

## Origin of the All India Muslim League

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**Abstract:** After the revolt of 1857 Muslims became the target of the British hatred and suffered most from its consequences. The decline of Muslim power created a sense of loss among the Muslims of India. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the first post Mutiny thinker tried hard to raise the economic conditions by promoting modern education for them. The Mohammedan Anglo- Oriental College, Aligarh and the Muslim Educational Conference were by far the most lasting achievements in the political organization of Muslims. After the death of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in 1998 Nawab Mohsin- ul- Mulk and Nawab Viqar- ul- Mulk played an important role in the formation of All India Muslim League. Its original purpose was to safeguard the political rights and interests of Muslims in India. The formation of All India Muslim League was the result of the Divide and Rule policy of British Government. The partition of Bengal in 1905 gave impetus to the old efforts of Muslims at uniting them into an All India Organization. The result was the formation of the Mohammedan Political Union, the Simla Deputation and eventually the formation of All India Muslim League in 1906. It had long lasting effects on Muslim politics in India.

**Key Words:** Aligarh Movement, British Government, organization, Deputation, Muslim League

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The decline of Mughal power created a sense of loss among the Muslims of India. The British Crown took up the reign of the country in 1858. The British regarded them squarely responsible for the mutiny and singled them out for revenge and repression. They were looked down upon with hate and anger and all kinds of confined to the Hindus. On one hand they lost almost all their remaining traditional prestige superiority over the Hindus and on the other they fortified the confidence of their foreign rulers. It was from this date that their loss of numerical majority in the higher subordinate ranks of civil and military services started.

### II. METHODOLOGY

1. It is a descriptive research. I have used content analysis methodology. Both primary and secondary sources have been used.

### III. EARLY MUSLIM'S EFFORTS

By the late nineteenth century the changing patterns of the Government policies confronted the Muslims with the harsh realities of life. They began to see that they must organize themselves so that they become a worthy object of government patronage. The first man to try to meet the situation was Nawab Abdul Lateef (1823- 1893) the first member of Bengal Legislative Assembly. In April 1863 he laid the foundation of an *Islami Majlis- i- Muzakira*, better known as the Mohammedan Literary Society, at Calcutta. While the Mohammedan Association of Calcutta formed in January 1856 was the oldest Muslim organization. Abdul Lateef was concerned to preserve and to promote old Muslim tradition. The object of the society was "to impart useful information to the higher and educated classes of the Mohammedan community by means of lectures delivered in Urdu, Persian and English languages." For more than thirty years Nawab Abdul Lateef, by his own account "almost alone" represented the Muslims of Bengal in all public movements and proceedings." His efforts were supplemented by another Muslim, when Syed Ameer Ali (1849- 1928) established the National Mohammedan Association in May 12, 1878 at Calcutta with the same object.

#### **IV. SIR SYED AHMAD'S EFFORTS-**

On the Muslim side also arose a leader of great force and determination and western outlook. He was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan the first post Mutiny thinker to realize the pathetic condition of the Muslims. He wrote a treatise in Urdu "*Asbab- e- Baghawat- e- Hind*" on the causes of the Indian Revolt in which he boldly indicated the Government of India for its lack of social intercourse between the British and the Indian public. According to him the basic cause of the Legislative Councils. For the welfare of the stability of the Government the people must have a voice in its Councils. However, soon after the publication he process of the reforms- e.g., the appointment of Indians to the Legislative Councils was started. In a way, the book also led to the birth of Indian National Congress and eventually the All India Muslim League. His aim was not only to confined to the reconciliation of the Muslims to the Government but also reconcile them to the Hindus. He considered the two major communities as the two beautiful eyes of India. He believed that all people of a nation should co-operate national development. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan organized a British India Association in 1886, the first Hindu-Muslim organization, with the avowed object of effectively representing matters to the British Parliament. His work in political sphere and his speeches created the atmosphere which ultimately gave birth to the Indian National Congress. In 1883 the Mohammedan Political Association also came into existence under the patronage of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and other Aligarh Leaders. With Sir Syed Ahmad began the period of self-awakening. In the field of education, to combine Western education with Islamic values, he founded the Mohammedan- Anglo- Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875. His efforts were crowned with success. It proved very beneficial for the promotion of Higher education and modern culture among the Muslims. With a view to raise their educational and social standard, he founded the All India Mohammedan Educational Conference in December 1886. When the Congress passed the resolution in its first session held in 1885 demanding the reconstruction of the Legislative Councils on representative basis, worried Sir Syed a great deal because in that case the Muslims would be in a "permanent minority" and would always be outvoted as the Irish members in West Minister. He therefore advised the Muslims to be away from the Congress and asked them to follow his educational programme. He founded the Indian United Patriotic Association in 1889. The object of the association was to "publish pamphlets and other papers for information of members of parliament, English people and journals of Great Britain" with the aim of explaining to them the Muslim point of view on Indian political affairs. In December 1893 the Mohammedan Anglo- Oriental Association was formed in a meeting held at Sir Syed's house at Aligarh, with a view to promote the political interests of Muslims, to lend support to the British Government and to strive to preserve peace in India. After his death in 1898 some other men of similar background came forward to carry his work.

#### **V. FORMATION OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS**

In August 1900, representative Muslims from various provinces held a big conference at Lucknow under Nawab Mohsin- ul- Mulk where it was decided to form a permanent All India Muslim organization to look after the political interests of the community. The task of completing the details was given to Nawab Viqar- ul- Mulk, who was appointed its secretary. A large number of Muslim institutions and leaders emphasized the need to organize and consolidate the scattered Muslim force. After the strong objection of the Governor, Mohsin- ul- Mulk decided to step down for the interest of the college of which he was now administrator because the future of the college was closely linked with the good will of the Government. Haji Mohammad Musa Khan, arising figure in the Aligarh Movement, suggested the Urdu Defense Association be changed into a Central Mohammedan Political Association which should have representative from all over the provinces and be conducted exactly on the same line as the Congress. In a meeting held at Lucknow in October 1901 and attended by men from Bihar and Punjab, a committee was formed under the president ship of Viqar- ul- Mulk. In July 1903 at the meeting held at Saharanpur the Mohammedan Political Association was formed. Most of the work was done by Viqar- ul- Mulk who finally succeeded to open branches of the Social and Political organization of the Muslims. Some other events that followed between 1900 to 1906 also seem to have helped the cause of Muslim Political union on an all India basis. The Partition of Bengal created fearful turmoil in the country; the two communities were divided into two antagonistic groups- one opposing the partition and other supporting it. This action of the Government was fully supported by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca. He decided to organize the Muslims of the new province into a compact body. Thus under him the Mohammedan Political Union came into existence. The Government of India also began to recognize the Muslim uneasiness and in a way sided with them which gave moral confidence. There was change of Government in England in 1906. Morley became the Secretary for State in the new Government.

#### **VI. SIMLA DEPUTATION**

The speech of John Morley, in the House of Commons regarding the expansion of elected elements in the Councils created great concern among the Muslims and therefore some leading Muslim Leaders contacted Mohsin- ul- Mulk to represent the Muslim point of view to the Government of India as it meant permanent

Hindu domination. There was a general consensus that at present, no Muslim could get into the Legislative Councils by election. Therefore, they decided to submit a memorial to the Viceroy to draw his attention towards Muslim apprehensions. On August 4, 1906 Mohsin- ul- Mulk wrote a letter to Principal Archibald which drew his attention to Morley's speech warning him that the announcement would produce a greater tendency among young educated Muslims for they were already disappointed. He also expressed their fear that by extension of the principle of election "no Mohammedan will get into the Councils." Archibald immediately wrote to Dunlop Smith the Private Secretary of the Viceroy, that a deputation is a solution of the uneasiness of Dacca and as well as the meeting of Aligarh. Minto greatly valued the advice of Dunlop Smith which usually coincided with his own inclinations. He, therefore, without any delay accepted the request of Mohsin- ul- Mulk. On August 14 Archibald sent a draft of a formal application to Mohsin- ul- Mulk who sent it to his friends for suggestions. Lancelot Hare advised the Viceroy not only to receive the Deputation, but also treat it as the real representation of the Muslims of India. Minto communicated his decision to Morley on 10<sup>th</sup> September that he would receive the Deputation on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Morley in his reply on September 16, said that he would be looking forward keenly to the Viceroy's talk with the Muslims. The Muslim Leaders lost no time and accordingly a Deputation consisting of thirty five prominent Muslims led by Aga Khan met Lord Minto at Simla on October 1, 1906. The Deputation discussed the question of representation and in its address drafted by Imadul Mulk demanded definite constitutional safeguards to protect the exclusive interests of Muslim minority; One of the most important safeguards was a separate Muslim representation all the elected bodies, from municipal to the Imperial Legislative Council. It was pointed out that both in gazetted and subordinate ministerial services of all Indian Provinces a due proportion of the Mohammedans should always find place on the basis of their political importance and the value of their contribution to the defense of the Empire.

## VII. FORMATION OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

The meeting of the Muslim elites held at Lucknow in the mid of September 1906 to finalize the text of the memorial to be presented to the Viceroy, decided to take advantage of the annual gathering of Muslim representatives on the occasion of the anniversary of the All India Mohammedan Educational Conference and establish an all India political body of the Muslims. The meeting also unanimously adopted the proposal given by Mian Mohammad Shafi, Aftab Ahmad Khan, Mohsin- ul- Mulk and Viqar- ul- Mulk regarding the name of the organization as "Muslim League." The plan was approved by the members of the Simla Deputation on October 1, 1906 under the name of "Confederacy." The first concrete step towards the foundation of a Muslim organization was taken by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca in his scheme circulated in November 1906 regarding the formation of the 'Muslim All India Confederacy'. The scheme was discussed by the selected gathering of Muslim Leaders who had assembled to attend the 20<sup>th</sup> session of All India Mohammedan Educational Conference at Dacca in the Christmas week of December 1906. Soon after the Educational Conference was over on 30<sup>th</sup> December, as per programme a public meeting of Muslim delegates was held at the initiative of Nawab Salimullah under the chairmanship of Nawab Viqar- ul- Mulk. In this historic meeting of Dacca on the motion of Nawab Salimullah, the resolution for the formation of the "All India Muslim League" was passed. The promotion of loyalty to British Government among the Muslims, the protection and promotion of the Muslim Political rights and interests and the prevention of hostility and promotion of inter communal unity were declared the main objects of the Muslim League. A Provincial Committee was formed with Nawab Viqar- ul- Mulk and Nawab Mohsin- ul- Mulk as its joint secretaries and several other Muslim luminaries coming from different provinces as its members. Its first session was held at Karachi on December 29- 30, 1907 under the president ship of Adamjee Peerbhoy where the constitution of the League was approved and the member again assembled at a special meeting held at Aligarh on March 18- 19, 1908 to transact some important business left unfinished in the Karachi session and it was at this meeting that the Aga Khan was elected permanent President of the All India Muslim League. The Congress had never been able to win the support of any large section of the Muslim community and the establishment of a separate Muslim political organization was a public demonstration of the Congress's failure to speak on behalf of all Indians.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Thus the League was not to counterpoise the Congress. It was founded to preserve and protect those of their rights and positions which were found in danger and to present to the Government their genuine demands which the Congress had failed. Since 1892 Muslims had not been properly represented. Hence they demanded separate electorate. It was the necessity of the time that forced the Muslims to ask for it.

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