

The All-India Khilafat Conference and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema were surely extremist bodies avowedly anti-British. But the All-India Muslim Conference was not at all a body of extremists or anti-British Musalmans. Yet the U. P. Branch of it in its session held at Cawnpore on 4th November 1928 passed the following resolution :—

“In the opinion of the All-Parties U. P. Muslim Conference, Musalmans of India stand for the goal of complete independence, which shall necessarily take the form of a federal republic.”

In the opinion of the mover, Islam always taught freedom, and for the matter of that the Muslims of India would fail in their religious duty, if they were against complete independence. Indian Muslims were poor, yet they were, the speaker was sure, devoted to Islam more than any other people on earth.

In this Conference an incident* of some interest occurred in the Subjects Committee when Maulana Azad Sobhani proposed that the Conference should declare itself in favour of complete independence.

Khan Bahadur Masoodul Hassan and some other persons, objected to such declaration, which, in their opinion, would go against the best interests of Musalmans. Upon this, a number of women from their *purdah* gallery sent a written statement to the President saying that if men had not the courage to stand for complete independence, women would come out of *purdah*, and take their place in the struggle for independence.

III

Notwithstanding this difference in their ultimate destiny, an attempt is made to force the Hindus and Muslims to live in one country, as one people, bound by the political ties of a single constitution. Assuming that this is done and that the Muslims are somehow manoeuvred into it, what guarantee is there that the constitution will not break down ?

The successful working of a Parliamentary Government assumes the existence of certain conditions. It is only when these

*See *The Indian Quarterly Register*, 1928, Vo. II, p. 425.

conditions exist that Parliamentary Government can take roots. One such condition was pointed out by the late Lord Balfour when in 1925 he had an occasion to discuss the political future of the Arab peoples in conversation with his niece Blanche Dugdale.

In the course of this conversation he said* :—

“It is partly the fault of the British nation—and of the Americans; we can’t exonerate them from blame either—that this idea of ‘representative government’ has got into the heads of nations who haven’t the smallest notion of what its basis must be. It’s difficult to explain, and the Anglo-Saxon races are bad at exposition. Moreover we know it so well ourselves that it does not strike us as necessary to explain it. I doubt if you would *find it* written in any book on the British Constitution that the whole essence of British Parliamentary Government lies in the *intention to make the thing work*. We take that for granted. We have spent hundreds of years in elaborating a system that rests on that alone. It is so deep in us that we have lost sight of it. But it is not so obvious to others. These peoples — Indians, Egyptians, and so on — study our learning. They read our history, our philosophy, and politics. They learn about our parliamentary methods of obstruction, but nobody explains to them that when it comes to the point, all our parliamentary parties are determined that the machinery shan’t stop. ‘The king’s government must go on’ as the Duke of Wellington said. But their idea is that the function of opposition is to stop the machine. Nothing easier, of course, but hopeless.”

Asked why the opposition in England does not go to the length of stopping the machine, he said:—

“Our whole political machinery presupposes a people. fundamentally at one.”

Laski has well summarized these observations of Balfour on the condition necessary for the successful working of Parliamentary Government when he says† :

“The strength of Parliamentary Government is exactly measured by the unity of political parties upon its fundamental objects.”

Having stated the condition necessary for the successful working of the machinery of representative government it will be well to examine whether these conditions are present in India.

How far can we say that there is an intention in the Hindus and the Muslims to make representative government work ? To

**Dugdale’s Balfour* (Hutchinson), Vol. II, pp. 363-64.

†*Parliamentary Government in England*, p. 37.

prove the futility and unworkability of representative and responsible government, it is enough even if one of the two parties shows an intention to stop the machinery of government. If such an intention is enough, then it does not matter much whether it is found in the Hindus or in the Muslims. The Muslims being more outspoken than the Hindus, one gets to know their mind more than one gets to know the mind of the Hindus. How the Muslim mind will work and by what factors it is likely to be swayed will be clear if the fundamental tenets of Islam which dominate Muslim politics and the views expressed by prominent Muslims bearing on Muslim attitude towards an Indian Government are taken into consideration. Certain of such religious tenets of Islam and the views of some of the Muslim leaders are given below to enable all those who are capable of looking at things dispassionately, to judge for themselves whether the condition postulated by Balfour can be said to exist in India.

Among the tenets one that calls for notice is the tenet of Islam which says that in a country which is not under Muslim rule wherever there is a conflict between Muslim law and the law of the land, the former must prevail over the latter and a Muslim will be justified in obeying the Muslim law and defying the law of the land.

What the duty of the Musalmans is in such cases was well pointed out by Maulana Mahomed Ali in the course of his statement made in 1921 before the Committing Magistrate of Karachi in answer to the charges for which he was prosecuted by the Government. The prosecution arose out of a resolution passed at the session of the All-India Khilafat Conference held in Karachi on 8th July 1921 at which Mr. Mahomed Ali presided and introduced the resolution in question.

The resolution was as follows :—

“This meeting clearly proclaims that it is in every way religiously unlawful for a Musalman at the present moment to continue in the British Army, or to enter the Army, or to induce others to join the Army. And it is the duty of all Musalmans in general and of the Ulemas in particular to see that these religious commandments are brought home to every Musalman in the Army.”

†*The Trial of Ali Brothers*, by R. V. Thandani, pp. 69-71.

prescribe when a country is a motherland to the Muslim and when it is not.

According to Muslim Canon Law the world is divided into two camps, Dar-ul-Islam (abode of Islam) and Dar-ul-Harb (abode of war). A country is Dar-ul-Islam when it is ruled by Muslims. A country is Dar-ul-Harb when Muslims only reside in it but are not rulers of it. That being the Canon Law of the Muslims, India cannot be the common motherland of the Hindus *and* the Musalmans. It can be the land of the Musalmans—but it cannot be the land of the ‘Hindus and the Musalmans living as equals’. Further, it can be the land of the Musalmans only when it is governed by the Muslims. The moment the land becomes subject to the authority of a non-Muslim power, it ceases to be the land of the Muslims. Instead of being Dar-ul-Islam it becomes Dar-ul-Harb.

It must not be supposed that this view is only of academic interest. For it is capable of becoming an active force capable of influencing the conduct of the Muslims. It did greatly influence the conduct of the Muslims when the British occupied India. The British occupation raised no qualms in the minds of the Hindus. But so far as the Muslims were concerned, it at once raised the question whether India was any longer a suitable place of residence for Muslims. A discussion was started in the Muslim community, which Dr. Titus says lasted for half a century, as to whether India was Dar-ul-Harb or Dar-ul-Islam. Some of the more zealous elements, under the leadership of Sayyed Ahmad, actually did declare a holy war, preached the necessity of emigration (*Hijrat*) to lands under Muslim rule, and carried their agitation all over India.

It took all ingenuity of Sir Sayyed Ahmad, the founder of the Aligarh movement, to persuade the Indian Musalmans not to regard India under the British as Dar-ul-Harb merely because it was not under Muslim rule. He urged upon the Muslims to regard it as Dar-ul-Islam, because the Muslims were perfectly free to exercise all the essential rites and ceremonies of their religion. The movement for *Hijrat* for the time being died down. But the doctrine that India was Dar-ul-Harb had not been

given up. It was again preached by Muslim patriots during 1920-21, when the Khilafat agitation was going on. The agitation was not without response from the Muslim masses and there was a goodly number of Muslims who not only showed themselves ready to act in accordance with the Muslim Canon Law but actually abandoned their homes in India and crossed over to Afghanistan.

It might also be mentioned that *Hijrat* is not the only way of escape to Muslims who find themselves in a Dar-ul-Harb. There is another injunction of Muslim Canon Law called *Jihad* (crusade) by which it becomes "incumbent on a Muslim ruler to extend the rule of Islam until the whole world shall have been brought under its sway. The world, being divided into two camps, Dar-ul-Islam (abode of Islam), Dar-ul-Harb (abode of war), all countries come under one category or the other. Technically, it is the duty of the Muslim ruler, who is capable of doing so, to transform Dar-ul-Harb into Dar-ul-Islam." And just as there are instances of the Muslims in India resorting to *Hijrat*, there are instances showing that they have not hesitated to proclaim *Jihad*. The curious may examine the history of the Mutiny of 1857 and if he does, he will find that, in part, at any rate, it was really a *Jihad* proclaimed by the Muslims against the British, and that the Mutiny so far as the Muslims were concerned was a recrudescence of revolt which had been fostered by Sayyid Ahmad who preached to the Musalmans for several decades that owing to the occupation of India by the British the country had become a Dar-ul-Harb. The Mutiny was an attempt by the Muslims to reconvert India into a Dar-ul-Islam. A more recent instance was the invasion of India by Afghanistan in 1919. It was engineered by the Musalmans of India who led by the Khilafatists' antipathy to the British Government sought the assistance of Afghanistan to emancipate India.* Whether the invasion would have resulted in the emancipation of India or whether it would have resulted in its subjugation, it is not possible to say because the invasion failed to take effect. Apart from this, the fact remains that India, if not exclusively under Muslim

*This interesting and awful episode has been examined in some details, giving the part played therein by Mr. Gandhi, in a series of articles in the issues of the *Maratha*, for the year by Mr. Karandikar.

rule, is a Dar-ul-Harb and the Musalmans according to the tenets of Islam are justified in proclaiming a *Jihad*.

Not only can they proclaim *Jihad* but they can call the aid of a foreign Muslim power to make *Jihad* a success, or if the foreign Muslim power intends to proclaim a *Jihad*, help that power in making its endeavour a success. This was clearly explained by Mr. Mahomed Ali in his address to the Jury in the Sessions Court. Mr. Mahomed Ali said:—

“But since the Government is apparently uninformed about the manner in which our Faith colours and is meant to colour all our actions, including those which, for the sake of convenience, are generally characterised as mundane, one thing must be made clear, and it is this : Islam does not permit the believer to pronounce an adverse judgment against another believer without more convincing proof; and we could not, of course, fight against our Muslim brothers without making sure that they were guilty of wanton aggression, and did not take up arms in defence of their faith”. (This was in relation to the war that was going on between the British and the Afghans in 1919.) “Now our position is this. Without better proof of the Amir’s malice or madness we certainly do not want Indian soldiers, including the Musalmans, and particularly with our own encouragement and assistance, to attack Afghanistan and effectively occupy it first, and then be a prey to more perplexity and perturbation afterwards.

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

“Such is the clear and undisputed law of Islam ; and we had explained this to the Committee investigating our case when it had put to us a

question about the religious duty of a Muslim subject of a non-Muslim-power when *Jihad* had been declared against it, long before there was any notion of trouble on the Frontiers, and when the late Amir was still alive”.

A third tenet which calls for notice as being relevant to the issue is that Islam does not recognize territorial affinities. Its affinities are social and religious and therefore extraterritorial. Here again Maulana Mahomed Ali will be the best witness. When he was committed to the Sessions Court in Karachi Mr. Mahomed Ali addressing the Jury said :—

“One thing has to be made clear as we have since discovered that the doctrine to which we shall now advert is not so generally known in non-Muslim and particularly in official circles as it ought to be. A Musalman’s faith does not consist merely in believing in a set of doctrines and living up to that belief himself; he must also exert himself to the fullest extent of his power, of course without resort to any compulsion, to the end that others also conform to the prescribed belief and practices. This is spoken of in the Holy Koran as *Amribilmaroof* and *Nahi anilmunkar*; and certain distinct chapters of the Holy Prophet’s traditions relate to this essential doctrine of Islam. A Musalman cannot say : ‘ I am not my brother’s keeper’, for in a sense he is and his own salvation cannot be assured to him unless he exhorts others also to do good and dehorts them against doing evil. If therefore any Musalman is being compelled to wage war against the Mujahid of Islam, he must not only be a conscientious objector himself, but must, if he values his own salvation, persuade his brothers also at whatever risk to himself to take similar objection. Then and not until then, can he hope for salvation. This is our belief as well as the belief of every other Musalman and in our humble way we seek to live up to it; and if we are denied freedom to inculcate this doctrine, we must conclude that the land, where this freedom does not exist, is not safe for Islam.”

This is the basis of Pan-Islamism. It is this which leads every Musalman in India to say that he is a Muslim first and Indian afterwards. It is this sentiment which explains why the Indian Muslim has taken so small a part in the advancement of India but has spent himself to exhaustion* by taking up the cause of Muslim countries and why Muslim countries occupy the first place and India occupies a second place in his thoughts.

His Highness the Aga Khan justifies it by saying† :—

*Between 1912 when the first Balkan war began and 1922 when Turkey made peace with the European Powers, the Indian Muslims did not bother about Indian politics in the least. They were completely absorbed in the fate of Turkey and Arabia.

†*India in Transition*, p. 157.

“This is a right and legitimate Pan-Islamism to which every sincere and believing Mahomedan belongs—that is, the theory of the spiritual brotherhood and unity of the children of the Prophet. It is a deep, perennial element in that Perso-Arabian culture, that great family of civilization to which we gave the name Islamic in the first chapter. It connotes charity and good-will towards fellow-believers everywhere from China to Morocco, from the Volga to Singapore. It means an abiding interest in the literature of Islam, in her beautiful arts, in her lovely architecture, in her entrancing poetry. It also means a true reformation—a return to the early and pure simplicity of the faith, to its preaching by persuasion and argument, to the manifestation of a spiritual power in individual lives, to beneficent activity of mankind. The natural and worthy spiritual movement makes not only the Master and His teaching but also His children of all climes an object of affection to the Turk or the Afghan, to the Indian or the Egyptian. A famine or a desolating fire in the Muslim quarters of Kashgar or Sarajevo would immediately draw the sympathy and material assistance of the Mahomedan of Delhi or Cairo. The real spiritual and cultural unity of Islam must ever grow, for to the follower of the Prophet it is the foundation of the life of the soul.”

If this spiritual Pan-Islamism seeks to issue forth in political Pan-Islamism, it cannot be said to be unnatural. It is perhaps that feeling which was in the mind of the Aga Khan when he said* :—

“It is for the Indian patriot to recognise that Persia, Afghanistan and possibly Arabia must sooner or later come within the orbit of some — Continental Power—such as Germany, or what may grow out of the break-up of Russia—or must throw in their lot with that of the Indian Empire, with which they have so much more genuine affinity. The world forces that move small States into closer contact with powerful neighbours, though so far most visible in Europe, will inevitably make themselves felt in Asia. Unless she is willing to accept the prospect of having powerful and possibly inimical neighbours to watch, and the heavy military burdens thereby entailed, India cannot afford to neglect to draw her Mahomedan neighbour States to herself by the ties of mutual interest and goodwill.

“In a word, the path of beneficent and growing union must be based on a federal India, with every member exercising her individual rights, her historic peculiarities and natural interests, yet protected by a common defensive system and customs union from external danger and economic exploitation by stronger forces. Such a federal India would promptly bring Ceylon to the bosom of her natural mother, and the further developments we have indicated would follow. We can build a great South Asiatic Federation by now laying the foundations wide and deep on justice, on liberty, and on recognition for every race, every religion, and every historical entity.

**India in Transition*, p. 169.

“A sincere policy of assisting both Persia and Afghanistan in the onward march which modern conditions demand, will raise two natural ramparts for India in the north-west that neither German nor Slav, Turk nor Mongol, can ever hope to destroy. They will be drawn of their own accord towards the Power which provides the object lesson of a healthy form of federalism in India, with real autonomy for each province, with the internal freedom of principalities assured, with a revived and liberalised kingdom of Hyderabad, including the Berars, under the Nizam. They would see in India freedom and order, autonomy and yet Imperial union, and would appreciate for themselves the advantages of a confederation assuring the continuance of internal self-government buttressed by goodwill, the immense and unlimited strength of that great Empire on which the sun never sets. The British position of Mesopotamia and Arabia also, whatever its nominal form may be, would be infinitely strengthened by the policy I have advocated.”

The South Asiatic Federation was more for the good of the Muslim countries such as Arabia, Mesopotamia and Afghanistan than for the good of India,* This shows how very naturally the thoughts of Indian Musalmans are occupied by considerations of Muslim countries other than those of India.

Government is based on obedience to authority. But those, who are eager to establish self-government of Hindus and Muslims, do not seem to have stopped to inquire on what such obedience depends and how far such obedience would be forthcoming in the usual course and in moments of crisis. This is a very important question. For, if obedience fails, self-government means working together and not working under. That may be so in an ideal sense. But in practical and work-a-day world, if the elements brought under one representative government are disproportionate in numbers, the minor section will have to work under the major section and whether it works under the major section or not

*What a terrible thing it would have been if this South Asiatic Federation had come into being? Hindus would have been reduced to the position of a distressed minority. The Indian Annual Register says : “Supporters of British Imperialism in the Muslim community of India have also been active trying by the organization of an Anglo-Muslim alliance to stabilize the rule of Britain in Southern Asia, from Arabia to the Malaya Archipelago, wherein the Muslims will be junior partners in the firm at present, hoping to rise in time to the senior partnership. It was to some such feeling and anticipation that we must trace the scheme adumbrated by His Highness the Aga Khan in his book *India in Transition* published during the war years. The scheme had planned for the setting up of a South Western Asiatic Federation of which India might be a constituent unit. After the war when Mr. Winston Churchill was Secretary of State for the Colonies in the British Cabinet, he found in the archives of the Middle Eastern Department a scheme ready-made of a Middle Eastern Empire”— 1938, Vol. II, Section on “India in Home Polity”, p. 48.

will depend upon how far it is disposed to obey the authority of the government carried on by the major section. So important is this factor in the success of self-government that Balfour may be said to have spoken only part of the truth when he made its success dependent upon parties being fundamentally at one. He failed to note that willingness to obey the authority of Government is a factor equally necessary for the success of any scheme of self-government.

The importance of this second condition, the existence of which is necessary for a successful working of parliamentary government, has been discussed by* James Bryce. While dealing with the basis of political cohesion, Bryce points out that while force may have done much to build up States, force is only one among many factors and not the most important. In creating, moulding, expanding and knitting together political communities what is more important than force is obedience. This willingness to obey and comply with the sanctions of a government depends upon certain psychological attributes of the individual citizens and groups. According to Bryce the attitude which produces obedience are indolence, deference, sympathy, fear and reason. All are not of the same value. Indeed they are relative in their importance as causes producing a disposition to obey. As formulated by Bryce, in the sum total of obedience the percentage due to fear and to reason respectively is much less than that due to indolence and less also than that due to deference or sympathy. According to this view deference and sympathy are, therefore, the two most powerful factors which predispose a people to obey the authority of its government.

Willingness to render obedience to the authority of the government is as essential for the stability of government as the unity of political parties on the fundamentals of the state. It is impossible for any sane person to question the importance of obedience in the maintenance of the state. To believe in civil disobedience is to believe in anarchy.

* *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, Vol. II. Essay I.

How far will Muslims obey the authority of a government manned and controlled by the Hindus? The answer to this question need not call for much inquiry. To the Muslims a Hindu is a Kaffir.* A Kaffir is not worthy of respect. He is low-born and without status. That is why a country which is ruled by a Kaffir is Dar-ul-Harb to a Musalman. Given this, no further evidence seems to be necessary to prove that the Muslims will not obey a Hindu government. The basic feelings of deference and sympathy, which predispose persons to obey the authority of government, do not simply exist. But if proof is wanted, there is no dearth of it. It is so abundant that the problem is what to tender and what to omit.

In the midst of the Khilafat agitation when the Hindus were doing so much to help the Musalmans, the Muslims did not forget that as compared with them the Hindus were a low and an inferior race. A Musalman wrote† in the Khilafat paper called *Insaf* :—

“What is the meaning of Swami and Mahatma? Can Muslims use in speech or writing these words about non-Muslims? He says that Swami means ‘Master’, and ‘Mahatma’ means ‘possessed of the highest spiritual powers’ and is equivalent to ‘Ruh-i-aazam’, and the supreme spirit.”

He asked the Muslim divines to decide by an authoritative *fatwa* whether it was lawful for Muslims to call non-Muslims by such deferential and reverential titles.

A remarkable incident was reported‡ in connection with the celebration, of Mr. Gandhi's release from gaol in 1924 at the Tibbia College of Yunani medicine run by Hakim Ajmal Khan at Delhi. According to the report, a Hindu student compared Mr. Gandhi to Hazarat Isa (Jesus) and at this sacrilege to the Musalman sentiment all the Musalman students flared up and threatened the Hindu student with violence, and, it is alleged, even the Musalman professors joined with their co-religionists in this demonstration of their outraged feelings.

* The Hindus have no right to feel hurt at being called Kaffirs. They call the Muslims *Mlechas*—persons not fit to associate with.

† See “Through Indian Eyes,” *Times of India*, dated 11-3-24.

‡ See “Through Indian Eyes,” *Times of India*, dated 21-3-24.

In 1923 Mr. Mahomed Ali presided over the session of the Indian National Congress. In this address he spoke of Mr. Gandhi in the following terms:

“Many have compared the Mahatma’s teachings, and latterly his personal sufferings, to those of Jesus (on whom be peace).....When Jesus contemplated the world at the outset of his ministry he was called upon to make his choice of the weapons of reform.....The idea of being all-powerful by suffering and resignation, and of triumphing over force by purity of heart, is as old as the days of Abel and Cain, the first progeny of man.....

“Be that as it may, it was just as peculiar to Mahatma Gandhi also; but it was reserved for a Christian Government to treat as felon the most Christ-like man of our time (*Shame, Shame*) and to penalize as a disturber of the public peace the one man engaged in public affairs who comes nearest to the Prince of Peace. The political conditions of India just before the advent of the Mahatma resembled those of Judea on the eve of the advent of Jesus, and the prescription that he offered to those in search of a remedy for the ills of India was the same that Jesus had dispensed before in Judea. Self-purification through suffering; a moral preparation for the responsibilities of government; self-discipline as the condition precedent of Swaraj—this was Mahatma’s creed and conviction; and those of us, who have been privileged to have lived in the glorious year that culminated in the Congress session at Ahmedabad, have seen what a remarkable and rapid change he wrought in the thoughts, feelings and actions of such large masses of mankind.”

A year after, Mr. Mahomed Ali speaking at Aligarh and Ajmere said:

“ However pure Mr. Gandhi’s character may be, he must appear to me from the point of view of religion inferior to any Musalman, even though he be without character. ”

The statement created a great stir. Many did not believe that Mr. Mahomed Ali, who testified to so much veneration for Mr. Gandhi, was capable of entertaining such ungenerous and contemptuous sentiments about him. When Mr. Mahomed Ali was speaking at a meeting held at Aminabad Park in Lucknow, he was asked whether the sentiments attributed to him were true. Mr. Mahomed Ali without any hesitation or compunction replied*: -

“Yes, according to my religion and creed, I do hold an adulterous and a fallen Musalman to be better than Mr. Gandhi. ”

*“ Through Indian Eyes,” *Times of India*, dated 21-3-24.

It was suggested* at the time that Mr. Mahomed Ali had to recant because the whole of the orthodox Muslim community had taken offence for his having shown such deference to Mr. Gandhi, who was a Kaffir, as to put him on the same pedestal as Jesus. Such praise of a Kaffir, they felt, was forbidden by the Muslim Canon Law.

In a manifesto† on Hindu-Muslim relations issued in 1928 Khwaja Hasan Nizami declared :

“Musalmans are separate from Hindus ; they cannot unite with the Hindus. After bloody wars the Musalmans conquered India, and the English took India from them. The Musalmans are one united nation and they alone will be masters of India. They will never give up their individuality. They have ruled India for Hundreds of years, and hence they have a prescriptive right over the country. The Hindus are a minor community in the world. They are never free from internecine quarrels ; they believe in Gandhi and worship the cow ; they are polluted by taking other people’s water. The Hindus do not care for self-government; they have no time to spare for it; let them go on with their internal squabbles. What capacity have they for ruling over men ? The Musalmans did rule, and the Musalmans will rule.”

Far from rendering obedience to Hindus, the Muslims seem to be ready to try conclusions with the Hindus again. In 1926 there arose a controversy as to who really won the third battle of Panipat, fought in 1761. It was contended for the Muslims that it was a great victory for them because Ahmad Sha Abdali had 1 lakh of soldiers while the Mahrattas had 4 to 6 lakhs. The Hindus replied that it was a victory to them—a victory to vanquished—because it stemmed the tide of Muslim invasions. The Muslims were not prepared to admit defeat at the hands of Hindus and claimed that they will always prove superior to the Hindus. To prove the eternal superiority of Muslims over Hindus it was proposed by one Maulana Akbar Shah Khan of Najibabad in all seriousness, that the Hindus and Muslims should fight, under test conditions, fourth battle on the same fateful plain of Panipat. The Maulana accordingly issued‡ a challenge to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the following terms:

“If you Malaviyaji, are making efforts to falsify the result at Panipat, I shall show you an easy and an excellent way (of testing it). Use your

* “Through Indian Eyes”, *Times of India*, dated 26-4-24.

† *Ibid.*, dated 14-3-28.

‡ *Ibid.*, dated 20-6-26.

well-known influence and induce the British Government to permit the fourth battle of Panipat to be fought without hindrance from the authorities. I am ready to provide.....a comparative test of the valour and fighting spirit of the Hindus and the Musalmans.....As there are seven crores of Musalmans in India, I shall arrive on a fixed date on the plain of Panipat with 700 Musalmans representing the seven crores of Muslims in India and as there are 22 crores of Hindus I allow you to come with 2,200 Hindus. The proper thing is not to use cannon, machine guns or bombs : only swords and javelins and spears, bows and arrows and daggers should be used. If you cannot accept the post of generalissimo of the Hindu host, you may give it to any descendant of Sadashivrao* or Vishwasrao* so that their scions may have an opportunity to avenge the defeat of their ancestors in 1761. But any way do come as a spectator; for on seeing the result of this battle you will have to change your views, and I hope there will be then an end of the present discord and fighting in the country.....In conclusion I beg to add that among the 700 men that I shall bring there will be no Pathans or Afghans as you are mortally afraid of them. So I shall bring with me only Indian Musalmans of good family who are staunch adherents of Shariat. ”

IV

Such are the religious beliefs, social attitudes and ultimate destinies of the Hindus and Muslims and their communal and political manifestations. These religious beliefs, social attitudes and views regarding ultimate destinies constitute the motive force which determines the lines of their action, whether they will be co-operative or conflicting. Past experience shows that they are too irreconcilable and too incompatible to permit Hindus and Muslims ever forming one single nation or even two harmonious parts of one whole. These differences have the sure effect not only of keeping them as under but also of keeping them at war. The differences are permanent and the Hindu-Muslim problem bids fair to be eternal. To attempt to solve it on the footing that Hindus and Muslims are one or if they are not one now they will be one hereafter is bound to be a barren occupation—as barren as it proved to be in the case of Czechoslovakia. On the contrary, time has come when certain facts must be admitted as beyond dispute, however unpleasant such admission may be.

* They were the Military Commanders on the side of the Hindus in the third battle of Panipat.

In the first place, it should be admitted that every possible attempt to bring about union between Hindus and Muslims has been made and that all of them have failed.

The history of these attempts may be said to begin with the year 1909. The demands of the Muslim deputation, if they were granted by the British, were assented to by the Hindus, prominent amongst whom was Mr. Gokhale. He has been blamed by many Hindus for giving his consent to the principle of separate electorates. His critics forget that withholding consent would not have been a part of wisdom. For, as has been well said by Mr. Mahomed Ali:

“.....paradoxical as it may seem, the creation of separate electorates was hastening the advent of Hindu-Muslim unity. For the first time a real franchise, however restricted, was being offered to Indians, and if Hindus and Musalmans remained just as divided as they had hitherto been since the commencement of the British rule, and often hostile to one another, mixed electorates would have provided the best battle-ground for inter-communal strifes, and would have still further widened the gulf separating the two communities. Each candidate for election would have appealed to his own community for votes and would have based his claims for preference on the intensity of his ill-will towards the rival community, however, disguised this may have been under some such formula as ‘the defence of his community’s interest’. Bad as this would have been, the results of an election in which the two communities were not equally matched would have been even worse, for the community that failed to get its representative elected would have inevitably borne a yet deeper grudge against its successful rival. Divided as the two communities were, there was no chance for any political principles coming into prominence during the elections. The creation of separate electorates did a great deal to stop this inter-communal warfare, though I am far from oblivious of the fact that when inter-communal jealousies are acute the men that are more likely to be returned even from communal electorates are just those who are noted for the ill-will towards the rival community.”

But the concession in favour of separate electorates made by the Hindus in 1909 did not result in Hindu-Muslim unity. Then came the Lucknow Pact in 1916. Under it the Hindus gave satisfaction to the Muslims on every count. Yet, it did not produce any accord between the two. Six years later, another attempt was made to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. The All-India Muslim League at its annual session held at Lucknow in March 1923 passed

a resolution* urging the establishment of a national pact to ensure unity and harmony among the various communities and sects in India and appointed a committee to collaborate with committees to be appointed by other organizations. The Indian National Congress in its special session held in September 1923 at Delhi under the presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad passed a resolution reciprocating the sentiments expressed by the League. The Congress resolved to appoint two committees (1) to revise the constitution and (2) to prepare a draft of a national pact. The report† of the committee on the Indian National Pact was signed by Dr. Ansari and Lala Lajpat Rai and was presented at the session of the Congress held at Coconada in 1923. Side by side with the making of the terms of the Indian National Pact there was forged the Bengal Pact‡ by the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee with the Bengal Muslims under the inspiration of Mr. C. R. Das. Both the Indian National Pact and the Bengal Pact came up for discussion§ in the Subjects Committee of the Congress. The Bengal Pact was rejected by 678 votes against 458. With regard to the National Pact, the Congress resolved¶ that the Committee do call for further opinions on the draft of the Pact prepared by them and submit their report by 31st March 1924 to the A. I. C. C. for its consideration. The Committee, however, did not proceed any further in the matter. This was because the feeling among the Hindus against the Bengal Pact was so strong that according to Lala Lajpat Rai# it was not considered opportune to proceed with the Committee's labours. Moreover, Mr. Gandhi was then released from jail and it was thought that he would take up the question. Dr. Ansari, therefore, contented himself with handing over to the A. I. C. C. the material he had collected.

Mr. Gandhi took up the threads as soon as he came out of the gaol. In November 1924 informal discussions were held in

* For the full text of the resolution of the League, see *Indian Annual Register*, 1923, Vol. I, pp. 395-96.

† For the terms of the Bengal Pact, see *Ibid.*, p. 127.

‡ For the report and the draft terms of the Pact, see *Ibid.*, 1923, Vol. II, supplement, pp. 104-108.

§ For the debate on these two Pacts, see *Ibid.*, pp. 121-127.

¶ For the resolution, see *Ibid.*, p. 122.

#See his statement on the All-Parties Conference held in 1925 in the *Indian Quarterly Register*, 1925, Vol. I, p. 70.

Bombay. As a result of these discussions, an All-Parties Conference was constituted and a committee was appointed to deal with the question of bringing about unity. The Conference was truly an All-Parties Conference inasmuch as the representatives were drawn from the Congress, the Hindu Maha Sabha, the Justice Party, Liberal Federation, Indian Christians, Muslim League, etc. On the 23rd January 1925, a meeting of the committee* appointed by the All-Parties Conference was held in Delhi at the Western Hotel. Mr. Gandhi presided. On the 24th January the committee appointed a representative sub-committee consisting of 40 members (a) to frame such recommendations as would enable all parties to join the Congress, (b) to frame a scheme for the representation of all communities, races and sub-divisions on the legislative and other elective bodies under Swaraj and recommended the best method of securing a just and proper representation of the communities in the services without detriment to efficiency, and (c) to frame a scheme of Swaraj that will meet the present needs of the country. The committee was instructed to report on or before the 15th February. In the interest of expediting the work some members formed themselves into a smaller committee for drawing up a scheme of Swaraj leaving the work of framing the scheme of communal representation to the main committee.

The Swaraj sub-committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Besant succeeded in framing its report on the constitution and submitted the same to the general committee of the All-Parties Conference. But the sub-committee appointed to frame a scheme of communal representation met at Delhi on the 1st March and adjourned *sine die* without coming to any conclusion. This was due to the fact that Lala Lajpat Rai and other representatives of the Hindus would not attend the meeting of the sub-committee. Mr. Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru issued the following statement†:—

“Lala Lajpat Rai had asked for a postponement by reason of the inability of Messrs. Jayakar, Srinivas Iyengar and Jai Ram Dastto attend. We were unable to postpone the meeting on our own

* For the proceedings of the committee, see the *Indian Quarterly Register*, 1925, Vol. I, pp. 66-77.

† For the proceedings of the committee, see the *Indian Quarterly Register*, 1925, Vol. I, p. 77.

responsibility. We, therefore, informed Lala Lajpat Rai that the question of postponement be placed before the meeting. This was consequently done but apart from the absence of Lala Lajpat Rai and of the gentlemen named by him the attendance was otherwise also too meagre for coming to any decision. In our opinion there was moreover no material for coming to any definite conclusions nor is there likelihood of any being reached in the near future.....”

There is no doubt that this statement truly summed up the state of mind of the parties concerned. The late Lala Lajpat Rai, the spokesman of the Hindus on the committee, had already said in an article in the *Leader* of Allahabad that there was no immediate hurry for a fresh pact and that he declined to accept the view that a Hindu majority in some provinces and a Muslim majority in others was the only way to Hindu-Muslim unity.

The question of Hindu-Muslim unity was again taken up in 1927. This attempt was made just prior to the Simon Commission inquiry, in the hope that it would be successful as the attempt made prior to the Montagu-Chelmsford inquiry in 1916 and which had fructified in the Lucknow Pact. As a preliminary, a conference of leading Muslims was held in Delhi on the 20th March 1927 at which certain proposals* for safeguarding the interest of the Muslims were considered. These proposals, which were known as the Delhi proposals, were considered by the Congress at its session held in Madras in December 1927. At the same time, the Congress passed a resolution† authorizing its Working Committee to confer with similar committees to be appointed by other organizations to draft a Swaraj constitution for India. The Liberal Federation and the Muslim League passed similar resolutions appointing their representatives to join in the deliberations. Other organizations were also invited by the Congress Working Committee to send their spokesmen. The All-Parties Conference,‡ as the committee came to be called, met on 12th February 1928 and appointed a sub-committee to frame a constitution. The committee prepared a report with a draft of the constitution—which

* These proposals will be found in the *Indian Quarterly Register*, 1927, Vol.1, p. 33. These proposals subsequently became the basis of Mr. Jinnah's 14 points.

† For the resolution of the Congress on these proposals, see *Ibid.*, 1927, Vol. II, pp. 397-98.

‡ For the origin, history and composition of the All-Parties Convention and for the text of the report, *Ibid.*, 1928, Vol. I, pp. 1-142.