

Multi-faith Resistance to British Colonialism; a brief over-view of Pan-Islamists' role in Ghadar Movement

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Abstract

Pan-Islamism refers to the movement which aims to unite the diversified Muslims on the basis of their common religion¹. There are several instances in the Qur'an and the traditions of the prophet Mohammad (PBUH), which emphasises the concept of Muslim brotherhood and good feelings for the fellow Muslims. However the concept of Pan-Islamism in modern history surfaced during the European colonial advancement in the 19th Century. In the same period, Europe witnessed the rise of certain movements having extra territorial sympathies of its adherents like Pan-Slavism, and Pan-Germanism. These developments by the Christian West in the surroundings of Turkey, affected some of the thinkers and policy makers to respond in a befitting manner². They thought that Turkey should have broadened its base of support. In response to the efforts of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism Turkey gave attention to organise the Muslims of the world. Certain European powers, particularly the British did not actively resisted pan-Islamism among Muslims even under their own jurisdiction, such as British India. It is on record that British used the office of Turkish Caliph when with Tipu Sultan's resistance to British Colonialism.³ The British also used the office of the Caliph to pacify Muslims' resistance in the turbulent period of 1857.⁴

The historical political context of the pre World War 1 decade was vastly different from that of the preceding decade. Throughout the first decade of the twentieth century the Muslims, with a few unimportant exceptions, held severely aloof from the revolutionary movements. They retained their traditional attitude of sturdy loyalty secure in the feeling that their interests were safe in the hands of British rule. The stormy years, 1911-14, represent a turning point in the history of Muslim India, for the most part, in the happenings in India and abroad, particularly in the recurring crises in the Ottoman dominions in south-eastern Europe and the Middle East. In these years, a good deal was said and written about Pan-Islamism. About fifty years old at this time, Pan-Islamism was essentially a social and a political movement aiming at the uplift of the Muslims and at a closer union between them.

Many Western writers made a bogey of it and represented it as a sinister and organized conspiracy against the West. The British Press was very caustic about the Muslim world and its affairs. Professor Vembery protested against its tone and wrote to The Times that Muslim-baiting was unnecessary, for it merely added spite to a relentless enmity of long-standing.⁵ These external grievances of Indian Muslims had caused deep stirrings which were aggravated by humiliating developments, described later, within the country. These accumulated frustrations encouraged a violent reaction against the political inertia of the last fifty years. Britain, formerly regarded as friendly, came now to be viewed as the arch foe of the world of Islam. The community was, by degrees, alienated from the Government, and

began to drift into political agitation and extremism. Some Hindu newspapers fully exploited the situation and helped to widen the breach. Muslim disaffection brought about a temporary concord between the Indian 'Nationalist' movement and Pan- Islamists. The crisis also ushered in what looked like an era of religious awakening among the Muslims.

The estrangement between the Muslims and the British Government began in 1911 when at the Delhi coronation durbar on 12 December; George V announced the revocation of Curzon's partition of Bengal. It was not difficult to see that this step was an abject surrender to militant Hindu opinion. It will be recalled that this partition proposed by the Viceroy and sanctioned by the Secretary of State. It was apparently accepted by the successors of both, and was held to be inviolable. The virulence of the opposition was dying down. It was observed at the end of 1910 that the situation in Bengal was easier. Lawlessness had subsided and passions had cooled down, demonstrations had largely disappeared. The anti-partition leaders and their adherents, weary of the protracted struggle, had given all hope and what remained of the agitation could not have endeavoured much longer. The repartition of Bengal was not only a severe disappointment to Muslim Community because it deprived them of what was essentially a Muslim but to many it came also as a shock to their trust in the British Government which they regarded as positively pledged to maintain the Partition.

The reversal of this partition was a shattering blow to the Muslims. It left them sullen and disillusioned. They were persuaded that the Government had played them false. Indeed, some officials pointed out that the new province of Bengal would still have more Muslims than Hindus and tried to convince them that their control over it would still be assured. But this consolation was purely academic. How the community measured the new situation will be evident from the writings of Mushtaq Hussain, Khwaja Salim Ullah of Dacca and Mohammad Ali, who represented the Muslim intelligentsia and Pan-Islamists. Mushtaq Husain wrote in the course of an article:

This drastic measure has embittered our people (Muslims). They are beginning to see that they do not gain much by keeping away from the Congress. Some would even wind up the League, and join the Congress *en bloc*. This is exactly what the Congress has wanted all along. But we do not agree with this. There is no point in sacrificing our own communal organization and getting swallowed up in a powerful majority. This is the way to self-destruction. The rivulet loses its identity in joining the ocean. We are not averse to the Congress on account of our loyalty to the Government. Loyalty is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end. Loyalty is always conditional. It cannot stand impossible strains. It is clear as the day that Muslims can no longer put their faith in the British Government. We have to rely upon God and on our own exertions. If we are disciplined that way, the Government will be compelled to respect our feelings. We have to learn a lesson from all that has happened. The Government deems it unnecessary to talk to us about our future. This (i.e. the Royal announcement) was like an artillery cavalcade ruthlessly trampling over Muslim corpses⁶.

If the abrogation of partition was the first massive Muslim grievance against the British Government, the failure of the Muslim University movement, which followed closely, was

the second. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Muslim education had advanced steadily, but it still fell short of Syed Ahmad's targets. When the foundation-stone of the M.A.O. College was being laid in 1876, he expressed the hope that it would soon develop into a Muslim University. A scheme for such a university was actually drawn up in his own lifetime, but it remained an ideal and a dream. In 1903, the Aga Khan revived and restated the idea in his presidential address to the Mohammadan Educational Conference. It continued to grow in discussions and newspaper articles, an organized move being launched seven years later. The Government promised consideration if the sponsors of the scheme could provide sufficient funds. King George V was due to visit the country at the end of 1911 and it was desired to receive the charter of incorporation at the Royal hands. A central committee was formed to settle the preliminaries and a university fund was opened. The Aga Khan came out as the first donor with a contribution of one lakh of rupees. Every old boy of the College offered a month's income while Mohammad Ali dedicated the columns of his Comrade to mobilize communal support. His brother, Shaukat Ali, a Government employee at the time, secured two years' leave to help in the collection of funds and threw himself into the task with his characteristic energy, acting as secretary to the Aga Khan, who headed one of the numerous subscription-collecting parties. The Aga Khan has recorded that the job was strenuous and kept their hands full for some months. For days and weeks they lived on railway trains. The appeal evoked a prodigious response and the figure of three million rupees was soon reached. The leaders of the movement were over-optimistic. They confronted the Government with an elaborate, perhaps extravagant, set of demands. They proposed to make Aligarh an autonomous centre of a standardized system of Muslim education with the power to annex (affiliate, as it was called) every Muslim educational institution located in any part of the country. Some zealots talked of Aligarh performing the same role as renowned centres of Muslim education, like Cordova and Baghdad, in the past.

When the theoretical unsoundness and practical difficulties inherent in an affiliating university were brought home to them, the leaders of the movement admitted the weakness of their case on purely academic grounds, but replied that every community had a right to fashion its system of instruction to correspond to its moral and material requirements. In the absence of an affiliating university, they asserted, all hope of improving Muslim schools and colleges would have to be abandoned. Their salvation lay in being placed under the tutelage of Aligarh. But educationally, an affiliating university is not a goal worth striving for and the educational argument was soon mixed up with the political argument. It is true that a formal claim to a separate Muslim nationality in the sub-continent was not advanced, but a vigorous assertion of a separate Muslim consciousness was abundantly evident throughout. The idea of a Muslim university was more political than educational.

The project evoked the opposition of influential Englishmen, who argued that a Muslim university would be undesirable because of its sectarian tendencies and particularistic teachings⁷. Some Hindu writers, such as B. C. Pal, identified the demand with a desire to establish a centre for the propagation of Pan-Islamism. The Government took some months in considering the matter, delivering the final reply in the middle of 1912. It was actually dictated from London. Every significant Muslim demand was turned down. The Government,

accepting the deficiencies of the prevailing system of education, argued that the remedy did not lie in creating yet another affiliating university but in encouraging and developing teaching and residential universities; an affiliating university would suffer from the want of corporate life; it would be stifled under the weight of external examinations; difficulties of supervision and inspection from one end of the country to another would be insuperable; linking of inferior institutions would, in course of time, debase the hall-mark of Aligarh and there would be no reverence for a remote and impersonal central institution and no loyalty to its ideals⁸. The Government also refused to permit the appellation 'Muslim', so that the university would be called Aligarh University and not 'Muslim' University. That was not the end of it. The powers vested in the Viceroy under the provisional constitution were to be exercised by the Government of India, which would obviously place the university under state control and reduce it to the status of a Government department. Communal feeling had already been incited by the revocation of the partition of Bengal, and the new development aggravated it. Muslim indignation against the Government decision found expression in protest meetings throughout the country. The Government was firm and refused to review its decision, but Muslim India was thoroughly awakened and this awakening was without parallel.

The University agitation was still simmering when the Cawnpore mosque affair leapt into prominence in July 1913. Some three years before this date, the city Municipal Board had decided to run a metalled road through Machli Bazar, and the work required, among other clearances, the demolition of a small outhouse of a mosque standing in the area. The trustees of the mosque agreed to its removal. Fortified with the consent of the guardians, the Municipal authorities notified their intention of pulling it down. In Muslim eyes a mosque is a consecrated structure and immune from profanation. The Muslims of Cawnpore demurred and laid their views before Governor Meston in a mildly worded protest. Several Muslim leaders from outside, including Mohammad Ali (who kept the issue out of his journal for some time), tried to influence the Governor. While these parleys were going on, the demolition was carried out in the presence of a police posse on 2 July, 1913. The act aroused strong feelings and the Muslims immediately called for redress. A whole month passed but the Muslim protests continued to be ignored. Official attention being denied, the Muslims of Cawnpore gathered at the Eidgah on 3 August, to decide on a course of action. When the meeting was over, an angry and agitated procession, estimated at 20,000, carrying black flags appeared before the mosque, and began to place loose bricks in place of the dismantled structure as a symbol of re-construction. A police force which was sent down to disperse the mob opened fire under the orders of a magistrate named Tyler. The firing continued for fifteen minutes. Six hundred rounds of cartridges were used. Numerous persons were killed outright and many more were wounded. Mounted police allegedly charged the demonstrators with bayonets. Government sources reported sixteen dead and thirty wounded. This was an understatement. More than one hundred were arrested on the spot to face trial as rioters and disturbers of the peace. A campaign of terror was inaugurated against the rest.

Muslim India felt deeply hurt. This event was depicted in prose and verse in the Muslim Press throughout India. Some of the most moving verses in Urdu poetry recall the ferment of

these-days. When another request was made to Governor Meston protesting against indifference and the persecution of the Muslims, he coldly declined to interfere, saying that he could 'not accept or appear to accept dictation by force'. Overwhelming sympathy was shown for the victims of police excesses and large sums of money were collected to help the bereaved. An army of Muslim lawyers poured in from different parts of the country to organize legal defence on behalf of the accused. This was not enough. It was proposed to send a deputation to England to get in touch with Ministers and members of Parliament, to acquaint them with the facts of the case, demand the renovation of the mosque, and prevent the recurrence of similar episodes.

Apparently, Governor Meston remained unmoved. The gravity of the situation was lost on him and he allowed the situation to worsen waiting for Muslim wrath to die away. Later he left the country on a short spell of leave, but meanwhile the agitation had assumed serious proportions and spread all over the country. Continued reticence and inaction on the part of Government might have been perilous. Therefore, under instructions from London, Hardinge was compelled to take notice of all that had happened. He went down to Cawnpore along with Ali Imam, the Muslim member of his Council. The gesture was welcomed and his mere presence restrained passions. In an address of welcome presented to him, the Muslim community of the city expressed full confidence in his judgement, and agreed to abide by his award. The Viceroy discussed the situation with Government officials and worked out a compromise, ruling out complete restoration of the premises, and maintaining the extension of the right of way ordered by the Municipal Board. An arcade was allowed to be built over the public road to make up for the lost accommodation. In the evening, Hardinge met the entire Muslim community of Cawnpore, pleaded for the burial of sad memories, and personally contributed to the fund raised for the relief of sufferers. The prisoners were set at liberty. The Muslim leaders extolled Hardinge's statesmanship. But the bitterness of the intelligentsia was not altogether assuaged. Quite a number of Britons viewed this as submission in a colonial territory, and openly stated that it was unwise of Hardinge to have adopted a policy of appeasement and that his action had greatly increased the difficulty of pacifying Muslim sentiment. They further declared that if the rioters had been tried and punished, the agitators would have learnt an unforgettable lesson. They deplored that 'concessions to the tumult had only stimulated the demand for more excitement'⁹. Hardinge's contribution to the relief fund hurt them the most, for in their judgement, it was calculated to give the impression that the Viceroy was satisfied of the justice of the cause for which they had fought. Such expressions were neither wise nor dignified. They blazed the trail of bitterness.

The period between the inception of Muslim League in 1906 and conclusion of the Lucknow pact in 1916 was an important decade for Muslims in India. The Muslim league was criticised by the Pan-Islamists. The party in 1913 proclaimed its adoption of the cause of colonial self-government of a kind suited to India and was warmly eulogised by congress. In Christmas week of 1916 Congress and League came formally together and the pan-islamists' opinion was ignored¹⁰.

The world of Islam was passing through a grave crisis. In the beginning of the century, progressive and reformist elements had arisen and asserted themselves here and there, but their influence was short-lived. Wherever established, constitutional governments were soon overthrown, while Muslim states were struggling for their very existence. But Indian Muslims were, above all, distressed by the cumulative effect of the rapid losses of Turkey's authority. Her troubles were the subject of constant conversation and unceasing lament in Muslim society and the Muslim Press. To the Sunni Muslims-this sect claimed the majority of Indian Muslims the Sultan was the Caliph, the successor to the successors of the Prophet. On him had fallen the holy mantle. He was the living voice of Islam, and the only personage entitled to interpret its law. Every Friday, the Sunni Muslim renewed his allegiance to the Caliph and invoked Allah's blessings on him. For the millions of Indian Muslims the word Caliph bore especial significance.

Muslims' attitude had been growing far less acquiescent for British Government. Their first disquiet arose was from the war which broke out between Italy and Turkey in 1911, when Great Britain neutrality engendered some bitterness of feeling. In 1911, the Italian forces marched on Tripoli, a province of Turkey in North Africa. The British government refused to allow the Turkish forces to reach Tripoli via Egypt, then under the British control. The Muslims of India expected that the British would favour Turkey, but the refusal of the British revealed its inclination on Italian side. This news stirred up pro-Turkish and anti British sentiments among the educated and non-educated alike. Roose Keppel had been reported to admit that, "The Muslims were deeply distressed at the sorrows and troubles of Islam in other countries and there had been stray instances of school boys burning Italian made caps, having read, in other parts of India school boys done the same the Mullahs had at the Friday gatherings put up prayers for the success of Turkish arms"¹¹. The enthusiasm of the pan-Islamists was even communicated to the Home Department in London by the Viceroy of India in a letter dated 12th October 1912. Lord Hardinge (1858-1944) sent a letter to Lord Crewe (1858-1945), the Secretary of State as, "I hear from the North West Frontier Province where practically the whole population is Mahommedan [Muslims] that the war between Italy and Turkey is sole topic of discussion in the villages and among the tribes and the bazaar version is that we have conspired with Italy to help her to seize Tripoli"¹².

The Balkan War was a further cause of estrangement. This was represented as a struggle between the cross and the crescent. Indian Muslims showed their sympathy for Turkey by despatching a medical mission to her aid in December 1912; and a section of Pan-Islamists' began to teach that first duty of Muslims is Allegiance to 'Khalifat' and founded a new pan-Islamic organisation 'Anjuman-i-Khudam-i-Kaba'. The members of this pan-Islamic organisation took an oath to sacrifice life and property in defence of Holy shrine (Kaba). The Balkan Tragedy also aroused Pan-Islamic feelings amongst the Muslim in a way that they gave up their weekly special dishes and meat and contributed that money to the Fund which they usually spent on their friends on the occasion of jublations¹³. The Balkan Peninsula, once ruled by the Turks roused against the Turks to secede in 1912. Vlachs, Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgars made an alliance and started revolting against the Turkish Ottoman authority. The news of the Balkan wars and the implicit support of the European nations to the

“rebellions” worried the Muslims. On the shocking news of the Turkish defeat in the Balkans, one of the pan-Islamist leader, Mohammad Ali, tried to run away from this reality by attempting to commit suicide.¹⁴

Britain declared war against the Central Powers on 4 August, 1914. The established Government in India entered this War in obedience. Enemy aliens in the country were interned and enemy ships lying in Indian ports were seized. The Viceroy appealed to the Press and political parties to stop all political controversy. When the war broke out, India was in a state of political uncertainty. Anarchism, which was rampant inside the country, presented disturbing problems to the Government. Numerous centres of revolutionary propaganda abroad drew a large number of young Indians into their fold, turning them into rebels. Political dacoity still struck terror in Bengal. Student indiscipline and frustration found outlets in strikes and demonstrations. Growing discontent with the working of the Minto-Morley Reforms crystallized into an insistent constitutional movement.

Turkey emerged out of the Balkan War dangerously enfeebled and worn out. For her, another war was out of the question. She needed long years of peace to recoup and recover. Her administration was disrupted and her Government was under complete German control. If she threw herself into the present ordeal, the area of the conflict would be immensely widened and Muslims would be inevitably involved. Britain did not relish the prospect, as a neutral Turkey suited her best. Overtures were made and guarantees against further spoliations offered. Teufiq Pasha, the Turkish ambassador in London, and the Aga Khan acted as intermediaries.¹⁵ Turkey did not respond, for she had learnt from experience not to rely on guarantees given by the Great Powers. Muslim India waited tensely, observing these developments. If the recent course of British diplomacy had been harmful to Turkey, that of German diplomacy had been callous. Germany had dealt with Turkey in a spirit of calculated and extreme selfishness and had lost all claim to Turkish gratitude.

In 1914, Turkey made her choice. She linked her destiny with Germany, proclaiming her entry into war as *Jihad*. It meant the destruction of Khilafat. Indian Muslims sent their views to the Turkish government not to enter the war, because it would create problems for them in India. The possible involvement of Turkey in the war circulated an unpleasant feeling among the Muslims against the British as they had traditionally good feelings for their Muslim brethren in Turkey.

When the war began, the affiliations of the Afghan king, Habib Ullah, were unpredictable. His attitude soon became a cause of anxiety to the Government. The decline of Turkey left him as the 'residuary beneficiary' of the growing sentiment of Pan-Islamism. Ever since the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid, he had advertised himself as the champion of the Muslim world. It was being constantly broadcast from Kabul that every other Muslim ruler was a puppet in the hands of Imperialist powers, and that Habib Ullah was the only hope of Islam. Turks constituted the most important foreign community in Afghanistan. They were extensively employed in different branches of the government, but principally as instructors in military establishments. The Afghan government also maintained permanent representatives at the holy places of Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, and kept in touch with

Karbala and Najaf, the centres of the Shia world.¹⁶ Attempts were made to win over Habib Ullah and prevent him from going the way of Turkey. On the receipt of a handsome subsidy, he gave a solemn promise of friendly neutrality as long as his independence was not threatened.¹⁷

After this assurance, British propaganda emphasized that the war was not a *jihad* and did not involve the interest of Islam in any way. The Muslims could not rightfully engage in *jihad* unless commanded by the Caliph, and the Caliph, in the present context, was the ruler of Afghanistan, and not the Porte.¹⁸ The Government also attempted to influence pan-Islamists' opinion by securing the assent of eminent Muslim divines to these propositions. The head of the foremost theological seminary of Deoband, Mahmud-ul-Hasan by name, incurred the wrath of the Government by refusing compliance, and had to leave the country. This was soon followed by a policy of persecution. Almost all the pan-Islamists and Muslim public workers of note were interned on vague charges of 'causing constant inconvenience to the King's Government', 'likely to be dangerous', 'of pro-German sympathies', 'in correspondence with the enemy', and 'writing treasonable letters'.

One of the immediate results of the war to galvanize the revolutionary movement against British rule in India. Part of it was directed from abroad and was probably older than the one proceeding from within the country. In 1901, a British military officer had found two thousand Sikhs in Shanghai 'disaffected'. In 1908, the Viceroy informed the legislature that destructive influences emanated from 'sources beyond the confines of India'.¹⁹ In the same year, it was reported to the Government that subversive doctrines were being preached to the Indian immigrants on the Pacific coast of Canada, who were particularly receptive on account of the harsh treatment they received from the Canadian government. Mention was also made of a grocer's shop in Vancouver being used as a counter for the exchange of letters between the revolutionaries abroad and their fellow workers at home.²⁰

Acting on reliable information Scotland Yard was going about in search of Indian revolutionary nests in New York and Chicago. The extent of anarchist activity in Britain itself was alarming. Ardent recruits were found amongst students. One member of the India Council, Sir Lee Warner, was waylaid on his way to the Athenaeum Club by a Hindu student, and another member, Sir Curzon Wylie, was assassinated by another Hindu student in Caxton Hall.

The India office felt it necessary to discourage Indian students from coming to England and to place those who were already there under close supervision. Sir Thomas Arnold, the well-known orientalist, was appointed adviser to Indian students to exercise a 'wholesome influence' over them. The East India Association helped in forming an association of well-affected students, probably with the intention of organizing counter-propaganda.

Interesting details of revolutionary enterprise were revealed in a famous trial in the district court of San Francisco, which began on 20 November 1917 and ended on 23 April 1918, and in which an unusually large number of Indians and Germans, and a few Americans figured as defendants. All the accused pleaded not guilty and some of them offered no defence. They

alleged that the prosecution had been inspired by the British Government. In his charge to the jury, the judge described theirs as 'a scheme of comprehensive character and far-reaching ramifications'. The evidence disclosed that the city of San Francisco was the nerve-centre of the conspiracy. The director of its central office was extremely careful about the safe keeping of its records and had them nightly deposited in the safe deposit box of the Bank of Italy. The revolutionary agencies functioned from Constantinople, Geneva, Tokyo, Manila, Hong Kong, Peking, Bangkok and numerous other cities in the Orient. Largely staffed by German diplomatic agents, they brought out propaganda pamphlets instigating Indian races to an immediate armed revolt. Russian anarchist manuals were used wherever necessary. The German Government furnished funds through its embassy in Washington. Men were enlisted and sent for 'service' to India, under German officers, along with quantities of arms and explosives. Extensive arrangements existed in India for the reception and concealment of weapons and powder. Large consignments of German arms were also despatched to India through Afghanistan. A party of sixty recruits was despatched on the steamship Korea, and others followed in batches. Detailed instructions about movements and dispositions were constantly received from Berlin in code telegrams. German agents in the Far East planned fresh lines of communication to India. They travelled from continent to continent in disguise and under assumed names.

A brief mention may here be made of the principal revolutionary figures outside India. The pioneer was Shyamji Krishnavarma. Born in 1857 in Western India, he graduated from Oxford, where he taught Sanskrit for some time and endowed the Herbert Spencer Lectureship. His idea in founding the chair was to offer it, from time to time, to well-known scholars for lecturing on political rather than scientific subjects. He had wide contacts in British society. He was a personal friend of Viceroy Dufferin and was introduced to Northbrook by Gladstone. In India he acquired considerable political importance by serving as Chief Minister in three prominent states in succession. One of the factors shaping his personality was the influence of the politician Tilak, with whom he had a lasting friendship. He was also the brain behind the militant Arya Samaj. He worked with Dayanand and gave new life and precise direction to his movement. Later, he installed himself in London and formed close contact with Socialists, supplying them with materials to assail the Government on Indian questions. In 1905, he established a student centre, called India House, which offered board and lodging to Indian students at cheap rates. The same year, he started a penny monthly called the Indian Sociologist. This paper was outspokenly revolutionary; expounding the doctrine that political assassination was no murder. His entire reading of history amounted to a justification of the use of violence for the attainment of political freedom. The ideological harmony between Herbert Spencer and the ancient Hindu law-giver, Manu, running throughout his writings, conforms to the familiar Hindu pattern of piecing together insignificant bits of information abstracted from ancient books to prove that the latest developments in modern thought were accepted as full-fledged philosophies in the remotest past of the Hindu race. Krishnavarma's political views cost him his social influence and alienated many of his intimate English friends. He was disbarred by the Inner Temple of which he was a member. The British police was also alerted against him. Fear of consequences obliged him to flee from Britain in 1907 and he sought asylum in Paris. But the

Sociologist continued to be published from London. Though its entry was forbidden in India, copies of it were smuggled into the country and enjoyed clandestine circulation. When The Times attacked him in 1909, he stoutly defended his views. His name was dragged into the famous Mylius libel on King George V. In 1912 when a bomb was thrown at Harding, he called it a 'sobering influence on its victim'.²¹ He had done much of his work by the beginning of the World War. We do not hear much about him after that date. When Jawaharlal Nehru saw him (1927) in Switzerland, he found him living a gloomy life, in a dust-laden and neglected dwelling, away from human contacts. He entered into enthusiastic conversation about his past. He was moneyed but niggardly. He suspected everybody who approached him of being either a robber or a British spy.²²

The next in order of importance was Hardyal. After a brilliant academic career at Forman Christian College Lahore, he was sent to Cambridge in 1905 at Government expense. An intense Anglophobia came over him. He gave up his studies two years later and declined to receive the last instalment of his fellowship as a protest against the 'emasculating' effects of the English system of education on Indian youth. In 1908, he came back and threw himself into the boycott movement and preached the value of passive resistance against British rule in India. In 1911, he left for the United States to settle down in San Francisco among a varied group of Indian immigrants. There he founded the Ghadar party (Ghadar is a word of which means 'rebellion'.) Throughout the States and more particularly on the West coast, Hardyal addressed numerous public meetings and at one of them held in Sacramento on 31 December 1913, he displayed portraits of famous 'revolutionary martyrs' on the screen. His party also claimed credit for the bomb thrown at Harding in Delhi. German financial assistance enabled the party to bring out a journal, Ghadar, which was prepared in three languages, English, Urdu and Gurmukhi. The party also ran an ashram, or training centre, for revolutionary workers and owned a press for producing books and pamphlets. The newspaper, Ghadar, exhorted its readers to use any and every means to rid themselves of the British 'vampire'. Hardyal came under the spell of Krishnavarma's dynamic personality and often quoted him with approval in his own contributions to the Sociologist. Like most leaders of nationalist thought in India, he was a staunch defender of Hindu orthodoxy. In one of his articles he made the following declaration:

*'I may state once and for all that I do not believe in any programme of Indian nationalism which does not include the protection of the cow, the prevention of the spread of Christianity, the preservation of the state, the school, and the home from the evil effect of foreign control and influence.'*²³

In 1914, the United States authorities arrested him. He was on the point of being deported as an undesirable alien when he absconded to Europe. Soon he found himself in Berlin at the head of the 'leaders of the Indian Revolutionary Society' which held frequent consultations with the military leaders of the Central powers, sent out anti-British pamphlets to Indian prisoners of war in Germany and communicated with the Indian princes on the planning of a revolt. But Hardyal was not steadfast in his loyalties and was soon discovered and discarded. He was trusted neither by his own compatriots nor by the Germans. By the time the war ended, he had undergone another conversion. In a pamphlet entitled Forty-four months in

Germany, he set forth his war-time experiences. The tract was a long hymn of denunciation. It branded Germany as a nation of maniacs, living chronologically in the twentieth century but morally and politically in the Middle Ages. He denounced their Jingoism and warlike mentality. Of the Turks he spoke still more bitterly and scornfully, and accused them of being savages. The civilized world, he stated, would always remain at war with Ottomanism. This hatred of Germany and Pan-Islamism was later turned against Indian Muslims. In 1925, he addressed a series of letters to Pratap, a Hindu daily in Lahore, advising his co-religionists to prepare for a 'fight to the finish' with their Muslim neighbours.

Hardyal had a valuable lieutenant in Maulavi Barkat Ullah. Born in Bhopal, the Maulavi memorized the Quran at an unusually early age and studied Arabic and theology. In 1890, he set out for England to work for the propagation of Islam. He wrote for magazines, translated passages from Persian and Arabic books for British orientalists assisted the historian Lane-Poole in the preparation of one of his works entitled Medieval India, and coached Arabic students for the Civil Service examinations. When he went to the United States in 1906, his work took on a political significance. He lectured on Islam and wrote a series of articles in Forum on India and the Muslim world. In 1908, he was made professor of Urdu in the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages. In this new job, he found time to bring out a journal called Islamic Fraternity. Devoted to the discussion of religion and politics, it had a modest circulation among the Indians in Japan as well as the Muslims in other oriental countries. With the help of his Japanese friends, Barkat Ullah formed an association to promote fraternal relations between Indian and Chinese Muslims. In 1911, he made a study tour through Turkey, Egypt and Russia. On his return next year, his paper was suppressed for making adverse comments on British rule in India and consequently he lost his job. The next scene of his activities was the city of San Francisco where he joined hands with Hardyal and the Ghadar party. Elected Vice-President of the Pacific Coast Hindustan Association, he was nominated party representative on the Indian revolutionary council in Berlin. He entered Germany via Norway on an American ship. He was appointed foreign minister in the 'provisional government of India', and led the Indian part of a deputation, consisting of Indians, Turks and Germans, to Kabul to persuade the Afghan king to join the war on the side of Turkey. The mission was doomed. Every day the Germans in Kabul expected to hear of the fall of Paris and the Turks of the capture of Suez. The Indians loudly predicted a revolution in their own country. Habib Ullah king of Afghanistan listened patiently. He simulated indecision, but apparently he waited for the war to take a more decisive turn. He promised to act as soon as the German and Turkish forces for the invasion of India had reached Kabul. At the same time, he faithfully reported the substance of these conversations to the Viceroy, earning an increased pension. The German members of the mission who had expected quick results were sorely disappointed. When the news arrived that the British army in India had been restored to its normal strength, Habib Ullah peremptorily asked the German members to quit. They did so in early 1916 but some of them never reached their destination. The Indian members of the mission, including Barkat Ullah, stayed behind. After the revolution of 1917, the new government of the U.S.S.R. sent an envoy to Kabul and entered into a new agreement with the government of Afghanistan. The original treaty, in Persian, was drafted by Barkat Ullah. Later he paid a visit to Moscow and met Lenin. But the

religious enthusiast in him was chilled by the bantering atheism of post-revolutionary Russia. He made his way back to Berlin to find the Indian community demoralized and bitterly divided against itself. He tried unsuccessfully to patch up its differences. Broken and despondent, he went to Paris and once again took up his literary pursuits. He wrote a small book on the problems of the Khilafat and edited an Arabic periodical, *Al-Islah*. But his new career was soon interrupted and he was turned out of France for his past political affiliations. He stayed in Switzerland and Italy for short intervals and ultimately reached California to die a lonesome exile. Jawaharlal Nehru, who met him in 1927, described him as 'a delightful old man, likable and enthusiastic, simple and not very intelligent', and as one who was 'trying to imbibe new ideas and to understand the present day world'.²⁴

Another outstanding character in the revolutionary drama was Mohindra Pratap, who arrived in Switzerland just a few days after the outbreak of war. He was an eccentric of imperious temper, who could speak several European languages fluently. Discovered by Hardyal, he was presented to the Kaiser. He became the president of the German-sponsored 'provisional government of India,' acquiring exaggerated ideas of the prerogatives of this office. The members of the government were required to take an oath of allegiance to him personally. Jawaharlal Nehru spoke of him as 'a delightful optimist living in a world of his own creation far from reality', and 'a character out of a medieval romance' who always went about in a semi-military uniform, with high Russian boots, his countless pockets bulging with numerous papers which he was always careful to keep on his own person.²⁵

Another knight of the revolutionary order, Obaid Ullah Sindhi. He was born on 1 March 1872 as Boota Singh in a Sikh family of Sialkot. In his student days he read some books on Islam which led to his conversion at the comparatively early age of sixteen. Leaving his home and people, he joined the famous theological seminary of Deoband to receive education in his newly-discovered faith. He distinguished himself as a student, and wrote a few booklets on dogma and theology. In 1915, his preceptor, Muhmud-ul-Hasan, asked him to go to Kabul on a secret mission. The adventure did not appear feasible as he had no money on him. The wife of a friend sold her jewellery to equip him for the journey. He slipped out of Delhi quietly, travelled by an almost unknown route, and succeeded in entering Afghanistan. His assignment kept him in Kabul for about seven years. He has left a detailed and graphic account of an Oriental autocracy in action, with its court intrigues, suspicions and jealousies; of the coming of the Berlin mission, and the mutual distrust between the Indian revolutionaries and between the Indian and German members of the Berlin mission; of the interminable afflictions of foreigners in the country, and of his own unmerited arrest and unexpected release. He records that while the Indian members were determined to save India from the horrors of the contemplated invasion, their German colleagues rejected the proposition. The debate was only theoretical, as events never reached the stage where it could assume practical importance. Sindhi made some caustic, but probably justified, comments on Barkat Ullah who struck him as a mere dupe. On important issues he found Barkat Ullah's mind to be singularly blank. Barkat Ullah could neither keep his own men in order nor could he carry others along with him. Sindhi felt disgusted with the narrow-mindedness of

Mohindra Pratap, one of whose men curtly said to his Muslim comrades, 'Join us only if you like. India is ours. We know our business'.²⁶

In the revolutionary annals, Obaid Ullah is best remembered as one of the two authors of the famous 'silk letter' addressed to the divine, Mahmud-ul-Hasan, then in the Hijaz (Saudi Arabia), giving an account of their activities at Kabul and urging upon him to further their scheme by securing the co-operation of the Turkish government and of the Sherif of Mecca, who had not yet rebelled against Turkey. The letter contained the details of a plan for raising an 'army of God', drawn from the various Muslim countries, with its high command at Medina. Obaid Ullah insists that the military character of the army of God was much the same as that of the Salvation Army. Its purpose was to destroy British rule in India by an attack on the North-West Frontier, assisted by a Muslim rising within the country.

In July 1916, Mawlana Obaidullah Sindhi wrote three letters on handkerchiefs and gave them to an agent, Abdul Haq, to be handed over to Sheikh Abdur Rahim in Hyderabad who was to further dispatch it through a confidant hajji, preferably by Sheikh Abdur Raheem or Molvi Hamdullah to Molana Mehmud ul Hasan in Hijaz.²⁷ These letters carried the work done by Obaidullah in Kabul and the situation in the bordering areas and future line of actions. The messenger was on his way to Hyderabad, when he stopped for a night in Multan. He stayed in the home of one of their colleague, Allah Nawaz Khan. During this time he disclosed the secret to the host, Rab Nawaz Khan father of Allah Nawaz Khan who immediately reported it to the police who hastened and arrested the messenger, took possession of his coat and passed it on to the Punjab Governor, O'Dwyer, who had it deciphered by the secret service, and thus strengthened the precautions against the intended insurrections. The British government arrested all the leaders and workers of the Movement in India. After the end of suzerainty of the Turks in Hijaz, through the help of Sharif, the British arrested Maulana Mehmud ul Hasan in December 1916 along with one of his close associate from the NWFP. Mawlana Uzair Gul and exiled them to Malta. Obaid Ullah stayed in Kabul till the end of the war and established a branch of the Indian National Congress in Kabul. He arrived in India in 1939, after visiting the U.S.S.R. and Turkey, and died five years later.

Hajji Sahib Turangzai, who was mainly relied upon in the Silk "Conspiracy" Movement, stationed himself in the independent tribal territory of the Mohmand tribe and continued his attacks on British troops. He mobilised the tribesmen for Jihad even at the borders of Peshawar. Mr. Hardinge admitted that they carried out the greatest military operation on the frontier since the Frontier Campaign of 1897.²⁸ When asked about the success of his attacks, he declared that his fight would make busy at least one British platoon and thus would relieve the Caliph's army from that platoon with the support of the tribal leaders and Mujahidin. In 1916, he wrote letters to the tribesmen to rise against the British rulers. These letters show the intensity of feelings of the Muslims for Turkey. Here wrote in a letter Hajji Sahib to the tribesmen:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. To all pious brethren, namely the Mohmands, Bajuris, Bunerwals, Swatis, Gaduns, and other tribes. After praises to God and blessing to the prophet, I, on behalf of General Kharid Beg, who is representative of the prophet's Khalifa, i.e. the Sultan of Turkey, and on behalf of the Sharif of Makkah, I offer greetings to all above tribes and convey this tidings that if God pleased the tribes after the third day of Eid they will raise their standards with the above named tribes will at once, after seeing my letter ... raise the standards and attack the British.²⁹

In February 1915, some fifteen students coming from well-known families disappeared simultaneously from Lahore and Peshawar. For some time nothing was heard of their whereabouts. But they were known to have stopped with the anti-British Wahabis of the tribal belt, called the mujahidin, and were believed to be on their way to Kabul en route for Turkey to fight against the Allies. When they reached Kabul, Habib Ullah had them interned. Released on the intervention of the anti-British faction at the Afghan court, they were set to work under the direction of Mohindra Pratap and Barkat Ullah, who put them on different jobs. Some were sent to Turkey, others to Persia, China and Japan. Some lost their lives as homeless wanderers and some fell into Allied hands and were executed as traitors. Those with powerful connections at home were pardoned.

This period of Multi-faith resistance to British colonialism was a period of unabashed repression. The Indian Defence of the Realm Act was far more rigorous than its British counterpart. It had a difficult passage through the legislature for the elected members voiced uncompromising opposition to it. The Government used, or rather abused, its official majority to prevent the 'efficiency' of the bill from being destroyed. All amendments designed to soften its cruel features were out-voted. As it emerged finally, the law gave the Executive wide powers of rule-making together with an almost unlimited discretion to intern without trial. It lowered the standards of evidence and provided for the creation of special tribunals for the speedy disposal of revolutionary crime in disturbed areas. Its ruthless provisions were enforced without sufficient discrimination. Investigating authorities sat in camera, permitted no counsels to appear before them, inquired into undefined charges, dealt with undisclosed evidence, and submitted reports that were never made public. Savage sentences were invariably passed against the accused. Hardinge has told us that one such 'special' judicial tribunal sitting in camera at Lahore sentenced all the twenty-four accused in a 'conspiracy' to death, whereas only six of them had been actually proved guilty. The Viceroy declined to allow 'a holocaust of victims'³⁰. How many 'holocausts' went unnoticed no one can tell. The police employed its agents provocateurs for tracing crime, pounced upon people and searched their houses for fire-arms. As volunteers were not coming forward to enlist in the army, the Government created conditions akin to conscription in certain areas. Its recruitment drives had much in common with the old pressgang methods of the English during the French wars. It became customary for the village youth to enlist, report at a training centre and then desert at the first convenient opportunity.³¹ For many it was a dull and depressing tale of transportations, and of official terrorism in which Muslim and Sikh suffering was the heaviest.

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