

CHAPTER VIII

MUSLIM ALTERNATIVE TO PAKISTAN

I

The Hindus say they have an alternative to Pakistan. Have the Muslims also an alternative to Pakistan ? The Hindus say yes, the Muslims say no. The Hindus believe that the Muslim proposal for Pakistan is only a bargaining manoeuvre put forth with the object of making additions to the communal gains already secured under the Communal Award. The Muslims repudiate the suggestion. They say there is no equivalent to Pakistan and, therefore, they will have Pakistan and nothing but Pakistan. It does seem that the Musalmans are devoted to Pakistan and are determined to have nothing else and that the Hindus in hoping for an alternative are merely indulging in wishful thinking. But assuming that the Hindus are shrewd enough in divining what the Muslim game is, will the Hindus be ready to welcome the Muslim alternative to Pakistan ? The answer to the question must, of course, depend upon what the Muslim alternative is.

What is the Muslim alternative to Pakistan ? No one knows. The Muslims, if they have any, have not disclosed it and perhaps will not disclose it till the day when the rival parties meet to revise and settle the terms on which the Hindus and the Muslims are to associate with each other in the future. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. It is, therefore, necessary for the Hindus to have some idea of the possible Muslim alternative to enable them to meet the shock of it; for the alternative cannot be better than the Communal Award and is sure to be many degrees worse.

In the absence of the exact alternative proposal one can only make a guess. Now one man's guess is as good as that of another, and the party concerned has to choose on which of these he will rely. Among the likely guesses, my guess is that

the Muslims will put forth as their alternative some such proposal as the following :—

“That the future constitution of India shall provide :

(i) That the Muslims shall have 50% representation in the Legislature, Central as well as Provincial, through separate electorates.

(ii) That 50% of the Executive in the Centre as well as in the Provinces shall consist of Muslims.

(iii) That in the Civil Service 50% of the posts shall be assigned to the Muslims.

(iv) That in the Fighting Forces the Muslim proportion shall be one half, both in the ranks and in the higher grades.

(v) That Muslims shall have 50% representation in all public bodies, such as councils and commissions, created for public purposes.

(vi) That Muslims shall have 50% representation in all international organizations in which India will participate.

(vii) That if the Prime Minister be a Hindu, the Deputy Prime Minister shall be a Muslim.

(viii) That if the Commander-in-Chief be a Hindu, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief shall be a Muslim.

(ix) That no changes in the Provincial boundaries shall be made except with the consent of 66% of the Muslim members of the Legislature.

(x) That no action or treaty against a Muslim country shall be valid unless the consent of 66% of the Muslim members of the Legislature is obtained.

(xi) That no law affecting the culture or religion or religious usage of Muslims shall be made except with the consent of 66% of the Muslim members of the Legislature.

(xii) That the national language for India shall be Urdu.

(xiii) That no law prohibiting or restricting the slaughter of cows or the propagation of and conversion to Islam shall be valid unless it is passed with the consent of 66% of the Muslim members of the Legislature.

(xiv) That no change in the constitution shall be valid unless the majority required for effecting such changes also includes a 66% majority of the Muslim members of the Legislature.

This guess of mine is not the result of imagination let loose. It is not the result of a desire to frighten the Hindus into an unwilling and hasty acceptance of Pakistan. If I may say so, it is really an intelligent anticipation based upon available data coming from Muslim quarters.

An indication of what the Muslim alternative is likely to be, is obtainable from the nature of the Constitutional Reforms which are contemplated for the Dominions of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad.

The Hyderabad scheme of Reforms is a novel scheme. It rejects the scheme of communal representation obtaining in British India. In its place is substituted what is called Functional Representation, i.e. representation by classes and by professions. The composition of the Legislature which is to consist of 70 members is to be as follows:—

<i>Elected</i>				<i>Nominated</i>			
Agricluture		...	12	Illakas	...		8
Patidars	8	]		Sarf-i-Khas	2	]	
Tenants	4			Paigahs	3		
Women	...		1	Peshkari	1		
Graduates	...	...	1	Salar Jung	1		
University	...	...	1	Samasthans	1		
Jagirdars	...	...	2				
Maashdars	...	...	1				
Legal	...	...	2				
Medical	...	...	2				
Western	1	]		Officials			18
Oriental	1			Rural Arts and Crafts			1
Teaching	...		1	Backward Classes			1
Commerce	...	...	1	Minor Unrepresented			3
Industries	...	...	2	Classes.			
Banking	...	...	2	Others			6
Indigenous	1	]					
Co-operative and Joint Stock	1						
Organized Labour		...	1				
Harijan	...	...	1				
District Municipalities		...	1				
City Municipality		...	1				
Rural Boards	...	...	1				
Total	...	...	<u>33</u>	Total	...		<u>37</u>

Whether the scheme of functional representation will promote better harmony between the various classes and sections than communal representation does is more than doubtful. In addition to perpetuating existing social and religious divisions, it may quite easily intensify class struggle by emphasizing class consciousness. The scheme appears innocuous but its real character will come out when every class will demand representation in proportion to its numbers. Be that as it may, functional representation is not the most significant feature of the Hyderabad scheme of Reforms. The most significant feature of the scheme is the proposed division of seats between Hindus and Musalmans in the new Hyderabad Legislature. Under the scheme as approved by H. E. H. the Nizam, communal representation is not altogether banished. It is retained along with functional representation. It is to operate through joint electorates. But there is to be equal representation for "the two majority communities" on every* elective body including the legislature and no candidate can succeed unless he secures 40 per cent of the votes polled by members of his community. This principle of equal representation to Hindus and Muslims irrespective of their numbers† is not only to apply to every elective body but it is to apply to both elected as well as nominated members of the body.

In justification of this theory of equal representation it is stated that:

"The importance of the Muslim community in the state, by virtue of its historical position and its status in the body politic, is so obvious that it cannot be reduced to the status of a minority in the Assembly."

Quite recently there have appeared in the press‡ the proposals formulated by one Mr. Mir Akbar Ali Khan calling himself the

* Besides the Central Legislature there are to be constituted under the scheme of Reforms other popular bodies such as Panchayats, Rural Boards, Municipalities and Town Committees.

†The distribution of population of Hyderabad State (excluding Berar) is according to the census of 1931 as follows:—

Hindus	Untouchables	Muslims	Christians	Others	Total
96,99,615	24,73,230	15,34,666	1,51,382	5,77,255	1,44,36,148

‡See *Bombay Sentinal*, June 22nd. 1940. Mr. Mir Akbar Ali Khan says that he discussed his proposals with Mr. Srinivas Iyengar, ex-President of the Congress and the proposals published by him are really proposals as approved by Mr. Iyengar.

leader of the Nationalist Party as a means of settling the Hindu-Muslim problem in British India. They are as follows :—

(1) The future Constitution of India must rest upon the broad foundation of adequate military defence of the country and upon making the people reasonable military minded. The Hindus must have the same military mindedness as the Muslims.

(2) The present moment offers a supreme opportunity for the two communities to ask for the defence of India being made over to them. The Indian Army must consist of an equal number of Hindus and Muslims and no regiment should be on a communal, as distinguished from regional basis.

(3) The Governments in the Provinces and at the Centre should be wholly National Governments composed of men who are reasonable military minded. Hindu and Muslim Ministers should be equal in number in the Central as well as all Provincial cabinets; other important minorities might wherever necessary be given special representation. This scheme will function most satisfactorily with joint electorates, but in the present temper of the country separate electorates might be continued. The Hindu Ministers must be elected by the Hindu members of the legislature and the Muslim Ministers by the Muslim members.

(4) The Cabinet is to be removable only on an express vote of no-confidence, against the Cabinet as a whole, passed by a majority of 2/3rd of the whole house which majority must be of Hindus and Muslims taken separately.

(5) The religion, language, script and personal law of each community should be safeguarded by a paramount constitutional check enabling the majority of members, representing that community in the legislature to place a veto on any legislative or other measure affecting it. A similar veto must be provided against any measure designed or calculated to affect adversely the economic well-being of any community.

(6) An adequate communal representation in the services must be agreed to as a practical measure of justice in administration and in the distribution patronage.

If the proposals put forth by a Muslim leader of the Nationalist Party in Hyderabad State is an indication of the direction in which the mind of the Muslims in British India is running, then, the guess I have made as to what is likely to be the alternative to Pakistan derives additional support.

II

It is true that in the month of April 1940 a Conference of Muslims was held in Delhi under the grandiloquent name of "The Azad Muslim Conference." The Muslims who met in the Azad Conference were those who were opposed to the Muslim League as well as to the Nationalist Muslims. They were opposed to the Muslim League firstly, because of their hostility to Pakistan and secondly because they did not want to depend upon the British Government for the protection of their rights.* They were also opposed to the Nationalist Musalmans (i.e. Congressites out and out) because they were accused of indifference to the cultural and religious rights of the Muslims.†

With all this the Azad Muslim Conference was hailed by the Hindus as a Conference of friends. But the resolutions passed by the Conference leave very little to choose between it and the League. Among the resolutions passed by the Azad Muslim Conference the following three bear directly upon the issue in question.

The first of these runs as follows:—

"This conference, representative of Indian Muslims who desire to secure the fullest freedom of the country, consisting of delegates and representatives of every province, after having given its fullest and most careful consideration to all the vital questions affecting the interest of the Muslim community and the country as a whole declares the following:—

"India will have geographical and political boundaries of an individual whole and as such is the common homeland of all the citizens irrespective of race or religion who are joint owners of its resources. All nooks and corners of the country are hearths and homes of Muslims who cherish the historic eminence of their religion and culture which are dearer to them than their lives. From the national point of view every Muslim is an Indian. The common rights of all residents of the country and

*Mufti Kifayat Ullah, a prominent member of the conference, in the course of his speech is reported to have said: "They had to demonstrate that they were not behind any other community in the fight for freedom. He wished to declare in clear terms that they did not rely on the British Government for the protection of their rights. They would themselves chalk out the safeguards necessary for the protection of their religious rights and would fight out any party, however powerful, that would refuse to accept those safeguards as they would fight the Government for freedom" (Prolonged cheers.) *Hindustan Times*, April 30, 1940.

† See the speeches of Maulana Hafizul Rehman and Dr. K. M. Ashraf in the same issue of the *Hindustan Times*.

their responsibilities, in every walk of life and in every sphere of human activity are the same. The Indian Muslim by virtue of these rights and responsibilities, is unquestionable an Indian national and in every part of the country is entitled to equal privileges with that of every Indian national in every sphere of governmental, economic and other national activities and in public services. For that very reason Muslims own equal responsibilities with other Indians for striving and making sacrifices to achieve the country's independence. This is a self-evident proposition, the truth of which no right thinking Muslim will question. This Conference declares unequivocally and with all emphasis at its command that the goal of Indian Muslims is complete independence along with protection of their religion and communal rights, and that they are anxious to attain this goal as early as possible. Inspired by this aim they have in the past made great sacrifices and are ever ready to make greater sacrifices.

"The Conference unreservedly and strongly repudiates the baseless charge levelled against Indian Muslims by the agents of British Imperialism and others that they are an obstacle in the path of Indian freedom and emphatically declares that the Muslims are fully alive to their responsibilities and consider it inconsistent with their traditions and derogatory to their honour to lag behind others in the struggle for independence."

By this Resolution they repudiated the scheme of Pakistan. Their second Resolution was in the following terms :—

"This is the considered view of this Conference that only that constitution for the future Government of India would be acceptable to the people of India which is framed by the Indians themselves elected by means of adult franchise. The constitution should fully safeguard all the legitimate interests of the Muslims in accordance with the recommendations of the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly. The representatives of other communities or of an outside power would have no right to interfere in the determination of these safeguards."

By this Resolution the Conference asserted that the safeguards for the Muslims must be determined by the Muslims alone.

Their third Resolution was as under:—

"Whereas in the future constitution of India it would be essential, in order to ensure stability of government and preservation of security, that every citizen and community should feel satisfied, this Conference considers it necessary that a scheme of safeguards as regards vital matters mentioned below should be prepared to the satisfaction of the Muslims.

“This Conference appoints a board consisting of 27 persons. This board, after the fullest investigation, consultation and consideration, shall make its recommendations for submission to the next session of this Conference, so that the Conference may utilise the recommendations as a means of securing a permanent national settlement of the communal question. This recommendation should be submitted within two months. The matters referred to the board are the following:

“1. The protection of Muslim culture, personal law and religious rights.

“2. Political rights of Muslims and their protection.

“3. The formation of future constitution of India to be non-unitary and federal, with absolutely essential and unavoidable powers for the Federal Government.

“The provision of safeguards for the economic, social and cultural rights of Muslims and for their share in public services.

“The board will be empowered to fill up any vacancy in a suitable manner. The board will have the right to co-opt other members. It will be empowered also to consult other Muslim bodies and if it considers necessary, any responsible organisation in the country. The 27 members of the board will be nominated by the president.

“The quorum for the meeting will be nine.

“Since the safeguards of the communal rights of different communities will be determined in the constituent assembly referred to in the resolution which this Conference has passed, this Conference considers it necessary to declare that Muslim members of this constituent will be elected by Muslims themselves.”

We must await the report* of this board to know what safeguards the Azad Muslim Conference will devise for the safety and protection of Muslims. But there appears no reason to hope that they will not be in favour of what I have guessed to be the likely alternative for Pakistan. It cannot be overlooked that the Azad Muslim Conference was a body of Muslims who were not only opposed to the Muslim League but were equally opposed to the Nationalist Muslims. There is, therefore, no ground to trust that they will be more merciful to the Hindus than the League has been or will be.

* This report has not appeared even now.

Supposing my guess turns out to be correct, it would be interesting to know what the Hindus will have to say in reply. Should they prefer such an alternative to Pakistan ? Or should they rather prefer Pakistan to such an alternative ? Those are questions which I must leave the Hindus and their leaders to answer. All I would like to say in this connection is that the Hindus before determining their attitude towards this question should note certain important considerations. In particular they should note that there is a difference between *Macht Politic** and *Gravamin Politic*†; that there is a difference between *Communitas Communitatum* and a nation of nations; that there is a difference between safeguards to allay apprehensions of the weak and contrivances to satisfy the ambition for power of the strong; that there is a difference between providing safeguards and handing over the country. Further, they should also note that what may with safety be conceded to *Gravamin Politic* may not be conceded to *Macht Politic*. What may be conceded with safety to a community may not be conceded to a nation and what may be conceded with safety to the weak to be used by it as a weapon of defence may not be conceded to the strong who may use it as a weapon of attack.

These are important considerations and, if the Hindus overlook them, they will do so at their peril. For the Muslim alternative is really a frightful and dangerous alternative.

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* *Macht Politic* means Power Politics.

† *Gravamin Politic* means in which the main strategy is to gain power by manufacturing grievances.

