

to the cause of persuading the Congress to adopt non-co-operation and strengthen the Khilafat movement. With that object in view Mr. Gandhi toured the country between 1st August and 1st September 1920 in the company of the Ali Brothers who were the founders of the Khilafat movement impressing upon the people the necessity of non-co-operation. People could notice the disharmony in the tune of Mr. Gandhi and the Ali Brothers. As the *Modern Review* pointed out: "Reading between the lines of their speeches, it is not difficult to see that with one of them the sad plight of the Khilafat in distant Turkey is the central fact, while with the other attainment of Swaraj here in India is the object in view". This dichotomy* of interest did not augur well for the success of the ultimate purpose. Nonetheless Mr. Gandhi succeeded in carrying the Congress with him in support of the Khilafat cause.†

For a long time the Hindus had been engaged in wooing the Muslims to their side. The Congress was very anxious to bridge the gulf between itself and the Muslim League. The ways and means adopted in 1916 for bringing about this consummation and which resulted in the Lucknow Pact signed between the Congress and the Muslim League have been graphically told by Swami Shradhanand in his impressions of the Congress Session held in that year at Lucknow. Says the Swami § :

"On sitting on the dias (Lucknow Congress platform) the first thing that I noticed was that the number of Moslem delegates was proportionately fourfold of what it was at Lahore in 1893. The majority of Moslem delegates had donned gold, silver and silk embroidered chogas (flowing robes) over their ordinary coarse suits of wearing apparel. It was rumoured that these 'chogas' had been put by Hindu moneyed men for Congress Tamasha. Of some 433 Moslem delegates only some 30 had come from outside, the rest belonging to Lucknow City. And of these majority was admitted free to delegate seats, board and lodging. SirSyed Ahmad's anti-Congress League had tried in a public meeting to dissuade

* Mr. Gandhi repudiated the suggestion of the *Modern Review* and regarded it as "cruellest cut". Dealing with the criticism of the *Modern Review* in his Article in *Young India* for 20th October 1921 Mr. Gandhi said "I claim that with us both the Khilafat is the central fact, with Maulana Mahomed Ali because it is his religion, with me because, in laying down my life for the Khilafat, I ensure safety of the cow, that is my religion, from the Musalman knife."

† The Resolution of non-co-operation was carried by 1886 votes against 884. The late Mr. Tairsee once told me that a large majority of the delegates were no others than the taxi drivers of Calcutta who were paid to vote for the non-co-operation resolution.

§ *Liberator*, 22nd April 1926.

Moslems from joining the Congress as delegates. As a countermove the Congress people lighted the whole Congress camp some four nights before the session began and advertised that that night would be free. The result was that all the "Chandul Khanas" of Lucknow were emptied and a huge audience of some thirty thousand Hindus and Moslems was addressed from half a dozen platforms. It was then that the Moslem delegates were elected or selected. All this was admitted by the Lucknow Congress organisers to me in private.

"A show was being made of the Moslem delegates. Moslem delegate gets up to second a resolution in Urdu. He begins: 'Hozarat, I am a Mahomedan delegate'. Some Hindu delegate gets up and calls for three cheers for Mahomedan delegates and the response is so enthusiastic as to be beyond description."

In taking up the cause of Khilafat Mr. Gandhi achieved a double purpose. He carried the Congress Plan of winning over the Muslims to its culmination. Secondly he made the Congress a power in the country, which it would not have been, if the Muslims had not joined it. The cause of the Khilafat appealed to the Musalmans far more than political safeguards, with the result that the Musalmans who were outside it trooped into the Congress. The Hindus welcomed them. For, they saw in this a common front against the British, which was their main aim. The credit for this must of course go to Mr. Gandhi. For there can be no doubt that this was an act of great daring.

When the Musalmans in 1919 approached the Hindus for participation in the Non-co-operation Movement which the Muslims desired to start for helping Turkey and the Khilafat, the Hindus were found to be divided in three camps. One was a camp of those who were opposed to non-co-operation in principle. A second camp consisted of those Hindus who were prepared to join the Muslims in their campaign of non-co-operation provided the Musalmans agreed to give up Cow Slaughter. A third group consisted of the Hindus who feared that the Mahomedans might extend their non-co-operation to inviting the Afghans to invade India, in which case the movement instead of resulting in Swaraj might result in the subjection of India to Muslim Raj.

Mr. Gandhi did not care for those Hindus who were opposed to joining the Muslims in the Non-co-operation Movement. But with regard to the others he told them that their attitude was unfortunate. To those Hindus who wanted to give their support

on the condition that the Muslims give up cow killing, Mr. Gandhi said*:

“I submit that the Hindus may not open the Goraksha (cow protection) question here. The test of friendship is assistance in adversity, and that too, unconditional assistance. Co-operation that needs consideration is a commercial contract and not friendship. Conditional co-operation is like adulterated cement which does not bind. It is the duty of the Hindus, if they see the justice of the Mahomedan cause to render co-operation. If the Mahomedans feel themselves bound in honour to spare the Hindu’s feelings and to stop cow killing, they may do so, no matter whether the Hindus co-operate with them or not. Though therefore, I yield to no Hindu in my worship of the cow, I do not want to make the stopping of cow killing a condition precedent to cooperation. Unconditional co-operation means the protection of the cow.”

To those Hindus who feared to join the Non-co-operation Movement for the reasons that Muslims may invite the Afghans to invade India, Mr. Gandhi said†:

“It is easy enough to understand and justify the Hindu caution. It is difficult to resist the Mahomedan position. In my opinion, the best way to prevent India from becoming the battle ground between the forces of Islam and those of the English is for Hindus to make non-co-operation a complete and immediate success, and I have little doubt that, if the Mahomedans remain true to their declared intention and are able to exercise self-restraint and make sacrifices, the Hindus will ‘play the game’ and join them in the campaign of non-co-operation. I feel equally certain that Hindus will not assist Mahomedans in promoting or bringing about an armed conflict between the British Government and their allies, and Afghanistan. British forces are too well organised to admit of any successful invasion of the Indian frontier. The only way, therefore, the Mahomedans can carry on an effective struggle on behalf of the honour of Islam is to take up non-co-operation in real earnest. It will not only be completely effective if it is adopted by the people on an extensive scale, but it will also provide full scope for individual conscience. If I cannot bear an injustice done by an individual or a corporation, and, I am directly or indirectly instrumental in upholding that individual or corporation, I must answer for it before my Maker; but I have done all that is humanly possible for me to do consistently with the moral code that refuses to injure even the wrong-doers, if I cease to

* *Young India*, 10th December 1919.

† *Young India*, 9th June 1920.

support the injustice in the manner described above. In applying, therefore, such a great force, there should be no haste, there should be no temper shown. Non-co-operation must be and remain absolutely a voluntary effort. The whole thing, then, depends upon Mahomedans themselves. If they will but help themselves, Hindu help will come and the Government, great and mighty though it is, will have to bend before the bloodless opposition of a whole nation."

Unfortunately, the hope of Mr. Gandhi that 'no Government can possibly withstand the bloodless opposition of a whole nation' did not come true. Within a year of the starting of the Non-cooperation Movement, Mr. Gandhi had to admit that the Musalmans had grown impatient and that:

"In their impatient anger, the Musalmans ask for more energetic and more prompt action by the Congress and Khilafat organisations. To the Musalmans, Swaraj means, as it must mean, India's ability to deal effectively with the Khilafat question. The Musalmans, therefore, decline to wait if the attainment of Swaraj means indefinite delay of a programme that may require the Musalmans of India to become impotent witnesses of the extinction of Turkey in European waters.

"It is impossible not to sympathise with this attitude. I would gladly recommend immediate action if I could think of any effective course. I would gladly ask for postponement of Swaraj activity if thereby we could advance the interest of Khilafat. I could gladly take up measures outside non-co-operation, if I could think of any, in order to assuage the pain caused to the millions of the Musalmans.

"But, in my humble opinion, attainment of Swaraj is the quickest method of righting the Khilafat wrong. Hence it is, that for me the solution of the Khilafat question is attainment of Swaraj and *vice versa*. The only way to help the affiliated Turks is for India to generate sufficient power to be able to assert herself. If she cannot develop that power in time, there is no way out for India and she must resign herself to the inevitable. What can a paralytic do to stretch forth a helping hand to a neighbour but to try to cure himself of his paralysis? Mere ignorant, thoughtless and angry outburst of violence may give vent to pent-up rage but can bring no relief to Turkey."

The Musalmans were not in a mood to listen to the advice of Mr. Gandhi. They refused to worship the principle of non-violence. They were not prepared to wait for Swaraj. They were in a hurry to find the most expeditious means of helping Turkey and saving the Khilafat. And the Muslims in their impatience did exactly what the Hindus feared they would do, namely, invite the Afghans to invade India. How far the Khilafatists had

proceeded in their negotiations with the Amir of Afghanistan it is not possible to know. But that such a project was entertained by them is beyond question. It needs no saying that the project of an invasion of India was the most dangerous project and every sane Indian would dissociate himself from so mad a project. What part Mr. Gandhi played in this project it is not possible to discover. Certainly he did not dissociate himself from it. On the contrary his misguided zeal for Swaraj and his obsession on Hindu-Moslem unity as the only means of achieving it, led him to support the project. Not only did he advise* the Amir not to enter into any treaty with the British Government but declared :

“I would, in a sense, certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British Government. That is to say, I would openly tell my countrymen that it would be a crime to help a government which had lost the confidence of the nation to remain in power”.

Can any sane man go so far, for the sake of Hindu-Moslem unity ? But, Mr. Gandhi was so attached to Hindu-Moslem unity that he did not stop to enquire what he was really doing in this mad endeavour. So anxious was Mr. Gandhi in laying the foundation of Hindu-Moslem unity well and truly, that he did not forget to advise his followers regarding the national crisis. In an Article in *Young India* of 8th September 1920 Mr. Gandhi said :

“During the Madras tour, at Bezwada I had occasion to remark upon the national crisis and suggested that it would be better to have cries about ideals than men. I asked the audience to replace Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai and Mahomed Ali Shoukat Ali-ki-jai by Hindu-Musalman-ki-jai. Brother Shoukat Ali, who followed, positively laid down the law. In spite of the Hindu-Muslim unity, he had observed that, if Hindus shouted Bande Mataram, the Muslims rang out with Allaho Akbar and *vice versa*. This, he rightly said jarred on the ear and still showed that the people did not act with one mind. There should be therefore only three cries recognised. Allaho Akbar to be joyously sung out by Hindus and Muslims, showing that God alone was great and no other. The second should be Bande Mataram (Hail Motherland) or Bharat Mata-ki-jai (Victory to Mother Hind). The third should be Hindu-Musalman-ki-jai without which there was no victory for India, and no true demonstration of the greatness of God. I do wish that the newspapers and public men would take up the Maulana’s suggestion and lead the people only to use the three cries. They are full of meaning. The first is a prayer

* *Young India* dated 4th May 1921.

and confession of our littleness and therefore a sign of humility. It is a cry in which all Hindus and Muslims should join in reverence and prayfulness. Hindus may not fight shy of Arabic words, when their meaning is not only totally inoffensive but even ennobling. God is no respecter of any particular tongue. Bande Mataram, apart from its wonderful associations, expresses the one national wish—the rise of India to her full height. And I should prefer Bande Mataram to Bharat Mata-ki-jai, as it would be a graceful recognition of the intellectual and emotional superiority of Bengal. Since India can be nothing without the union of the Hindu and the Muslim heart, Hindu-Musalman-ki-jai is a cry which we may never forget.

“There should be no discordance in these cries. Immediately some one has taken up any of the three cries, the rest should take it up and not attempt to yell out their favourite. Those, who do not wish to join, may refrain, but should consider it a breach of etiquette to interpolate their own when a cry has already been raised. It would be better too, always to follow out the three cries in the order given above.”

These are not the only things Mr. Gandhi has done to build up Hindu-Moslem unity. He has never called the Muslims to account even when they have been guilty of gross crimes against Hindus.

It is a notorious fact that many prominent Hindus who had offended the religious susceptibilities of the Muslims either by their writings or by their part in the Shudhi movement have been murdered by some fanatic Musalmans. First to suffer was Swami Shradhanand, who was shot by Abdul Rashid on 23rd December 1926 when he was lying in his sick bed. This was followed by the murder of Lala Nanakchand, a prominent Arya Samajist of Delhi. Rajpal, the author of the *Rangila Rasool*, was stabbed by Ilamdin on 6th April 1929 while he was sitting in his shop. Nathuramal Sharma was murdered by Abdul Qayum in September 1934. It was an act of great daring. For Sharma was stabbed to death in the Court of the Judicial Commissioner of Sind where he was seated awaiting the hearing of his appeal against his conviction under Section 195, I. P. C, for the publication of a pamphlet on the history of Islam. Khanna, the Secretary of the Hindu Sabha, was severely assaulted in 1938 by the Mahomedans after the Session of the Hindu Maha Sabha held in Ahmedabad and very narrowly escaped death.

This is, of course, a very short list and could be easily expanded. But whether the number of prominent Hindus killed by fanatic Muslims is large or small matters little. What matters is the attitude of those who count towards these murderers. The murderers paid the penalty of law where law is enforced. The leading Moslems, however, never condemned these criminals.

On the contrary, they were hailed as religious martyrs and agitation was carried on for clemency being shown to them. As an illustration of this attitude, one may refer to Mr. Barkat Alli, a Barrister of Lahore, who argued the appeal of Abdul Qayum. He went to the length of saying that Qayum was not guilty of murder of Nathuramal because his act was justifiable by the law of the Koran. This attitude of the Moslems is quite understandable. What is not understandable is the attitude of Mr. Gandhi.

Mr. Gandhi has been very punctilious in the matter of condemning any and every act of violence and has forced the Congress, much against its will to condemn it. But Mr. Gandhi has never protested against such murders. Not only have the Musalmans not condemned* these outrages but even Mr. Gandhi has never called upon the leading Muslims to condemn them. He has kept silent over them. Such an attitude can be explained only on the ground that Mr. Gandhi was anxious to preserve Hindu-Moslem unity and did not mind the murders of a few Hindus, if it could be achieved by sacrificing their lives.

This attitude to excuse the Muslims any wrong, lest it should injure the cause of unity, is well illustrated by what Mr. Gandhi had to say in the matter of the Mopla riots.

The blood-curdling atrocities committed by the Moplas in Malabar against the Hindus were indescribable. All over Southern India, a wave of horrified feeling had spread among the Hindus of every shade of opinion, which was intensified when certain Khilafat leaders were so misguided as to pass resolutions of

* It is reported that for earning merit for the soul of Abdul Rashid, the murderer of Swami Shradhanand, in the next world, the students and professors of the famous theological college at Deoband finished five complete recitations of the Koran and had planned to finish daily a lakh and a quarter recitations of Koranic verses. Their prayer was "God Almighty may give the marhoom (i.e., Rashid) a place in the 'a' ala-e-illeeyeen (the summit of the seventh heaven)"—*Times of India*. 30-11-27 *Through Indian Eyes* columns.

“congratulations to the Moplas on the brave fight they were conducting for the sake of religion”. Any person could have said that this was too heavy a price for Hindu-Moslem unity. But Mr. Gandhi was so much obsessed by the necessity of establishing Hindu-Moslem unity that he was prepared to make light of the doings of the Moplas and the Khilafats who were congratulating them. He spoke of the Moplas as the “brave God-fearing Moplas who were fighting for what they consider as religion and in a manner which they consider as religious”. Speaking of the Muslim silence over the Mopla atrocities Mr. Gandhi told the Hindus :

“The Hindus must have the courage and the faith to feel that they can protect their religion in spite of such fanatical eruptions. A verbal disapproval by the Mussalmans of Mopla madness is no test of Mussalman friendship. The Mussalmans must naturally feel the shame and humiliation of the Mopla conduct about forcible conversions and looting, and they must work away so silently and effectively that such a thing might become impossible even on the part of the most fanatical among them. My belief is that the Hindus as a body have received the Mopla madness with equanimity and that the cultured Mussalmans are sincerely sorry of the Mopla’s perversion of the teaching of the Prophet.”

The Resolution* passed by the Working Committee of the Congress on the Mopla atrocities shows how careful the Congress was not to hurt the feelings of the Musalmans.

“The Working Committee places on record its sense of deep regret over the deeds of violence done by Moplas in certain areas of Malbar, these deeds being evidence of the fact that there are still people in India who have not understood the message of the Congress and the Central Khilafat Committee, and calls upon every Congress and Khilafat worker to spread the said message of non-violence even under the gravest provocation throughout the length and breadth of India.

“Whilst, however, condemning violence on the part of the Moplas, the working Committee desires it to be known that the evidence in its possession shows that provocation beyond endurance was given to the Moplas and that the reports published by and on behalf of the Government have given a one-sided and highly exaggerated account of the wrongs done by the Moplas and an understatement of the needless destruction of life resorted to by the Government in the name of peace and order.

* The resolution says that there were only three cases of forcible conversion !! In reply to a question in the Central Legislature (Debates 16th January 1922) Sir William Vincent replied: “The Madras Government report that the number of forcible conversions probably runs to thousands but that for obvious reasons it will never be possible to obtain anything like an accurate estimate”.

“The Working Committee regrets to find that there have been instances of so-called Forcible conversion by some fanatics among Moplas, but warns the public against believing in the Government and inspired versions. The Report before the Committee says :

“The families, which have been reported to have been forcibly converted into Mahomedanism, lived in the neighbourhood of Manjeri. It is clear that conversions were forced upon Hindus by a fanatic gang which was always opposed to the Khilafat and Non-co-operation Movement and there were only three cases so far as our information goes.”

The following instances of Muslim intransigence, over which Mr. Gandhi kept mum are recorded by Swami Shradhanand in his weekly journal called the *Liberator*. Writing in the issue of 30th September 1926 the Swamiji says :

“As regards the removal of untouchability it has been authoritatively ‘ruled several times that it is the duty of Hindus to expiate for their past sins and non-Hindus should have nothing to do with it. But the Mahomedan and the Christian Congressmen have openly revolted against the dictum of Mr. Gandhi at Vaikom and other places. Even such an unbiased leader as Mr. Yakub Hassan, presiding over a meeting called to present an address to me at Madras, openly enjoined upon Musalmans the duty of converting all the untouchables in India to Islam.”

But Mr. Gandhi said nothing by way of remonstrance either to the Muslims or to the Christians.

In his issue of July 1926 the Swami writes :

“There was another prominent fact to which I drew the attention of Mahatma Gandhi. Both of us went together one night to the Khilafat Conference at Nagpur. The Ayats (verses) of the Quran recited by the Maulanas on that occasion, contained frequent references to Jihad and killing of the Kaffirs. But when I drew his attention to this phase of the Khilafat movement, Mahatmaji smiled and said, ‘They are alluding to the British Bureaucracy’. In reply I said that it was all subversive of the idea of non-violence and when the reversion of feeling came the Mahomedan Maulanas would not refrain from using these verses against the Hindus.”

The Swami’s third instance relates to the Mopla riots. Writing in the *Liberator* of 26th August 1926 the Swami says :

“The first warning was sounded when the question of condemning the Moplas for their atrocities on Hindus came up in the Subjects Committee. The original resolution condemned the Moplas wholesale for the killing of Hindus and burning of Hindu homes and

the forcible conversion to Islam. The Hindu members themselves proposed amendments till it was reduced to condemning only certain individuals who had been guilty of the above crimes. But some of the Moslem leaders could not bear this even. Maulana Fakir and other Maulanas, of course, opposed the resolution and there was no wonder. But I was surprised, an out-and-out Nationalist like Maulana Hasrat Mohani opposed the resolution on the ground that the Mopla country no longer remained Dar-ul-Aman but became Dar-ul-Harab and they suspected the Hindus of collusion with the British enemies of the Moplas. Therefore, the Moplas were right in presenting the Quran or sword to the Hindus. And if the Hindus became Mussalmans to save themselves from death, it was a voluntary change of faith and not forcible conversion—Well, even the harmless resolution condemning some of the Moplas was not unanimously passed but had to be accepted by a majority of votes only. There were other indications also, showing that the Mussalmans considered the Congress to be existing on their sufferance and if there was the least attempt to ignore their idiosyncracies the superficial unity would be scrapped as under.”

The last one refers to the burning of the foreign cloth started by Mr. Gandhi. Writing in the *Liberator* of 31st August 1926 the Swamiji says:

“While people came to the conclusion, that the burning of foreign cloth was a religious duty of Indians and Messrs. Das, Nehru and other topmost leaders made bon-fire of cloth worth thousands, the Khilafat Musalmans got permission from Mahatmaji to *send all foreign cloth for the use* of the Turkish brethren. This again was a great shock to me. While Mahatmaji stood adamant and did not have the least regard for Hindu feelings when a question of principle was involved, for the Moslem dereliction of duty, there was always a soft corner in his heart.”

In the history of his efforts to bring about Hindu-Moslem unity mention must be made of two incidents. One is the Fast, which Mr. Gandhi underwent in the year 1924. It was a fast of 21 days. Before undertaking the fast Mr. Gandhi explained the reasons for it in a statement from which the following extracts are taken:

“The fact that Hindus and Musalmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting like cats and dogs in some places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw the symptoms in Bombay, Chauri Chaura and in a host of minor cases. I did penance then. It had its effects *protanto*. But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable. It became unbearable on hearing of the Kohat tragedy. On the eve of my

departure from Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do. I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me. Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive.

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"I was violently shaken by Amethi, Sambhal and Gulbarga. I had read the reports about Amethi and Sambhal prepared by Hindu and Musalman friends. I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Musalman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain. On Wednesday I knew the remedy. I must do penance.

"It is a warning to the Hindus and Mussalmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts.

"The penance of Hindus and Mussalmans is not fasting but retracting their steps. It is true penance for a Mussalman to harbour no ill-will for his Hindu brother and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Mussalman brother.

"I did not consult friends—not even Hakim Saheb who was close with me for a long time on Wednesday—not Maulana Mahomed Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality.

"But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussalman roof? (Gandhi was at the time the guest of Mr. Mahomed Ali at Delhi). Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill-will against a single soul. My being under a Mussalman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussalman house.

"And who is Mahomed Ali? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I had told him what was mine was his and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mahomed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Doctors Ansari and Abdur Rehman have constituted themselves my medical advisers. They examine me daily. I have had many a happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than

the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

“It has been whispered that by going so much with Mussalman friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely I do not live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be a very poor thing if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Mussalman mind. The closer I come to the best of ? Mussalmans, the juster I am likely to be in my estimate of the Mussalmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussalmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so ! My fast among other things is meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love.”

The fast produced Unity Conferences. But the Unity Conferences produced nothing except pious resolutions which were broken as soon as they were announced.

This short historical sketch of the part Mr. Gandhi played in bringing about Hindu-Moslem unity may be concluded by a reference to the attitude of Mr. Gandhi in the negotiations about the Communal Settlement. He offered the Muslims a blank cheque. The blank cheque only served to exasperate the Muslims as they interpreted it as an act of evasion. He opposed the separate electorates at the Round Table Conference. When they were given to the Muslims by the Communal Award, Mr. Gandhi and the Congress did not approve of them. But when it came to voting upon it, they took the strange attitude of neither approving it nor opposing it.

Such is the history of Mr. Gandhi's efforts to bring about Hindu-Moslem unity. What fruits did these efforts bear ? To be able to answer this question it is necessary to examine the relationship between the two communities during 1920-40, the years during which Mr. Gandhi laboured so hard to bring about Hindu-Moslem unity. The relationship is well described in the Annual Reports on the affairs of India submitted year by year to Parliament by the Government of India under the old Government of India Act. It is on these reports* that I have drawn for the facts recorded below.

* The series is known as “India in 1920” & so on.

Beginning with the year 1920 there occurred in that year in Malabar what is known as the Mopla Rebellion. It was the result of the agitation carried out by two Muslim organizations, the Khuddam-i-Kaba (servants of the Mecca Shrine) and the Central Khilafat Committee. Agitators actually preached the doctrine that India under the British Government was Dar-ul-Harab and that the Muslims must fight against it and if they could not, they must carry out the alternative principle of *Hijrat*. The Moplas were suddenly carried off their feet by this agitation. The outbreak was essentially a rebellion against the British Government. The aim was to establish the kingdom of Islam by overthrowing the British Government. Knives, swords and spears were secretly manufactured, bands of desperadoes collected for an attack on British authority. On 20th August a severe encounter took place between the moplas and the British forces at Pirunangdi. Roads were blocked, telegraph lines cut, and the railway destroyed in a number of places. As soon as the administration had been paralysed, the Moplas declared that Swaraj had been established. A certain Ali Mudaliar was proclaimed Raja, Khilafat flags were flown, and Ernad and Wallurana were declared Khilafat Kingdoms. As a rebellion against the British Government it was quite understandable. But what baffled most was the treatment accorded by the Moplas to the Hindus of Malabar. The Hindus were visited by a dire fate at the hands of the Moplas. Massacres, forcible conversions, desecration of temples, foul outrages upon women, such as ripping open pregnant women, pillage, arson and destruction—in short, all the accompaniments of brutal and unrestrained barbarism, were perpetrated freely by the Moplas upon the Hindus until such time as troops could be hurried to the task of restoring order through a difficult and extensive tract of the country. This was not a Hindu-Moslem riot. This was just a Bartholomew. The number of Hindus who were killed, wounded or converted, is not known. But the number must have been enormous.

In the year 1921-22 communal jealousies did not subside. The Muharram Celebrations had been attended by serious riots both in Bengal and in the Punjab. In the latter province in particular, communal feeling at Multan reached very serious heights, and

although the casualty list was comparatively small, a great deal of damage to property was done.

Though the year 1922-23 was a peaceful year the relations between the two communities were strained throughout 1923-24. But in no locality did this tension produce such tragic consequences as in the city of Kohat. The immediate cause of the trouble was the publication and circulation of a pamphlet containing a virulently anti-Islamic poem. Terrible riots broke out on the 9th and 10th of September 1924, the total casualties being about 155 killed and wounded. House property to the estimated value of Rs. 9 lakhs was destroyed, and a large quantity of goods were looted. As a result of this reign of terror the whole Hindu population evacuated the city of Kohat. After protracted negotiations an agreement of reconciliation was concluded between the two communities, Government giving an assurance that, subject to certain reservations, the prosecution pending against persons concerned in rioting should be dropped. With the object of enabling the sufferers to restart their businesses and rebuild their houses, Government sanctioned advances, free of interest in certain instances, amounting to Rs. 5 lakhs. But even after the settlement had been reached and evacuees had returned to Kohat there was no peace and throughout 1924-25 the tension between the Hindu and Musalman masses in various parts of the country increased to a lamentable extent. In the summer months, there was a distressing number of riots. In July, severe fighting broke out between Hindus and Musalmans in Delhi, which was accompanied by serious casualties. In the same month, there was a bad outbreak at Nagpur. August was even worse. There were riots at Lahore, at Lucknow, at Moradabad, at Bhagalpur and Nagpur in British India; while a severe affray took place at Gulbarga in the Nizam's Dominions. September-October saw severe fighting at Lucknow, Shahajahanpur, Kankinarah and at Allahabad. The most terrible outbreak of the year being the one that took place at Kohat which was accompanied by murder, arson and loot.

In 1925-26 the antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims became widespread. Very significant features of the Hindu-Muslim rioting, which took place during this year were its

wide distribution and its occurrence, in some cases, in small villages. Calcutta, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and the Bombay Presidency were all scenes of riots, some of which led to regrettable losses of life. Certain minor and local Hindu festivals which occurred at the end of August, gave rise to communal trouble in Calcutta, in Berar, in Gujarat in the Bombay Presidency, and in the United Provinces. In some of these places there were actual clashes between the two communities, but elsewhere, notably at Kankinarah—one of the most thickly populated jute mill centres of Calcutta—serious rioting was prevented by the activity of the police. In Gujarat, Hindu-Muslim feeling was running high in these days and was marked by at least one case of temple desecration. The important Hindu festival of Ramlila, at the end of September, gave rise to acute anxiety in many places, and at Aligarh, an important place in the United Provinces, its celebration was marked by one of the worst riots of the year. The riot assumed such dangerous proportions that the police were compelled to fire in order to restore order, and five persons were killed, either by the police or by riots. At Lucknow, the same festival gave rise at one time to a threatening situation, but the local authorities prevented actual rioting. October saw another serious riot at Sholapur in the Bombay Presidency. There, the local Hindus were taking a car with Hindu idols through the city, and when they came near a mosque, a dispute arose between them and certain Muslims, which developed into a riot.

A deplorable rioting started in Calcutta in the beginning of April as an affray outside a mosque between Muslims and some Arya Samajists and continued to spread until 5th April, though there was only one occasion on which the police or military were faced by a crowd which showed determined resistance, namely, on the evening of the 5th April, when fire had to be opened. There was also a great deal of incendiarism and in the first three days of this incendiarism, the Fire Brigade had to deal with 110 fires. An unprecedented feature of the riots was the attacks on temples by Muslims and on mosques by Hindus which naturally led to intense bitterness. There were 44 deaths and 584 injured. There was a certain amount of looting and business was suspended, with great economic loss to Calcutta. Shops began to reopen soon after the

5th, but the period of tension was prolonged by the approach of a Hindu festival on the 13th of April, and of the Id on the 14th. The Sikhs were to have taken out a procession on the 13th, but Government were unable to give them the necessary license. The apprehensions with regard to the 13th and 14th of April, fortunately, did not materialise and outward peace prevailed until 22nd April when it was abruptly broken as a result of a petty quarrel in a street, which restarted the rioting. Fighting between the mobs of the two communities, generally on a small scale, accompanied by isolated assaults and murders continued for six days. During this period there were no attacks on the temples and mosques and there was little arson or looting. But there were more numerous occasions, on which the hostile mobs did not immediately disperse on the appearance of the police and on 12 occasions it was necessary to open fire. The total number of casualties during this second phase of the rioting was 66 deaths and 391 injured. The dislocation of business was much more serious during the first riots and the closing of Marwari business houses was not without an effect on European business firms. Panic caused many of the markets to be wholly or partially closed and for two days the meat supply was practically stopped. So great was the panic that the removal of refuse in the disturbed area was stopped. Arrangements were, however, made to protect supplies, and the difficulty with the Municipal scavengers was overcome, as soon as the Municipality had applied to the police for protection. There was slight extension of the area of rioting, but no disturbances occurred in the mill area around Calcutta. Systematic raiding of the portions of the disturbed area, the arrest of hooligans, the seizure of weapons and the re-inforcement of the police by the posting of British soldiers to act as special police officers had the desired effect, and the last three days of April, in spite of the continuance of isolated assaults and murders, witnessed a steady improvement in the situation. Isolated murders were largely attributable to hooligans of both communities and their persistence during the first as well as the second outbreak induced a general belief that these hooligans were hired assassins. Another equally persistent feature of the riots, namely, the distribution of inflammatory printed leaflets by both sides,

together with the employment of hired roughs, strengthened the belief that money had been spent to keep the riots going.

The year 1926-27 was one continuous period of communal riots. Since April 1926, every month witnessed affrays more or less serious between partizans of the two communities and only two months passed without actual rioting in the legal sense of the word. The examination of the circumstances of these numerous riots and affrays shows that they originated either in utterly petty and trivial disputes between individuals, as, for example, between a Hindu shopkeeper and a Mahomedan customer, or else, the immediate cause of trouble was the celebration of some religious festival or the playing of music by Hindu processionists in the neighbourhood of Mahomedan places of worship. One or two of the riots, indeed, were due to nothing more than strained nerves and general excitement. Of these, the most striking example occurred in Delhi on 24th June, when the bolting of a pony in a crowded street gave the impression that a riot had started, upon which both sides immediately attacked each other with brickbats and staves.

Including the two outbursts of rioting in Calcutta during April and May 1926, 40 riots took place during the twelve months ending with April 1st 1927, resulting in the death of 197 and injuries, more or less severe, to 1,598 persons. These disorders were widespread, but Bengal, the Punjab, and the United Provinces were the parts of India most seriously affected. Bengal suffered most from rioting, but on many occasions during the year, tension between Hindus and Mahomedans was high in the Bombay Presidency and also in Sind. Calcutta remained uneasy throughout the whole of the summer. On 1st June a petty dispute developed into a riot in which forty persons were hurt. After this, there was a lull in overt violence until July 15th on which day fell an important Hindu religious festival. During its celebration the passage of a procession, with bands playing in the neighbourhood of certain mosques, resulted in a conflict, in which 14 persons were killed and 116 injured. The next day saw the beginning of the important Mahomedan festival of Muharram. Rioting broke out on that day and, after a lull, was renewed on the 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd. Isolated assaults and cases of stabbing occurred on the

23rd, 24th and 25th. The total ascertained casualties during this period of rioting were 28 deaths and 226 injured. There were further riots in Calcutta on the 15th September and 16th October and on the latter day there was also rioting in the adjoining city of Howrah, during which one or two persons were killed and over 30 injured. The April and May riots had been greatly aggravated by incendiarism, but, happily, this feature was almost entirely absent from the later disorders and during the July riots, for example, the Fire Brigade was called upon to deal with only four incendiary fires.

Coming to the year 1927-28 the following facts stare us in the face. Between the beginning of April and the end of September 1927, no fewer than 25 riots were reported. Of these 10 occurred in the United Provinces, six in the Bombay Presidency, 2 each in the Punjab, the Central Provinces, Bengal, and Bihar and Orissa, and one in Delhi. The majority of these riots occurred during the celebration of a religious festival by one or other of the two communities, whilst some arose out of the playing of music by Hindus in the neighbourhood of mosques or out of the slaughter of cows by the Muslims. The total casualties resulting from the above disorders were approximately 103 persons killed and 1,084 wounded.

By far the most serious riot reported during the year was that which took place in Lahore between the 4th and 7th of May 1927. Tension between the two communities had been acute for some time before the outbreak, and the trouble when it came was precipitated by a chance collision between a Mahomedan and two Sikhs. The disorder spread with lightning speed and the heavy casualty list—27 killed 272 injured—was largely swollen, by unorganised attacks on individuals. Police and troops were rushed to the scene of rioting quickly and it was impossible for clashes on a big scale to take place between hostile groups. Casual assassinations and assaults were however, reported, for two or three days longer before the streets and lanes of Lahore became safe for the solitary passerby.

After the Lahore riot in May, there was a lull for two months in inter-communal rioting, if we except a minor incident, which

happened about the middle of June in Bihar and Orissa; but July witnessed no fewer than eight riots of which the most serious occurred in Multan in the Punjab, on the occasion of the annual Muharram celebrations. Thirteen killed and twenty-four wounded was the toll taken by this riot. But August was to see worse rioting still. In that month, nine riots occurred, two of them resulting in heavy loss of life. In a riot in Bettiah, a town in Bihar and Orissa, arising out of a dispute over a religious procession, eleven persons were killed and over a hundred injured, whilst the passage of a procession in front of a mosque in Bareilly in the United Provinces was the occasion of rioting in which fourteen persons were killed and 165 were injured. Fortunately, this proved to be the turning point in inter-communal trouble during the year, and September witnessed only 4 riots. One of these, however, the riot in Nagpur in the Central Provinces on September 4th was second only to Lahore riot in seriousness and in the damage which it caused. The spark, which started the fire, was the trouble in connection with a Muslim procession, but the materials for the combustion had been collected for some time. Nineteen persons were killed and 123 injured were admitted to hospitals as a result of this riot, during the course of which many members of the Muslim community abandoned their homes in Nagpur.

A feature of Hindu-Muslim relations during the year which was hardly less serious than the riots was the number of murderous outrages committed by members of one community against persons belonging to the other. Some of the most serious of these outrages were perpetrated in connection with the agitation relating to *Rangila Rasul* and *Risala Vartman*, two publications containing most scurrilous attack on the Prophet Muhammed and as a result of them, a number of innocent persons lost their lives, sometimes in circumstances of great barbarity. In Lahore a series of outrages against individuals led to a state of great excitement and insecurity during the summer of 1927.

The excitement over the *Rangila Rasul** case had by now travelled far from its original centre and by July had begun to

* *Rangila Rasul* was written in reply to *Sitaka Chinala*—a pamphlet written by a Muslim alleging that Sita, wife of Rama, the hero of Ramayana, was a prostitute.

produce unpleasant repercussions on and across the North-West Frontier. The first signs of trouble in this region became apparent early in June, and by the latter part of July the excitement had reached its height. On the British side of the border, firm and tactful handling of the situation by the local authorities averted, what would have been a serious breach of the peace. Economic boycott of Hindus was freely advocated in the British Frontier Districts, especially in Peshawar, but this movement met with little success, and although the Hindus were maltreated in one or two villages, the arrest of the culprits, together with appropriate action under the Criminal Law, quickly restored order. Across the border however, the indignation, aroused by these attacks on the Prophet, gave rise to more serious consequences. The Frontier tribesmen are acutely sensitive to the appeal of religion and when a well-known Mullah started to preach against the Hindus among the Afridis and Shinwaris in the neighbourhood of the Khyber Pass, his words fell on fruitful ground. He called upon the Afridis and Shinwaris to expel all the Hindus living in their midst unless they declared in writing that they dissociated themselves from the doings of their co-religionists down country. The first to expel their Hindu neighbours were two clans of the Khyber Afridis, namely the Kuikhel and Zakkakhel, on the 22nd July. From these, the excitement spread among their Shinwari neighbours, who gave their Hindu neighbours notice to quit a few days later. However, after the departure of some of the Hindus, the Shinwaris agreed to allow the remainder to stay on. Some of the Hindus on leaving the Khyber were roughly handled. In two cases, stones were thrown, though happily without any damage resulting. In a third case, a Hindu was wounded and a large amount of property carried off, but this was recovered by Afridi Khassadars in full, and the culprits were fined for the offence. Thereafter, arrangements were made for the picketing of the road for the passage of any Hindu evacuating tribal territory. Under pressure from the Political Agent an Afridi *jirga* decided towards the end of July to suspend the Hindu boycott pending a decision in the Risala Vartman case. In the following week, however, several Hindu families, who had been living at Landi Kotal at the head of the Khyber Pass moved to Peshawar refusing

to accept assurances of the tribal chiefs but leaving one person from each family behind to watch over their interests. All told, between four hundred and fifty Hindus, men, women and children, had come into Peshawar by the Middle of August, when the trouble was definitely on the wane. Some of the Hindus were definitely expelled, some were induced to leave their homes by threats, some left from fear, some no doubt from sympathy with their neighbours. This expulsion and voluntary exodus from tribal territory were without parallel. Hindus had lived there for more generations than most of them could record as valued and respected, and, indeed, as essential members of the tribal system, for whose protection the tribesmen had been jealous, and whose blood feuds they commonly made their own. In all, about 450 Hindus left the Khyber during the excitement; of these, about 330 had returned to their homes in tribal territory by the close of the year 1927. Most of the remainder had decided to settle, at any rate for the present, amid the more secure conditions of British India.

The year 1928-29 was comparatively more peaceful than the year 1927-28. His Excellency Lord Irwin, by his speeches to the Central Legislature and outside, had given a strong impetus to the attempts to find some basis for agreement between the two communities, on those questions of political importance, which were responsible for the strained relations between them. Fortunately the issues arising out of the inquiry by the Simon Commission which was appointed in 1929, absorbed a large part of the energy and attention of the different communities, with the result that less importance came to be attached to local causes of conflict, and more importance to the broad question of constitutional policy. Moreover, the legislation passed during the autumn session of the Indian Legislature in 1927 penalising the instigation of inter-communal hostility by the press, had some effect in improving the inter-communal disturbances. The number of riots during the twelve months ending with March 31st, 1929, was 22. Though the number of riots was comparatively small, the casualties,—swelled heavily by the Bombay riots,—were very serious, no fewer than 204 persons having been killed and nearly a thousand injured. Of these, the fortnight's rioting in Bombay accounts for 149 killed and 739 injured. Seven of these 22 riots,

or roughly one-third of them, occurred on the day of the celebration of the annual Muslim festival of Bakr-i-Id at the end of May. The celebration of this festival is always a dangerous time in Hindu-Muslim relations. The Muslim regard it as a day of animal sacrifice, and as the animal chosen is almost always a cow the slightest tension between the two communities is apt to produce an explosion. Of the Bakr-i-Id riots only two were serious and both of them took place in the Punjab. The first took place in a village in the Ambala District in which ten people were killed and nine injured. The other riot which took place in Softa village in the Gurgaon District in the Southern Punjab, attained considerable notoriety because of its sensational features. The village of Softa is about 27 miles south of Delhi and is inhabited by Muslims. This village is surrounded by villages occupied by Hindu cultivators who, on hearing that the muslims of Softa intended to sacrifice a cow on the 'Id Day', objected to the sacrifice of the particular cow selected on the ground that it had been accustomed to graze in fields belonging to the Hindu cultivators. The dispute over the matter assumed a threatening aspect and the Superintendent of Police of the district accordingly went with a small force of police, about 25 men in all, to try to keep peace. He took charge of the disputed cow and locked it up, but his presence did not deter the Hindu cultivators of a few neighbouring villages from collecting about a thousand people armed with pitchforks, spears and staves, and going to Softa. The Superintendent of Police and an Indian Revenue official, who were present in the village, assured the crowd that the cow, in connection with which the dispute had arisen would not be sacrificed, but this did not satisfy the mob which threatened to burn the whole village if any cow was sacrificed, and also demanded that the cow should be handed over to them. The Superintendent of Police refused to agree to this demand, whereupon the crowd became violent and began to throw stones at the police and to try to get round the latter into the village. The Superintendent of Police warned the crowd to disperse, but to no effect. He, therefore, fired one shot from his revolver as a further warning. Notwithstanding the crowd still continued to advance and the Superintendent had to order his party of police to fire. Only one volley was fired at first, but as this did