plunder, abduction and stabbing were on rampage in the eastern districts of the Punjab. Muslims lacked security of life and property. Emigrations to Pakistan started at a large scale and on their way Muslims were trapped and murdered in cold blood. Children were cut to pieces and maimed. Young Muslim girls were subjected to the worst possible atrocities. They were kidnapped, raped and often cut to pieces. Heaps of their dead bodies were seen in the streets, roads and highways. Numberless corpses were thrown into rivers, canals and sewers. Several trains, full of dead bodies of Muslim refugees reached Lahore. According to a contemporary British account:

“The scale of killings and movements of refugees became even more extensive than those caused by the more formal conflicts of opposing armies.”³⁶ Another eyewitness Captain Glue of Royal Sappers and Miners

recorded: "I have served in France during the World War II and I did not see the destruction to the extent, which I have seen in Amritsar."³⁷

About the beginning of August, the Sikhs and Hindus began attacking the Muslim inhabitants of central Punjab, "Systematic attacks of a novel type were being made on Muslim villages by roving bands of Sikhs, usually on horseback, and operating under what looked like military discipline."

According to Lumby:

"Gangs led by ex-soldiers and armed with automatic guns, rifles, and bombs were roaming the countryside, attacking and burning villages and massacring their inhabitants. It was estimated that, in the Amritsar district alone, nearly 1,000 people were killed during the first fortnight of August and most of them were obviously Muslims."³⁸

The same author summarizes the whole catastrophe in the following words:

"The truth is that, despite all the warnings, leading public figures in Delhi quite failed, for ten days or so, to grasp the significance of the news gruesomely pouring in from the central Punjab. The Sikh war of revenge, so long foretold, had begun, and in which the

helpless (sic) Punjab Boundary Force, belatedly formed, proved incapable of dealing with, despite all its discipline and gallantry—a fact necessitating its disbandment within a month. Like the great Calcutta killing of nearly a year before, what was happening proved once again to be a ‘new order in disorder’; an affair the effect of which flared out swiftly, in reprisal and counter-reprisal, to involve the whole Punjab including its princely states; tracts also of Western U.P., of Southern Kashmir, and of Frontier Province; princely states South of the Punjab such as Bahawalpur, Alwar, Bharatpur; and which, when it reached Delhi, came within a hairsbreadth of plunging the whole sub-continent irretrievably in confusion; and affair which brought death to hundreds of thousands, and set in motion millions of refugees. It was into conditions such as these, about nine weeks after the decision on 3rd June 1947, to create her, that Pakistan was born.”³⁹

Ian Morrison, correspondent of *The Times*, informing about the barbaric incidents occurred in the East Punjab in a very short duration only three weeks cabled the following report:

“More horrible than anything we saw during that war, is the universal comment of experienced officers, British and Indian, on

the present slaughter in East Punjab. The Sikhs are clearing East Punjab of Muslims, burning Muslim villages and homesteads, even in their frenzy burning their own. This violence has been organized from the highest levels of Sikh leadership, and it is being done systematically, sector by sector. Some large towns, like Amritsar and Jullundhur, are now quiet, because, there are no Muslims left. In a two hours air reconnaissance of the Jullundhur district at the week-end I must have seen 50 villages aflame.

The Sikh *jathas*, armed mobs from 50 to 100 strong, assemble usually in the gurdwaras, their places of worship, before making a series of raids. Many *jathas* cross over from the Sikh (princely) states. The Muslims are usually armed only with staves. When threatened, they assemble on their roofs and beat gongs and drums to summon help from neighbouring Muslim communities, and prepare to throw stones at the attackers. The Sikh attack scientifically. A first wave armed with firearms fires to bring the Muslims off their roofs. A second wave lobs grenades over the walls. In the ensuing confusion a third wave goes in with *kirpans*—the Sikh sabers, which are also religious emblems—and spears, and the

serious killing begins. A last wave consist of older men, often army pensioners with long white beards, who carry torches and specialize in arson. Mounted out riders with *kirpans* cut down those trying to flee.

British officers have seen *jathas* that have included women and even children with spears. Appalling atrocities have been committed; bodies have been mutilated; none had been spared, men, women, or children. In one village, out of fifty corpses, thirty were those of women. One officer found four bodies roasted to death over a fire.”⁴⁰

Further more gigantic panic stricken process of immigration from other parts of India began at a tremendous rate in third week of August. An innumerable number accompanying the Muslim convoys on road to Pakistan on foot were brutally slain by the organized Hindu-Sikh *jathas*. Planned attacks were made on refugee trains which ‘became a horrible specialty of the whole affair, and continued far into the autumn’.

One such incident of train outrage is given below in the words of Colonel Sher Khan, later Major General of the Pakistan Army. He says:

“On 22nd September I left Lahore, after a meeting, for Amritsar, and arrived in the area of the Khalsa (Sikh) College at 16.20 hours. There were very big crowds with

spears and swords, and more to the south of the road. There was firing going on. I stopped near a Garhwal Regiment post in the Khalsa College; here I was told a train was being attacked...The following morning I went to the station, where the train had been pulled in during the night...I talked to some survivors. They said they were refugees from Alwar State, and were put on the train at Delhi. Most of their belongings were taken away at Delhi Station. They were asked to surrender sharp weapons at Ambala. Some who had knives did so. They were fired at near Beas. An attack by about 100 Sikhs two or three stations on other side of Amritsar, the train slowed down, then stopped. Soon after, heavy firing started from both sides. Then hundreds of Sikhs rushed towards the train. They first started collecting valuables of the women, and throwing out boxes. Anyone resisting was killed by sword, *kirpan*, spear. Then started pulling out women, saying come with us, those resisting being killed. Having done all the looting, they started killing. There was some firing from the train, presumably from the escort, but it died down. Several bombs were thrown into the carriages. ...It is impossible to estimate the number of dead, as they were piled on top of each other in the

compartments...Altogether, forty lorries were sent to Lahore loaded with wounded, including about 200 persons who had escaped serious injuries. The train pulled out of Amritsar towards Jullundhur.”⁴¹

In the midst of these agonizing atrocities, Pakistan came into being on the 14th August 1947 and the first Parliament of Pakistan was sworn in.

It is a vital fact to be recorded that the Congress was not sincerely implementing the June 3rd Plan. It was unwilling to provide protection to the Muslims in India. The following is the utterance of one of the Chief Ministers of the Congress, that Muslims left in India “could not expect to be treated otherwise than as aliens. They would have no citizenship rights.”⁴²

Yet another greatest example of the Congress refutation can be seen in Indo-Pakistan relations after the independence of these two nations. The Muslims who remained behind in India owing to one reason or the other, or by an accident of history, are still regarded as bitter enemies of the Hindus. There is a long-drawn list of innumerable communal riots in India which have occurred since the birth of Pakistan, in which the Muslims have been and are still being treated as *Malechch* and bitter rivals. They have not the least protection of life, honour and property. The consequences of which is that the world has witnessed the blood-bath of Ahmadabad and in many other parts of India. India must rise above its archaic thinking and live in the modern world as a civilized state.

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Index

A

Abdul Hamid Lahori · 23
 Abdur Rahim · 19, 118
 Abul Kalam Azad · 161
 Achyut Patwardhan · 54
 Agha Khan · 126, 127, 128, 131
 Ahmadabad · 26, 173
 Ahmadnagar · 9, 26
 Ajmer · 5, 8
 Akali Sikhs · 160
 Ala-ud-Din Khalji · 10
 Al-Beruni · 5, 27
 Ali Adil Shah · 23
 Ali Imam, Sir · 83
 Aligarh · 64
 Allahabad · 27, 47, 91, 123, 174
 Allan Octavian Hume · 61
 All-India Muslim League · 82, 123, 132, 151, 174
 Altaf Hussain Hali, Maulana · 57
 Alwar · 169, 172
 Ambala · 46, 70, 172
 Ambedkar, B.R. · 96
 Ameer Ali (Jurist) · 80
 Amin Chand · 31
 Amir Khusro · 14
 Amritsar · 130, 165, 166, 168, 170, 171
Arya Samaj · 68, 98, 112, 113, 117, 135
 Asoka Mehta · 54
 Aurangzeb (Emperor) · 24, 26, 29, 48, 69
 Awadh · 32
 Azamgarh · 65, 70
 Aziz, A. · 36, 46, 47, 50, 90, 107, 121, 125, 130, 131

B

Babar · 9
 Bahadar Shah (Emperor) · 29
 Bahawalpur · 169

Bal Raj Madhok · 115
 Balban · 8
 Banaras · 7, 69, 92
Bande Mataram (Hindi Song) · 135, 147
 Bankim Chandar Chatterjee · 64
 Benaras · 25, 57
 Bengal · 12, 13, 14, 27, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37, 40, 41, 45, 52, 53, 64, 72, 73, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 90, 102, 114, 115, 123, 151, 160
 Bhadauri · 23
 Bhai Permanand · 117
 Bharatpur · 169
 Bhimbar · 24
 Bihar · 41, 51, 59, 70, 141, 142, 156, 157, 158, 159
 Bijapur · 9, 23
 Bombay · 27, 28, 64, 65, 70, 91, 92, 110, 130, 161
 Brahma Samaj · 112
 Britain · 48, 85, 155
 Budha · 4
 Bukka · 8

C

C.P. · 139, 149
 C.R. Das · 121
 C.S. Ranga Iyer · 120
 Cabinet Mission · 160, 162
 Calcutta · 27, 28, 30, 70, 74, 78, 80, 84, 86, 88, 91, 92, 93, 109, 110, 159, 163, 169, 175
 Casey, Lord (Governor of Bengal) · 115
 Cawnpur · 89
 Chaitanya · 12, 20
 Chandur Biswas · 139
 Chaudhuri, N.C. · 81
 Chaudhri, T. Ray, Prof. · 13
 Clarke, Mr. (Session Judge) · 139
 Cochin · 32

Coconada · 88
 Colin Campbell, Sir · 43, 90
 Congress Rule · 135, 141, 142, 143,
 146, 147, 149
 Cripps, Sir Stafford · 154, 160
 Curzon, Lord · 72, 81

D

Dacca · 86, 88, 90
 Dadu Miyan · 40
 Dariyaganj · 48
 Delawar Hussain · 53
 Delhi · 5, 8, 10, 11, 25, 27, 32, 46,
 47, 51, 70, 91, 103, 132, 167,
 168, 172
 Dera Ghazi Khan · 70
 Devi Singh · 26
 Dinajpur · 39
 Dravadians · 125
 Durrani, F.K. · 130, 135, 174
 Dwarkanath Tagore · 34

E

Ellenborough, Lord · 39

F

Faraidi Movement · 40
 Faraidpur · 40
 Fatehpuri · 43, 48
 Fazl-ul-Haque, A.K. · 151
 Ferozpur · 166
 Firishta (author) · 5, 9, 17, 22
 Francis Taker, Sir · 142

G

Gandhi, M.K. · 95
 Garmukteswar · 159
 Gazipur · 57
 Glue, Captain · 167
 Gokhale · 73, 92
 Golkanda · 9
 Growse · 12
 Gujranwala · 166
 Gujrat · 23, 26
 Guru Gobind Singh · 29
 Gwalior · 5

H

Hajjaj-bin-Yousaf · 2
 Hardayal · 98
 Harishan · 8
 Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani · 21
 Henry Harrington · 44
 Himalayas · 54
 Hindu Mahasabha · 100, 105, 121,
 130, 135
 Holy Prophet (PBUH) · 21, 113, 146
 Hooghly · 30
 Hoshiarpur · 70
 Hunter, Dr. · 37, 52
 Hyderabad · 114, 131

I

I. H. Qureshi · 15
 Ibn-e-Battuta · 15
 Iilm-ud-Din Ghazi · 111
 Indian National Congress · 60, 80,
 82, 91, 92
 Indor · 81
 Iqbal, Allama Muhammad · 123

J

Jaipal · 5
 Jalaluddin Khalji · 11
 Jamiluddin Ahmad · 174
 Jan Sangh · 115
 Janjira · 70
 Jhansi · 46
 Jhind · 51
 Jinnah, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad
 Ali · 121, 128
 John Simon, Sir · 119
 Jullundhur · 166, 170, 173

K

Kalinjar · 5
 Kalyana Singh · 32
 Kannauj · 5
 Kanwaha · 17
 Karnal · 70
 Kashmir · 7, 23, 169
 Khalsa Panth · 165
 Khilafat Movement · 95, 96, 101
 Khizr Hayat · 164

Kirtan · 12
 Kohat · 101, 109
 Kufa · 2

L

Lahore · 27, 28, 32, 70, 90, 91, 92,
 93, 111, 113, 114, 117, 130, 131,
 149, 165, 166, 167, 171, 174, 175
 Lala Lajpat Rai · 102, 113
 Lord Attlee (Premier of England) ·
 166
 Lucknow · 47, 51, 94, 97, 114, 121
 Lucknow Pact (1916) · 94
 Ludhiana · 70
 Lumby · 168, 174
 Lumby, E.W.R. · 143

M

Madhu Sudhan Saraswati · 20
 Madras · 70, 144
 Maharaja Bari Bahadur · 32
 Maharashtra · 67
 Mahmud Ghaznavi · 5
 Majumdar · 27, 32, 34, 90
 Malabar · 4, 101, 130
 Master Tara Singh · 165
 Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar · 87,
 93, 95, 121, 122, 129, 132
 Meerut · 46, 91
 Mewar · 9
 Mohammad Bin Qasim · 2
 Mohammad Shafi, Sir · 132
 Mohan Mukherjee, Raja Pearsy · 74
 Moplah · 107
 Morley-Minto Reforms (1909) · 84
 Mountbatten, Lord · 167
 Majumdar, R.C. Prof. · 15
 Multan · 25, 101, 109, 116, 166
 Murree · 166
 Murshidabad · 31
 Mushtaque Hussain · 83
 Mymensingh · 80

N

Narayan · 51
 Navin Chander Roy · 112
 Nehru · 111, 120, 121, 122, 130, 134,
 153, 156, 161, 174

Nehru Report (1928) · 120
 Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal · 133
 Nizam Shah · 23

O

Omer-ibn-e-Khatib, Caliph · 4
 Orissa · 54

P

Pakistan · 5, 17, 27, 36, 46, 90, 91,
 96, 114, 125, 130, 132, 149, 151,
 152, 153, 156, 161, 167, 169,
 171, 173, 174, 175
 Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar · 84, 93
 Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya · 77,
 92
 Panikkar · 20, 28, 30, 90
 Patna · 46
 Percival Griffith, Sir · 51
 Pertab Singh, Sir · 81
 Peshawar · 5
 Pirthvi Raj · 8
 Plassey · 32, 51
 Poona · 64, 65, 66, 68
 Punjab · 23, 29, 51, 59, 76, 81, 102,
 112, 113, 114, 123, 124, 160,
 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170

Q

Qazi of Mathura · 19
 Qutb-ud-Din Aibak · 8

R

Rabindranath Tagore · 78
 Rahmat Ali, Chaudhri · 125
 Rai Bahadur Mul Raj · 113
 Rai Chach · 3
 Rai Sadhuram · 32
 Raja Dahir · 2
 Raja Kishan Das · 57
 Raja Narindra Nath · 102
 Rajendra Prashad · 103
 Rajputana · 9, 29
 Ram Raj · 23, 107
 Rana Sangha · 9, 17
 Ranjit Singh, Maharaja · 166
 Rash Behari Ghose · 76, 92
 Rawlatt, Justice · 65

Ripon, Lord · 62
 Round Table Conference (England) ·
 123, 128, 131

S

S.M. Ikram · 14, 27, 28, 56, 90, 91,
 130
 Salimullah, Nawab · 86
 Sanghatan · 99, 101, 104, 105, 117
 Sanskrit · 19, 34
 Sawaraj Party · 105
 Sayamananda · 13
 Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Dr. · 130
 Shahab-ud-Din Ghauri · 8
 Shahjahan (Emperor) · 23
 Shakespeare, Mr. · 57, 58
 Shampuker · 163
 Shankarcharva · 5
 Shariattullah, Haji · 40
 Sher Khan (Colonel) · 171
 Shitab Roy · 32
 Shivaji · 69, 78, 83
 Shuddhi · 99, 100, 101, 103, 104,
 105, 117, 119
 Shyamaprasad Mookerjee · 115
 Sialkot · 166
 Siberia · 54
 Sindh · 2, 124, 160
 Siraj-ud-Dullah, Nawab · 30
 Spain · 81, 119
 Sri Ram Sharma · 24, 28
 Subuktigin · 5
 Sukla, Mr. (Premier of C.P.) · 139
 Surendranath Banerjee · 68, 88
 Swami Shardhananda · 99, 104
 Syed Ahmad Khan, Sir · 43

T

Thatta · 25
 Theodore Beck · 64
 Tikori · 141
 Tilk · 64
 Titu Mir · 41
 Travancor · 32
 Tripoli · 85
 Tylor (Magistrate) · 89

U

U.P. · 43, 140, 159, 160, 169
 Ujjain · 5, 26
 Urdu-Hindi Controversy · 60

V

Vaishnavas · 12, 13, 14
 Vidya Mandir Scheme · 144
 Vijayanagar · 8, 9

W

Wahabi Movement · 41
 Walter Lawrence · 81
 Wardha Scheme · 144, 146
 Watson · 31
 Wellington, Duke of · 40
 World War II (1939) · 149

Y

Yamuna · 11

