

Khaksar Movement in India



Shan Muhammad

KHAKSAR MOVEMENT IN INDIA



Gul Hayat Institute

By Shan Muhammad

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan A Political Biography



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PREFACE

THE THIRTIES OF the present century witnessed the rise of the Khaksar Movement in India with Allama Mashriqi as its leader. It coincided with the rise of the Nazis in Germany, but while the former tended to be a social movement and drifted to politics only in its later stages, the latter was purely political from the very outset.

As in Germany, the period following the World War I had created unrest and dissatisfaction among the younger generations, particularly of Muslims in India. Unemployment and depression was the cry of the time. A university graduate was willing to sell his talents for Rs. 35 a month. In Madras and United Provinces brilliant youngmen, to escape starvation, were constrained to join the lower police services or so-called menial staff of the postal department. The economic miseries had demoralised the people. The Khaksar Movement was the offshoot of these circumstances.

Khaksar is a compound Persian word 'Khak' plus 'Sar'. 'Khak' is dust and 'Sar' is life, that is, one who is a Khaksar must be humble like dust.

Prune facie, the ostensible object of the Khaksar Movement was social service. Dressed in semi-military style with *Belchas* on their shoulders under the command of their *salars* in perfect rigid discipline, they marched through city streets on the occasion of religious festivals and rendered even menial services whenever required to do so. It became a most powerful organisation towards the closing years of the thirties and dominated the field for a little less than a decade. Its success was short-lived, and it disintegrated with surprising rapidity. The Khaksar Movement could not become an all-India movement in spite of a good organisation, though it was certainly widespread.

The Khaksars aimed at disciplining the whole nation. Their motto in life was 'Action and Glory'. They groaned that their

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nation talked too much and worked little and they therefore endeavoured to make it powerful with action. To them the German defeat of 1918 was mainly due to the German's much talkative nature. They believed. A silent nation is a powerful nation. The power of the English nation lies in its silence.

A very glaring feature of the Khaksar Movement was its non-sectarian character. The movement stood for unity for liberation of India and for secularism. Though overwhelmingly Muslim the Khaksars did not indicate any tinge of communalism. The services rendered to the famine-stricken people of Bengal amply prove their claim for unity and secular approach to all problems of India.

My interest in the subject was roused by my erudite teacher Professor A. B. Lal, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Allahabad and now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. Subsequent discussions with Dr. A. D. Pant, Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Allahabad and Dr. S. A. H. Haqqi, Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University whetted my curiosity. Their keen interest and able guidance enabled me to undertake this study. But wherefrom was I to get the material? The Khaksar leadership did not leave any compact literature. It is scattered in one or two page leaflets printed as and when needed. The non-availability of some recorded authentic source material which could provide me substantial and detailed information about the Khaksars disheartened me. The newspapers only gave passing references which were too inadequate to be woven in a book.

In 1969-70 I visited the National Archives of India, New Delhi as a Fellow of the University Grants Commission. To my utter surprise while consulting some secret and confidential reports of the Home Department I came across a few files which filled the gap and rekindled my long cherished desire to work on the Khaksar Movement. These files consisted of the confidential letters and secret reports to and from the Home Department and they constituted a valuable source material. Of the surviving

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personalities mentioned in the records of the Home Department are Professor Baber Mirza and Professor B A Khan. While the former had migrated to Germany long ago, the latter still resides in Aligarh. It was Professor B. A. Khan who very kindly furnished me with oral information about the Khaksar tactics and activities of his time which enabled me with the help of secret records to visualise what I call the Khaksar era. Without this the Khaksar Movement could not be described and discussed with accuracy, as no records were known to exist elsewhere. Some leaflets were discovered in the records of the Home Department found in the National Archives of India, while for others I had to consult the All-India Congress Committee Papers, Dr Moonje Papers, Jayker Papers found in the Nehru Museum, New Delhi. Miss D G Kheshwani, Assistant Director of the National Archives and Mr B R Nanda, Director, Nehru Museum made me available all the relevant material while I worked in their archives.

There is no book in my knowledge that deals exclusively with the Khaksar Movement. This has inspired me to undertake this study. The eminent scholar, Dr Sayyid Nasir Ali, Professor, Department of Political Science, A. M. U., Aligarh, and the reputed author Mr Ram Gopal of Lucknow were kind enough to very thoroughly revise the book and my friends Mr M. Sarfaraz Husayn, Imran Mushtaq and Sayyid Shamim Ahmad read the type-script. I am beholden to them all.

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CHAPTER I

INCEPTION OF THE MOVEMENT

THE POST-MUTINY era in India is mostly conspicuous for the creation of a number of socio-political movements¹ that awakened the slumbering India of ages. Out of these emerged a new ideological upsurge, the Khaksar Movement in the thirties of the current century.

The founder of the Khaksar Movement M. Inayatullah Khan, popularly known as Allama Mashriqi, came into prominence sometime in 1926. Pan-Islamism² dominated his socio-political ideas, and he gave vent to these more elaborately the same year when he was invited by the Shaykh-ul-Islam³ of Egypt to a conference at Cairo.⁴

His speech at the conference concerned itself mainly with the condemnation of the proposed election of the Sultan of Egypt as

¹ The Wahabi movement, the Aligarh movement, the Swadeshi movement, the Khilafat movement, the Non-Cooperation and the Civil Disobedience movements are some of them which have played important role in the nationalist movement of India.

² 'The word Pan-Islamism gained much currency in the early eighties of the nineteenth century to bring about unity among the Muslim states of West Asia and Europe against the Christian powers of Europe.' See Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, Fourteenth edition, New York, 1929, p. 185.

³ 'One of the most honourable title which first appeared in the second half of the fourth century AH. The title of Shaykh has always been reserved for 'Ulama' and mystics.' See Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. IV, p. 275.

⁴ For the Cairo Conference, invitations were sent to the Jamiat-ul-Ulama, the All-India Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League. But they did not send their delegates.

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Khalifat ul Muslimin on the ground that a vassal ruler could not be a spiritual head of the Islamic world. He also had planned to establish a common Islamic fund to be known as Bayt ul Maal with a capital of £ 20 00 000 but his scheme did not materialise due to the slackness of the participants. A trip to Islamic and European countries closed him to a number of prominent leaders. The most popular among them was Adolf Hitler⁵ in Germany and Obaydullah Sindhi⁶ the arch rebels against the British whose association must have naturally infused anti Britishness in Mashriqi.⁷

Born in 1883 to M. Ata Muhammad a petition writer of Amritsar Mashriqi had a brilliant academic career taking the M.A. degree from the Punjab University and thereafter proceeding to England to qualify for the Indian Civil Service Examination. But poor physique prevented him and he turned to the Indian Educational Service serving entirely in the NWFP save for sometimes when he held the appointment of Assistant Secretary in the Department of Education, Health and Lands of the Government of India. Injustice caused to him in his promotion during the tenure of his service under the British forced him to resign in 1930. Then he settled down at Ichhra a suburb of Lahore contemplating to organise the Muslims for social service and

Hitler was the founder of the Nazi movement in Germany. He entered politics in 1923 wrote *Mein Kampf* which was supposed to be the Bible of the Nazis. In 1934 he became President and Chancellor of Germany. His policy led to World War II. He died in 1945.

⁶ Obaydullah Sindhi had a Sikh parentage but accepted Islam during his teens and left home. He joined Dar ul Uloom Deoband in 1889 for Arabic studies and remained very close to Shaykh ul Hind. The company of the learned devout acquainted him with the works and teachings of Hazrat Shah Wali Ullah, a great theologian. In 1915 for his revolutionary activities he was jailed for twenty years and visited Afghanistan, USSR, Geneva, Turkey and Hejaz. In association with Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh he formed the provisional Government of India in Afghanistan. For details see Muhammad Sarwar's *Maulana Obaydullah Sindhi*.

⁷ Home Department Pol. File No. 11835 Secret and Confidential Section

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within a year (September 1, 1931) founded the Khaksar Movement with a weekly organ *Al-Islah*⁸ The movement was devoid of violent activities but it could do otherwise if conditions so demanded as they were reported to keep in view the Persian line which says, *Tang Amad ba Jang Amad* that is, when one is forced to resorting to violence, he will take to it⁹

Khaksar, as previously stated, means earth-like, humble and submissive, and it is the spirit of this meaning that Mashriqi laid stress on the voluntary service of the Khaksars In a pamphlet, *The Final Word*, he wrote 'The introduction of the programme of humanitarian service in the Khaksar has been designed to make the Khaksars bold and fearless, to wear down his fat soul, to strengthen his obstinate and proud self and so to make his self the prize of the world by rendering it obedient'¹⁰ Therein he further elaborated that the first duty of the Khaksar organisation was to secure for every community its civic rights and to guard its internal and external interests To maintain cordial relations amongst the various communities, the Khaksars were instructed to recognise people of each community as its comrades and expected the same from others¹¹

The membership of the movement was not restricted to

⁸ A report submitted to the Central Government by J V B Janvrim, Deputy Commissioner of Police Special Branch, Calcutta mentioned 1936 as the date of the inception of the movement The report said that Khaksar association was started in the Punjab in 1936 by Allama Mashriqi, a disgruntled member of IES Its object was to promote unity among Muslims of the world and to instil a spirit of discipline and unity among Muslims A branch was started in Calcutta, in September 1938 by Peshawari fruit sellers But the date quoted in the report appears to be wrong as all the contemporary records quote September 1931 as the date of its inception

⁹ See Legislative Assembly Debates (Speech of Sayyid Murtaza Ali Khan in support of the lifting of ban from the Khaksar Movement), Vol III, 1942 Sixteenth session, September 14 to September 24, 1942, p 480

¹⁰ Home Department, Pol, F No 74/6/41 (I)

¹¹ Philips Talbot 'The Khaksar Movement,' published in the *Indian Journal of Social Work*, See Home Department, Pol (I) F No 74/6/41, p 193

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Muslims It was open to all and had a non sectarian character.¹ Its object was to attain perpetual happiness by uniting the human race irrespective of its religion or nationality. Social service based on spiritualism being their sole object the Khaksars were to drive away from within false pride passion male vengeance intemperance revelry corruption debauchery etc and always to keep in mind that they were accountable to God for every action of theirs. The Khaksars were not to be afraid of death. They believed that a period had been fixed for life and they were to give unrestricted obedience to the Prophet of faith be he Krishna Buddha Moses Christ or Muhammad.²

Certain duties were also enjoined upon the Khaksars. They were to lead a pure devotional life leaving all temptations to wear Khaki dress and carry a shovel or Belcha which apart from being an emblem of labour could be used for digging cutting and cleaning. They were to tie the badges of Ukhawwat on the right upper arm which indicated a Universal brotherhood to parade under the command of his commander and to carry out orders loyally and with unquestioning obedience.³

Drilling and parades formed an important part of the movement as Mashriqi attributed the degeneration of the Musalmans to their divorcing military life from religion. To him military life was the keynote of Islam military life and Islam being synonymous the giving up of military life was giving up of Islam.⁴ Allama Mashriqi was a man of religious learning. He had religious education of Islam introduced in all the High Schools of NWFP in the teeth of Government opposition.⁵ He completed his

¹ Home Department Pol F No 118/35. See Secret and confidential report of the Criminal Intelligence Department Punjab dated December 24 1935 by A J Hopkins ICS Chief Secretary to NWFP Government Peshawar.

² Agha Sayyid Ghazanfar Ali Shah *The Spirit of the Khaksar Movement* found in the records of the Home Department Pol (Internal) F No 74/4/41 Pt I & II.

³ *Ib id*.

⁴ Mashriqi *Islam Ki Askari Zindagi* p 10.

⁵ *Note on the Khaksar Movement* found in the All India Congress

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outstanding work Tazkirah in 1924 after a strenuous labour of four years¹⁷ This work presented the Holy Quran in a new light and drew public attention The interpretations given by him suited only his own philosophy meant to bring about socio-political regeneration of the Muslims Naturally it was to come in clash with the Moulavis and learned divines¹⁸

According to Mashriqi, the Moulavis were the most unprogressive as well as lethargic section of the Muslim community In his own words, 'The Moulavi dislikes the Khaksar Movement because when the military and soldierly ability has been acquired, when the strength for conquering forts had been developed and when they have learnt to be ready at one clarion call who then would give bread to him to eat'¹⁹ To quote him again 'The way as shown by the Moulavis today is wrong The Khaksar is out to wipe out this wrong religion from the face of the earth and establish again in its place the Islam of the Prophet'²⁰ The rise of totalitarianism appears to have considerably influenced Mashriqi's thinking Like Hitler and Mussolini he also spoke in a dictatorial tone and talked of regeneration and militarism Describing the Khaksar Movement in a pamphlet, *The Final Word*, he wrote, 'It is a movement of men, lions, soldiers and belligerents, and never a movement for women, wives, eunuchs and boys'

'When nations are in the throes of death and decline,' he continued, 'every body is helpless in finding out the exact source of mischief, or where the shoe really pinches Once the individuals of a nation are infused with courage, power, energy, aspiration, will, and action is instilled in their limbs and action in hands, feet, body, soul and determination—in short, action and only

Committee Papers, F No G 63/1940, available in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi

¹⁷ Professor M Al-Fazl, *An Exposition of the Tazkirah of Allama Mashriqi*

¹⁸ Home Department, Pol (Internal) F No 231/1941, Pol (I)

¹⁹ Mashriqi, *Moulavi Ka Ghalat Mazhab*, pp 7, 8

²⁰ Mashriqi, *Qaul-i Faysal*, point 3

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action then nothing on earth can stop that nation from its onward march. We are instilling that preliminary lesson of action and glory, power and determination, kingdom and sovereignty—aye! resistance and war without which even the slightest progress is impossible in a nation.¹ He exhorted the young Muslims to lead the life of a soldier to become true Muslims according to the teachings of the Quran and claimed that he was making through military life the whole nation a fighting nation. To Mashriqi obedience to the Moulavi was ridiculous since he did not know even to handle the sword.²

His pamphlet *Islam Ki Askari Zindagi* (the Military life of Islam) also throws a flood of light on the ideology of the Khaksar movement. Therein also he lays great stress on military life and says: Since the Musalmans gave up military life and divorced military life from religion and religion from the world, God has become angry with the Musalmans and has remorselessly taken away kingdoms from them and given them to other military nations.³ Paradise could be attained by fighting the enemy on the battle field and hell by avoiding war. Since he preached military life through his movement, Mashriqi was a great admirer of Mustafa Kamal (1881-1938) of Turkey, Ibn Saud (1880-1953) of Saudi Arabia, Raza Shah Pahlavi (1878-1944) of Iran, Ghazi Amanullah Khan (1892-1960) of Afghanistan who stoutly opposed Mullaism and uprooted the conservative elements that had sapped the glory of Islam. The reforms in their

¹ Philips Talbot *op cit* p. 192. Cf. Mussolini's writing with the above in which he says: We fight against every thing that restricts and harms the individual. Also Cf. Hitler when he says: Man has become great through perpetual struggle. In perpetual peace his greatness must decline. *Mein Kampf* p. 124.

Mashriqi *Moulavi ka Ghalat Ma haab* pp. 7-8.

² Mashriqi *Islam Ki Askari Zindagi* p. 15.

³ *Ibid* p. 10. Cf. Hitler who says: Nature knows no political frontiers. She begins by establishing life on the globe and then watches the free play of forces. Those who show the greatest courage and industry are the children nearest to her heart and they will be granted the sovereign rights of existence. *Mein Kampf* p. 3.

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respective countries had so much impressed him that he wished to become a disciple of anyone and kiss their feet for they had 'saved the sinking boat of Islam'. He wished all the Khaksars to follow the footsteps of the above saviours of Islam.²⁵

The Government suspected the movement from its outset, and despite his declaration of the motive of the movement, he failed to persuade them that it was in no way hostile to government, but was merely an endeavour to organise the Musalmans to prove their unity and self-sufficiency to attain Swaraj in a shorter time than through the methods employed by the Congress.²⁶

India of 1930—31 was like a turbulent ocean. The movement for independence of the country was in the air. The Nehru report,²⁷ having been rejected, the Congress at its Lahore Session (December 1929) declared India's goal as complete independence. In Nehru's own words 'this overflowing enthusiasm was for a symbol and an idea'.²⁸ The events of 1919 were recalled with all their humiliations and glories and the nationalist movement had taken a different course hitherto not followed.²⁹ In pursuance of the resolution passed at the Lahore session, January 26, 1930 was observed as the complete independence day all over the country. Dr Sayf-ud-Din Kitchlu suggested a programme for the country which consisted of

- (i) The declaration of complete independence
- (ii) Complete boycott of the legislatures
- (iii) Organisation of a National Army of workers
- (iv) Organisation of a permanent body of full-time national workers

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp 15, 16

²⁶ Home Department, (Political) F No 74/1/40, Section A

²⁷ In 1928, Pt Motilal Nehru with the help of all parties, prepared a constitution to meet out the challenge of the Government that the Indians were incapable of framing any constitution. This report came to be known as the Nehru report which demanded Dominion Status.

²⁸ Nema Sadhan Bose, *The Indian National Movement* (Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1967), p 77

²⁹ *Ibid*

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(v) An organisation of mass civil disobedience as well as individual civil disobedience in selected areas

Dr Kitchlu also appealed to Mahatma Gandhi to lead them onward onward until the goal is reached ³⁰

No province of India escaped the fury of the National Movement. Even in the extreme North Western Frontier much above the rich plains of India a young Pathan Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan with his Khudai Khidmatgars³¹ was in emergence. The young Red Shirt leader subsequently came to be known to the millions of our countrymen as the Frontier Gandhi for his selfless services and adopting a Gandhian way of life.

Such political conditions were enough to rouse Mashriqi's innate desire to form an association for social service. But the British authorities felt otherwise believing that the ultimate object of the movement was far from innocuous and that there was revolution and sedition in it. And it is proved from the fact that Mashriqi before launching the movement met the Arch Nationalists like Dr Sayf ud Din Kitchlu and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who promised their fullest support to his movement.³²

The Indian Review January 1930 pp 28-29

¹ Khudai Khidmatgar was founded by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the wake of Shah Amanullah's abdication (1928) from Afghanistan. Firstly it was a non-political body formed to eradicate the social evil and remove educational backwardness of the Pathans. But with the rise of British tyranny it drifted to politics. As the white clothes got easily dirty the Khan chose red-coloured dress for his volunteers and his movement came to be known as Red Shirt Movement. See D. G. Tendulkar's *Abdul Ghaffar Khan* Bombay p. 59.

For joining the National Movement Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had to undergo severe hardships and imprisonments. In a letter to Dr M.A. Ansari dated February 4, 1932 the Khan wrote from Hazaribagh Central Jail:

I consider C class prisoners better off than myself. In my opinion this law had been constituted for taking revenge. What should I write more? If I do so for days you will be weary and I shall be weary. I shall be weary from the heap. See records of the Home Department Pol. F No 31/107/1932. For details see also the Home Department, (Political) File No 40/V/1932 and 22/115/35.

² Home Department Pol. F No 118/35. Dr Sayf ud Din Kitchlu and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan are two great nationalists who fought against the

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In 1931 Mashruqi published a book entitled *Isharat* the manifesto of the Khaksar which reveals the inner feelings of the founder towards British Raj. This was a prelude to the movement. A perusal of its pages reveals that while it dealt with the necessity of Muslim regeneration all over the earth, it also displayed its sympathy for the Congress Civil Disobedience Movement³³ and hatred to the foreign domination. The objects of the movement as mentioned in *Isharat* were as follows

- (i) To unite the community and promote equality, mutual love and affection by persuading the people to serve one another
- (ii) To exalt the vision of the people by making them servants of God
- (iii) To establish uniformity by making people wear clothes of one colour
- (iv) To eschew communal disputation and abandon political sectarianism
- (v) To make the community smart by providing an Islamic symbol—the Belcha (a spade) and training them in drill
- (vi) To discipline all villages and cities under one officer and the entire community under one Amir and to make its members obey one command
- (vii) Not to collect subscription
- (viii) Not to withdraw any step taken by former National or Indian leaders, nor to antagonise any person, community, association or movement

British throughout their lives. Dr. Kitchlu has passed away while Ghaffar Khan is still alive and probably the oldest surviving nationalist in Afghanistan. He has also toured India.

³³ In 1930 Gandhiji presented 11 points to the Viceroy. This included total prohibition, reduction of the rupee sterling ratio, reduction in land revenue, abolition of Salt Tax, reduction of military expenditure etc. Gandhiji wrote to Viceroy that if his demands were accepted he would not start the Civil Disobedience. But the Government dealt harshly. Therefore, on March 12, 1930, he took his famous Dandi March and started the Disobedience movement.

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(ix) To become the ruling power by promoting unity ³⁴

Dressed in Khaki uniform and armed with Belhas the Khaksars appeared to be streaming like a quasi military force. The Belhas or spade signified a special symbol and this had been borrowed from the battle of Uhud³⁵ when the holy Prophet with a handful of people took the spade and repulsed the invading people of Maccah. Apart from its religious significance to Mashriqi it had endless virtues. It was a weapon for a soldier for fighting as well as for protection a pillow in camp a cushion to sit upon a cup for drinking water a kettle for cooking food and iron plate for baking bread. Such being the good qualities it was taken up as the symbol of the Khaksars ³⁶. In a message to the Khaksars Mashriqi said Every principle and every action of the Khaksar movement is based on military pattern. The Khaksar soldier is not a showy and toy soldier. He is a perfect military commander. The line of Khaksars is not a row of toys glittering in gay attire it is the line of undaunted fearless soldiers ³⁷. Further Mashriqi held that the Khaksar Movement was vitally necessary for other movements had failed to give any concrete result and Indian Muslims needed a permanent standing army unbreakable and capable of solving every issue and which might be able to withstand the enemy ³⁸.

The Khaksars unquestionably had a perfect organisation. Anybody from sixteen to sixty was permitted to join it. Right from the top to the bottom offices were assigned by Mashriqi who held the supreme control and exercised absolute dictatorial powers.

Home Department Pol P No 74/1/40 Sec A p 150 (3) Appendix to notes Secret

³⁴ A very famous battle in the early history of Islam which took place in the third year of Hijrah between Abu Sufyan son of Harb son of Omayyah the great rival of the Hashimites and the people of Madinah. This battle took place at the foot of Mt. Uhud and in 3 years were destroyed.

Philips Talbot op cit
ibid

³⁵ Ibid Cf with Hitti. He says He who would live must fight. He who does not wish to fight in this world where permanent struggle is the law of life has not the right to exist. *Al In Aa nuf* p 42

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The following were the rank of officers in the organisation

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Amur</i> | Dictator |
| 2. <i>Salar-i-Akbar</i> or
<i>Salar-i-Zila</i> | District Commander |
| 3. <i>Salar-i-Idarah-i-</i>
<i>Markaziya</i> | Assistant District Commander |
| 4. <i>Salar-i-Ala</i> | Commander of 12 Jamaat |
| 5. <i>Sai Salar</i> | Commander of three Jamaat |
| 6. <i>Salar-i-Mohalla</i> | Commander of one Mohalla |
| 7. <i>Salar-i-Idarah</i> | Assistant Commander of a
Mohalla |
| 8. <i>Pakbaz</i> | Senior Janbaz |
| 9. <i>Janbaz</i> | Signatories of the 'blood pledge' |
| 10. <i>Khaksar</i> | Privates |

Of the above, the Janbaz occupied a position of special importance in the hierarchy. They were required to sign a pledge, in their own blood, to sacrifice their lives for the cause of the movement. The swearing-in ceremony of the Janbazs was celebrated with great pomp and splendour and they made the following pledge on the holy Quran

'Respected Allama Inayatullah Mashriqi, Greetings. I regard myself in the presence of God as one of the worst sinners. I hereby declare that from today I place my life, wealth, and everything else bestowed on me by the Almighty at the disposal of your great Institution in the service of God and Islam. If I disobey the orders of God and Islam, may I be consigned to hell on the day of resurrection. May God accept my pledge in blood. I submit the pledge to the Khaksars Central Institution which has undertaken the duty of guiding the Muslims according to the injunctions of God and the Prophet. I pray that the Almighty may give me strength to observe this pledge faithfully.'⁹⁹

The Khaksars were not required to subscribe anything for the organisation. They were only to provide themselves a Khaki dress

⁹⁹ Home Department, Pol F No 74/1/40 (Section A), p 105

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(consisting of a shalwar shirt and turban) The *belcha* was provided by the organisation supplied to it in a large stock at a humble rate. The expenditure of the organisation was borne out by Mashriqi who had a fortune of about 80 000⁴⁰ deposited in Banks. Moreover an Ex Mir of Sindh also contributed Rs 9 lakhs which established the movement and had strengthened its hold on far flung areas of India.⁴¹

The Khaksars were not given any salary. They were to render voluntary service. Only a sort of promissory notes of the value of Rs 10 and Rs 5 were introduced. The Salar-i-Akbar and Sar Salar and Sipah Salar were to get salary of Rs 50 20 and 15 per month respectively.⁴² The promissory notes bore the following inscription in Persian:

I promise to pay the bearer the above mentioned rupees
on the attainment of independence

The promissory notes contained the map of India with crescent star numbers and an Arabic line with the signature of Mashriqi. These notes were banned by the Government of India in the name of law and order.⁴³

At a time when the struggle to overthrow the foreign domination was in full swing any movement could have been seized by the people. The Khaksar Movement naturally drew young men to its fold. They started enrolling themselves as Khaksars with a duty to do and die obviously for the independence of India in the guise of social servants.

In the first few years of its inception in the Punjab people in tens of thousands became its active members. Branches all over the

⁴⁰ Some accounts say that Rs 18 000 were deposited in the Imperial Bank of India.

⁴¹ *The Bombay Chronicle* October 20 1939. See article 'Khaksar Movement' by Gop Nath Srivastava.

⁴² Home Department F No 74/1/40 (Section A) p 105. See also letter of F C Burne CIE ICS Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab to the Secretary to the Government of India Home Department New Delhi dated October 17 1942. Home Department (Political) (I) F No 28/9/1942.

Home Department (Political) (I) F No 28/9/1942 p 2

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Punjab and Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Firuzpur, Jallundhar, Shaykhupura, Sialkot, and Hoshiarpur started functioning. Within a short period, it enlisted some five to six thousand volunteers. Its reaction was felt in the adjoining provinces as well, and organised branches of the Khaksars appeared in Peshawar, Sindh, United Provinces, Bangalore, Madras, Delhi and Bengal.

The conduct of the Khaksars in the Punjab and other provinces, save Peshawar,⁴⁴ was in the beginning somewhat unseditious. They only drilled and paraded in their full uniform with spades on their shoulders, on the occasions of special Muslim festivals to perform social service. But in Peshawar they had close association with the members of the Red-Shirt movement and had introduced a special form of spade and bayonet.

This gave the Government cause to apprehend it as being a military organisation. In March 1934, at an executive committee meeting of the Khaksar organisation, Mashriqi stated that he had obtained a plot of land near Ichhra for a Khaksar training school, which would impart military tactics to Khaksar volunteers. The same year a group within the Khaksar organisation known as the 'Sword Party', was formed.⁴⁵ They paraded the densely populated areas with naked swords, but these parades were stopped when the local authorities issued a warning under Section 107 Cr P C, asking the processionists that they were rendering themselves liable to action.

Brick by brick the body structure of the Khaksar Movement was coming up, advancing from military uniform and drilling to military tactics and mock wars.⁴⁶ All over India mock wars were arranged and the period between 1935 and 1938 is marked by such fictitious wars to which Congress leaders were also invited.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁴ In N-WFP Khudai Khidmatgar held the field and exercised tremendous influences. However the influence of Khaksars was not negligible.

⁴⁵ Home Department, Pol (I) F No 74/1/40 (Section A)

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp 474, 75, 78

⁴⁷ The A-ICC Papers file No 11/1937 contains a letter of Abdullah, Salarn-Idarah, to Jawaharlal Nehru asking him to pay a visit to three mock war

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mock war was fought in the presence of some ten to fifteen thousand people. Huts and forts were built up at strategic points and a fierce battle with gun and powder was fought. The wounded were rushed to the field hospital. The war stopped when the Khaksar soldiers got an upper hand. Mashriqi himself visited such programmes and while receiving the guard of honour by the Khaksar Jawans armed with swords and spades he never failed to infuse militant spirit in the volunteers through a speech which centred round the idea that the Khaksars should unite and oppose force with force.⁴⁸

One of the items of the Khaksar programme was the launching of camps outside the city where they were taught self help, perseverance and austerity. These camps were to be the real schools for teaching unity, discipline and brotherhood.⁴⁹ Like mock wars the camps were held in every part of the country and Khaksars from all over India participated in them. Uniformed women Khaksar volunteers also attended the ladies' camps and Mashriqi's daughter being prominent with the lady Khaksars guided the activities. The main idea was to draw mass attention and popularise the movement. Strict obedience to the command of the supreme official was exemplary⁵⁰ and such was the loyalty of its members to the organisation that they were proud of giving their lives without

programmes to be launched by the Culbarga Khaksars on August 12, 13 and 14, October 11, 15, 16 and December 30, 31, 1937 and January 1, 1938. See also *The Bombay Chronicle* October 20, 1939.

⁴⁸ At that very time Dr Moonje the great Mahasabha leader also founded a military school and toured Southern India with the object of enlisting support for his school but he met with considerable opposition from the Karnatak Congress leader G. B. Deshpande who opposed Dr Moonje's propaganda and characterised it as being detrimental to the Congress and to Hindu-Muslim unity. See extract from the fortnightly Bombay Political Situation Report for the first half of September 1935. Appendix (I) to notes vide *Home Department Papers* P. J. F. No. 118/35 nos. 17, 18.

⁴⁹ Home Department, P. J. F. No. (I) 31/59/1943 and K.W.

In May 1937 Muhammad Akram a Khaksar of Gujranwala was flogged under the orders of Dr Ghulam Muhammad a local sardar for not attending the Delhi Khaksars camp. Muhammad Akram willingly submitted to corporal punishment.

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question⁵¹ Janbaz that is those who signed the pledge with their blood, were to be considerably honoured. All this led the Government to view the movement with grave concern.

Like Jamal-ud-Din Afghani,⁵² Mashriqi also was a pan-Islamist and aimed at uniting the Muslims of the whole world. With this intention Mashriqi sent a party of nine Khaksars in 1933 to tour the holy places of Mesopotamia and Arabia via Baluchistan, Persia and Nejd. After four years, another party of Khaksars was despatched to Hedjaz with letters from Mashriqi to Ibn i-Saud and the minister of finance of the Saudi Arabian Government. The deputation interviewed the finance minister, distributed their literature in Arabia but met with little success.⁵³ However they succeeded in establishing Khaksar centres in Egypt, Aden and Behrein. It is difficult to say anything categorically what led to the failure of their mission in the Muslim countries. It is probable that British mandates over Islamic countries and Khaksars' intervention in Indian politics obstructed their progress.

By 1937 the Khaksars had become a considerably influential organisation. Mashriqi repeatedly claimed that his was purely a non-political organisation and meant solely for the social service, but their activities had convinced the Government of its wider underground activities. However, Mashriqi formulated three non-political demands and strongly pressed upon the Punjab Govern-

⁵¹ In 1938 a mock war was arranged at Lahore. Tayab Ali Shih a young Khaksar received fatal injuries and died in the hospital. It is significant that no report in this connection was made to the police authorities by the survivors of the deceased.

⁵² Jamal-ud-Din Afghani (1838 AD-1898 AD) was a man of vast learning. His message for the unification of Muslim world exercised tremendous influence on Muhammadans in all countries. He founded at Mecca a Pan-Islamic Society which aimed at creating one caliph for the whole Muslim world either at Constantinople or Kufa.

⁵³ 'A rumour also ran afloat in India that the Saudi Arabian Government had invited 1000 persons of the Khaksar organisation to perform Haj and had promised to bear all their expenses from the time they arrived in Jeddah. The Government of Saudi Arabia denied this.' See Press note Foreign and Political Department, New Delhi dated January 21, 1936 vide Home Department, Pol. F. No. 118/35, p. 29.

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ment to accept to them. These demands consisted of (i) the establishment of a broadcasting station at Ichhra the headquarters of the movement near Lahore for the purpose of disseminating the true teachings of the Quran and for delivering a common Khutbah on the occasion of Id prayers (ii) the setting up of a Government agency for the collection of Zakat with a view to the establishment of a Khaksar Bayt ul Maal and (iii) permission to Government servants to join Khaksar Movement.

The Khaksars gave wide currency to the above demands in the Punjab and in August 1938 threatened to resort to bloodshed if these were not accepted. Broadcasting being a central subject the Punjab Government forwarded their application to the Central Government with a note that if the request for opening a broadcasting station was refused they might be permitted to broadcast on purely social subjects from the All India Radio Station. About the second demand the Government stated that they would legislate for the collection of Zakat if the Muslims so desired but it was for the Muslims to name the organisation to which Zakat should be entrusted. The last demand was rejected with the plea that the Government Servants Conduct Rules prohibited Government servants participating in any political association.⁸⁴

The *Al-Islah* the principal party organ which was published from Lahore made a hue and cry but the Government was adamant and nothing was done. Besides the *Al-Islah* other party papers were the *Khaksar Sipahi* the *Khaksar Weekly* and the *Radiance* published from Hyderabad (Sind) Calcutta and Aligarh respectively.

By 1939 the Khaksar movement had gained a sizeable following in many provinces. Besides the Punjab the home of Khaksars the United Provinces had also a strength of 4771 members. It was the second most important stronghold of the movement. In NWFP their strength was estimated between 2500 and 3000 members. Other provinces like Bengal Central Provinces Delhi

* Home Department Pol F No 74/1/40 (Section I) p 105 (14) See Appendix to notes Secret

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Bihar, Ajmer-Mewar, Bombay, Sind and Baluchistan were reported to be having small units. The Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir, Mysore, Indore, Bhopal, Gwalior and Hyderabad also could not check the growth of the movement. Its total membership throughout India was estimated to be approximately 17,000.



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CHAPTER II

RELIGION THE BASIC NEED

THE WHOLE STRUCTURE of the Khaksar Movement is based on religious edifice. Religion is innate in man and is indispensable for his moral well being¹. The need of religion as a guiding force has always been felt and even in the primitive ages when man was incapable of understanding the true nature of religion he worshipped some unseen superior force. With the passing of ages and development of reason a curiosity arose in man to understand religion. Faith and belief came into being and the true place of religion in society came to be known. In every age man has embraced religion and if he is ignorant of true God he must make to himself false ones². The question is What does religion give to its adherents? The answer is simple. It gives man reason to distinguish between good and bad virtue and sin and promotes a sense of spiritualism which elevates him from lower being. Man is the highest manifestation of God and his superiority lies in doing things conducive to human society.

Like other philosophers Mashriqi does not believe in spiritualism. His whole philosophy is based on materialism as he is greatly impressed by western sciences and philosophy. Therefore the Khaksar Movement is based on materialistic philosophy.

Syed Ahmad Khan Bahadur *Series of Essays on the Life of Mohammad*
Preface p 1

Syed Ahmad Khan Bahadur *Essays on the Various Religions of Pre Islamic Arabs* (London 1870) pp 1 and 2

of western thinkers. He has freely borrowed from the writings of Darwin, Bacon, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Bentham and other philosophers of Hedonism who believed in the greatest good of the greatest number, and to introduce their respective ideas he has given a new interpretation of Islam hitherto unknown.

In 1924 Mashriqi came out with a book called the *Tazkirah*.³ He planned to write it in ten volumes but his dream remained unfulfilled and it was the first volume that continued guiding the Khaksar Movement. The thesis of the *Tazkirah* is that religion is basically a system governing the rise and fall of nations. *Tazkirah*, partly written in Urdu and partly in Arabic, interprets the Quran in a new light. Mashriqi believes that the Quran has been a 'sealed book'⁴ all commentators and Tafsir writer had not rightly interpreted the words of God. Hence he himself undertook the task of interpreting the Holy Book in a manner suitable to modern age and English educated graduates. Unlike Mutazilites⁵ thinkers who based their argument on reason, while not criticising the social life of Islam, Mashriqi, not only interprets things to suit his own way but finds faults with everything Islamic.⁶ *Tazkirah* forms the Bible of the Khaksars which, to Mashriqi himself, is 'a permanent reality', and consequently a 'vitally important book'.⁷ To persuade the simple-minded Muslim, Mashriqi has employed an oratorist style with flowery phrases. The rise and fall of Islam

³ *Tazkirah* in original has not been found out anywhere in the archives. In the records of the Home Department, File No. 231/41 Pol (I) a typed copy of *An Exposition of the Tazkirah of Allama Mashriqi* by Professor M. Al-Fazl is available. This is actually a commentary on Mashriqi's *Tazkirah*. The author starts his book with a 'Foreword' and thereafter provides an English translation of *Tazkirah* with his own views. This makes the task easy for the present writer.

⁴ Foreword, p. 13.

⁵ A great theological school originated with two natives of Basra, Wasil b. Ata and Amr b. Ubayd. The period of their activities covers practically the reign of Caliph Hisham and his Umayyad successors, i.e., the years 105-131 (723-48). See the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (London 1933), Vol. III, pp. 787-88.

⁶ M. Al-Fazl, *op cit*, p. 14.

⁷ *Tazkirah*, pp. 2, 6, 19.

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form an important subject of discussion in the Tazkirah wherein he laments and sheds tears on the down trodden Muslim millions under an Islamic rule. He holds Mullas responsible as also for the degeneration of the Muslims who were hell bound worthy of disgrace and insult.⁸ Things are judged from their intrinsic value but Mashriqi judges them from the point of view of power and strength. This leads him to materialism and he counts everything in terms of matter.

Since through the force of religion Mashriqi wishes to transform the thinking of Muslims he discusses it thoroughly. To discuss religion he starts with Evolution. The Islamic concept of Evolution is the transformation of potentiality into actuality. Maulana Rumi (1207-1273), Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), Shah Waliullah (1703-1765) and Sir Saviyd Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) all believe in Evolution and hold that man came into existence as a result of a long process of development.⁹ But Mashriqi does not believe in this notion of Evolution. He believes in the Darwin's theory of evolution which is based on the idea of the survival of the fittest through a struggle for existence.¹⁰ Naturally the plan Mashriqi drew up for the Khaksar Movement was only to be fulfilled under the Darwinian theory and not through the Islamic theory of Evolution.

To an orthodox religion connotes spiritualism and well being of the other world. But because Mashriqi does not believe in spiritualism he feels that religion means worldly power and stands for worldly superiority and domination.¹¹ Such an interpretation of religion is un-Islamic. Islam does not say that religion is an instrument to gain world power and domination. Power undoubtedly came in the wake of Islam but this is not the sole purpose of a true religion. Islam never stood for the conquest of the

⁸ Introduction p. 16

For details see Shan Muhammad Sir Syed Ahmad Khan *A Political Biography* p. 145 (Meenakshi Prakashan Meerut 1967)

⁹ Professor Al-Fazl *op cit* p. 237

¹⁰ Tazkirah Arabic part p. 30

world, though its followers took to it just after the death of the Prophet. But the motive behind these conquests was to carry the message of the Prophet and God to distant strands through which mankind may lead a contented life. Wherever riches appear contentment disappears and here comes the role of religion which brings purification of the soul. The Prophet's life has revealed that He had no land, no worldly power and no wealth, and it was through His simplicity and force of spirit that Islam achieved distinction.

To Mashriqi, religion is an important factor but he is not willing to accept Islamic ideology of the bygone centuries. His thesis of religion is otherwise. To him Angels, genu and Satan are not to be believed.¹² His interpretation of some of the verses of the Holy Quran is purely materialistic which is the be-all and end-all of all his philosophy. He talks of worship and devotion in very high terms. But by devotion he does not mean only Salat (prayer) and Fasting, but blind obedience to God's commandments which to Mashriqi are an 'outward form of devotion'—devotion to the superior in the world.¹³

Mashriqi also feels that God's blessing is a palpable thing but it has nothing to do with spiritualism. Lawful or unlawful things, to him have no concern with the spiritual life of a man which is somewhat non-existent. They are only connected with his social and worldly life.¹⁴

Mashriqi is a great admirer of European society. To him Europe's materialism, philosophy, irreligious views and forceful occupation of others' land are devotion, good deeds and piety. He is so much overwhelmed by the Europeanisation that their sins, immorality, injustice and hypocrisy are all the best things to be followed.¹⁵

The rise of industrialization in Europe gave rise to a new

¹² Tazkirah, Introduction, pp 18, 19

¹³ *Ibid*, Urdu part, p 215

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p 217

¹⁵ Professor Al-Fazl, *op cit*, p 23

approach to life in which spiritualism was undone. The attitude of the people widened the gulf between the Church and Science. Asceticism practised by the Christian monks was also one of the factors for this gulf. But what did Europe get after rejecting the religious dogma? It got the materialistic way of life, heresy and a new conception of nationality which has marred the peace of Europe. But Mashriqi is not concerned with its consequences. To him even spiritualism if there is any should result in worldly supremacy and domination and to achieve a worldly goal the only path according to him is a social programme.¹⁷ It is through struggle and constant endeavour that a social programme can be accomplished.

Not being himself a firm believer of the Great Book, his ideas about God's unity (Tawhid), Hell and Paradise and the Day of Judgement are quite different from those of Islam. Deviation from the teaching of the Quran is heresy but Mashriqi does not care for it and his interpretation conforms to the heretic ideas. To him Paradise and Hell are misnomers. To say that a believer would go to Paradise and non-believer to Hell is not a reasonable argument.¹⁷ According to Mashriqi, Paradise is on earth for a ruling nation and likewise Hell is on earth for the poor and subjugated one. He therefore is not a believer of a life which begins hereafter and which is the result of man's virtuous or sinful deeds. Very closely to this is the faith on the Day of Judgement on which rests the whole structure of Islamic life.¹⁸

According to the Holy Book, God would end the world on a certain stage. Actions and deeds of man will be judged by the Almighty and rewards and punishment would be given accordingly. Then God will create another world and this will be the beginning of a new society.¹⁹ This one should note is essential for making man moral and good. But Mashriqi has nothing to do with such

¹⁷ Tazkirah Urdu Part pp 217-218
Professor Al-Fazl *op cit* pp 20-21

¹⁸ *Ibid* p 21

¹⁹ *Ibid* p 2.

an abstract concept. He is a practical man and his criterion of piety is not good performance or in following the lines showed by the Prophet and God, but the number of forces and ships, better armament and fighting machines and explosives. To him 'you are pious and praiseworthy if you have usurped a kingdom. You are true Muslims if you have strong defences. You are true believers in Islam if you have spread your armies over land and sea'²⁰

In accordance with his new religious ideology he discards the five articles of the faith taught by the Prophet. These are

- (i) Belief in the Unity of God
- (ii) Belief in the sinlessness of God
- (iii) Belief in the Books of God
- (iv) Belief in the Prophets of God
- (v) Belief in the Day of Judgement

Contrary to the above he introduces ten articles of faith coined by himself. They are

- (i) Unity of action
- (ii) Unity of nation
- (iii) Obedience to a ruler from amongst you
- (iv) Jihad against the enemies with wealth
- (v) Jihad with sword and persons
- (vi) Travels to foreign countries
- (vii) Perseverance and constancy in endeavour
- (viii) Nobility of Character
- (ix) Acquisition of Science and learning
- (x) Belief in the World to come²¹

He also lays down some other things which are contrary to the basic teachings of Islam. For instance, he feels that materialism is the only means dearer to God, religious institutions and rituals are not necessary and Islam is narrow because of its institutions²². He wants to reduce religion to precise science like

²⁰ Tazkīrah, (Arabic part), pp 8, 25, 38, 44, Cf, the Doctrine of Aggrandisement of Machiavelli

²¹ Tazkīrah, (Arabic part), pp 56-80

²² *Ibid*, (Arabic part), pp 31, 58

Mathematics and Metaphysics ³

Why does he take such an attitude of religion and science ? He firmly holds that religion as interpreted by Moulavi and Mullas is no religion at all. In his pamphlets he rebukes the Moulavi who to him was the man responsible for the degeneration of Islam. Commenting on the role of the Moulavi he says. It is wrong for him (Moulavi) to wear arms. It is wrong for him to forget the military life of Islam. It is wrong on his part to set his face against the goal of domination and sovereignty with his brain which has become stunted and cannot think of far reaching results. he cannot build the magnificent dome of domination and sovereignty on these five pillars (Namaz, Roza, Zakat, Haj and Kalimah). He has forgotten that the purpose of the pillars is always to support the roof over them. Now these five pillars of Islam are mere pillars and are but remnants of an old dilapidated building. ⁴

He wants a new structure of Muslim Society rejecting the old dogma. He feels and to a certain extent rightly that much harm has been done to Islam by Mullas through wrong interpretation presenting baseless notions and introducing them in religion. To him Islam only means a life of domination. ⁵ He feels that the Muslims of bygone days could not have conquered even a small fort had they not in them the qualities of a soldier. Thus soldierly life was an essential factor in the life of a Musalman. ⁶ In Islam according to Mashriqi implicit obedience as a duty is due to that Muslim ruler alone who has the sword of the inheritance of the world in his hand (i.e. rules the world with his sword). It is ridiculous to offer obedience to Moulavis who do not know how

³ Ibid. Urdu part p 2

⁴ *Moulavi ka Ghalat Ma'hab* pp 8-9. In his *Qadri Qaysal* also (p 3) Mashriqi condemns the Moulavis. Therein he says 'The way as it is shown by the Moulavi today is wrong. The Khaksar it out to wipe out this wrong religion from the face of the earth and establish again in its place the Islam of the Prophet

⁵ Mashriqi *Islam ki Askari Zindagi* p 3

⁶ Ibid pp 4-6

to handle the sword ²⁷

He coincides Islam with military life and if he has in stock to present anything it is the life of a soldier so that one may become a true Muslim ²⁸ 'We are making,' he said, 'through military life the whole nation a fighting nation' ²⁹

Thus whatever he was doing, his intention was to build up a fighting force through the instrument of religion which was the only weapon that could inspire the Musalmans of India



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²⁷ *Ibid*, p 15

²⁸ Mashruqi, *Moulavi Ka Ghalat Mazhab*, p 14

²⁹ *Ibid*, p 15

CHAPTER III

SHAHIDGANJ MOSQUE LAHORE

THE KHAISARS CAML to Imelight from the Shahidganj Mosque dispute between the Sikhs and the Musalmans V2 1

Shahidganj is a small locality in Lahore where the land and building of a mosque had been in the possession of the Sikhs for about a century by the decision of a court of law. In 1935 a rumour got currency that the Sikhs were preparing to demolish the building. It turned out to be true when a portion of the building was actually pulled down by the Sikhs. This led to serious disturbances in Lahore and then communal tempo spread all over the Punjab. Efforts were made by the Musalmans to get back the mosque by physical force and the police had to open fire to save the situation. The Muslims took the case to the court but before the court could make a decision the Ahrars¹ started an agitation and demanded the delivery of the Mosque to the Muslims. Soaked in religious sentiments they decided to violate the law and actually marched to the mosque in defiance of the Governor's orders. By the end of January 1938 200 Ahrar volunteers were arrested of whom 158 were clamped in Jul². The court decision was again in favour of the Sikhs and it fanned the fire. Thousands of volunteers from Delhi and North West Frontier Province flocked to the

¹ A party of Muslim Nationalists formed in 1930 worked side by side with the Congress in the Civil Disobedience movement in 1930-32. For more details see the next chapter.

² Ram Gopal *Indian Muslims* p 280

Punjab to offer resistance, and the number of arrests rose to 1 000 ³

A new device was thought of Malik Barkat Ali, a member of the Assembly, who prepared a Bill 'to apply the Muslim law with retrospective effect to all buildings which had ever been mosques' ⁴ The Sikhs sought the Governor's protection, who, in exercise of his discretionary powers refused the introduction of the Bill ⁵ In the press this action of the Sikhs was not favourably treated and received a chorus of vehement condemnation from all sides ⁶

With the failure of the Ahrars to gain anything substantial, the Khaksars took the sceptre, organised a civil disobedience movement and prepared themselves to face the calamities stubbornly ⁷ Maula Bakhsh took the lead, and the Badshahi Mosque was made the base for operation After prayer meetings were held and the jathas were sent to Shahidganj Mosque to say their prayers in the mosque and thus to keep the agitation alive and stir feelings of excitement against the Government Maula Bakhsh confined himself within the four walls of the Badshahi Mosque and directed the campaign The police entered the mosque, arrested Maula Bakhsh, presented him before the court which ordered him to sign a bond for good behaviour for a year or go to prison in case of his failure to do so As a clever man he signed the bond but again appeared in the Badshahi mosque a few hours later and restarted the campaign

When on the previous occasion the police caught hold of Maula Bakhsh, he was detained at the police station for a night

³ *Ibid* 'Ahrars were also arrested because of their attitude towards the expected World War II Maulana Muhammad Ismail Labsh, dictator Majlis-i-Ahrar in a telegram to Gandhi, Azad, Rajendra Prasad and Pt Nehru assured their best co-operation to Congress in the national movement' See the *Bombay Chronicle* October 10, 1938

⁴ Ram Gopal, *op cit*, p 280

⁵ *Ibid*, p 281

⁶ The *Bombay Chronicle*, in its editorial 'The Shahidganj Trouble' March 18, 1938 called the action of the Sikhs as 'a definitely unpatriotic act and extremely objectionable from the point of view of national interests'

⁷ Home Department, Pol F No 4/9/37

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before being produced before a court. In the mean time a successor in the person of Yusub Husayan had been appointed. On the release of Maula Bakhsh there appeared two leaders who continued to form the jathas to go to Shahidganj Mosque. In the Friday prayer Yusub Husayn made a violent speech against the police and the Punjab Government and attempted to arouse the Juma mob estimated at about 20 000 against the police outside the mosque. Every time the entry of the police was apprehended. Therefore the Badshahi Mosque was kept packed up every moment to face any emergency. Police officials also in view of strong excitement did not deem it advisable to enter the mosque to carry out the arrest of Maula Bakhsh and Yusub Husayn. Even during the night the strength of the supporters of the two wanted men did not decline and fresh entrants continued pouring into the mosque. The police avoiding entry into the mosque encountered the jathas outside the Shahidganj Mosque. However the two men were not ignored the delay in arrest was a matter of expediency.

Day after day the resentment and excitement of both the parties was mounting. The police finding no alternative forced its entry into the mosque faced ferocious resistance and finally succeeded in arresting the two men^a.

To continue the agitation and challenge the forces of police which had entered the mosque a new man appeared on the terrace of the Badshahi Mosque. He was Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi who assumed the role of a dictator. Like the two men arrested he also stayed in the mosque exhorted the assembly to do and die for religion and God and despatched jathas. To the existing demand in connection with the Shahidganj Mosque Mashriqi further added another—the release of prisoners who had been convicted and an enquiry into the conduct of the police.

Unlike the two former agitators Mashriqi was a man of

^a The above details have been taken from a secret letter of the Government of the Punjab to the Hon ble Sir Henry Craik Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council dated February 8 1936 Home Department F No 5/3/1936 (Political) pp 7 10

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rational attitude Besides using his own influence, he sent a telegram to Mr M A Jinnah, acquainting him with the real state of affairs and requesting him to come to Lahore to give the Muslims the right lead in connection with the Shahidganj agitation Some mischief-mongers had misinformed Jinnah about Lahore affairs Therefore Mr M L Gauba left for Delhi to interview Jinnah and to apprise him of the actual facts The mosque was intended for prayers Now it had become a centre of great activities round the clock The meeting also decided that after the Shahidganj agitation was over they would start another campaign demanding that all shrines, mosques and estates attached to any institution should be placed under a managing committee consisting of Mashriqi, M L Gauba, Yusub Husayn, Maula Bakhsh and other suitable young men⁹

Gauba's contact with Jinnah at Delhi and his intended visit to Lahore embarrassed the Punjab Government which wrote to Sir Henry Craik to call on Jinnah on his own and explain the correct position to him As advised, Sir Craik, explained to him the fact and figure and wrote to the Governor of the Punjab that 'he will insist as an essential condition on the complete abandonment of violent or unconstitutional methods and on the maintenance of law and order'¹⁰

In view of the serious condition Jinnah proceeded to Lahore, started negotiations and demanded that the Government must set free all prisoners arrested for Shahidganj agitation to soften the Muslim attitude for a reasonable settlement The Government accepted the demand and the Muslims, on Jinnah's initiative, abandoned the civil disobedience movement and the province, again attained normalcy¹¹ A rousing reception was given to Jinnah in

⁹ Letter of the Government of the Punjab dated February 17, 1936 to Sir Henry Craik, Home Department F No 5/3/1936, Pol., pp 18-20 The present author also sought interview with Mr M L Gauba at Delhi who also furnished above details

¹⁰ Confidential letter of Sir Henry Craik to Sir Herbert Emerson, Governor of the Punjab, dated February 19, 1936, Home Department F No 5/3/1936, pp 29-30

¹¹ Maftubul Hasan Saiyid, *Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, p 238

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the Badshahi Mosque where addressing a huge congregation he said "While we are not going to give up our claim for Shahidganj Mosque we are going to make every effort for an honourable understanding with the sister community. We shall seek all remedies by means of constitutional and peaceful methods"¹² A Shahidganj Conciliation Committee consisting of both the communities was appointed and Jinnah having satisfied himself that the peaceful atmosphere had reappeared left for Delhi. In a press statement he said "This is not a dispute between two individuals but between two great communities and it must take some time to ascertain the general wishes of the people"¹³ The same night in a dinner the Governor of the Punjab paid a glowing tribute to the peace efforts of Jinnah and said

I am greatly indebted to the efforts of Mr Jinnah for this improvement and I wish to pay an unqualified tribute to the work he has done and is doing. Mr Jinnah succeeded in his first task namely bringing the Muslim agitation to strictly constitutional and legal lines and thus made it possible for the Government to take action for which they had been awaiting an opportunity. There remained the second part of his task. It is no secret that so far his efforts have not been crowned with success but this does not mean that they have failed. His efforts continue and in several respects they are being carried on in conditions far more favourable than when they began.¹⁴

Allama Mashriqi against whom a warrant of arrest had been issued could not be arrested in the Badshahi Mosque partly because of the presence of a multitude and partly because of the Government's deliberate intention of refraining from it to save the situation. After Jinnah's intervention the warrant of arrest against him was withdrawn and Mashriqi became the most sought after man in the Punjab. His prestige rose high because he accomplished what the Ahrars had failed to achieve.

G. Allama Q. A. Jinnah *The Story of a Nation* pp. 253-54
¹² Ibid.

¹³ Matlubul Hasan Saifi *op cit* p. 240

CHAPTER IV

MADH-I-SAHABAH CONTROVERSY

THE YEAR 1939 saw a dispute between the two most powerful sections of the Musalmans—Shi'ah and Sunni—over what the Sunnis called their right to recite Madh-i-Sahabah in United Provinces, particularly in Lucknow. The controversy started as far back as 1906¹

The Shi'ahs held that the three Khalifas, who immediately succeeded the Prophet were usurpers, committed acts of tyranny and oppression against Hazrat Ali (the last Khalifa) and his wife, Hazrat Fatimah, (the daughter of the Prophet) and their policy led to the tragic massacre of Hazrat Husayn (son of Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Fatimah) at Karbala. This martyrdom is mourned by Shi'ahs during the days of Muharram. The Sunnis, on the contrary, believe that the first three Khalifas were the rightful successors and held them in great esteem for their matchless qualities²

Madh and Sahabah are Persian words meaning praise of the companions of the Prophet. About 1906 disputes between the

¹ Note by Director, Information Bureau on Lucknow Shi'ah-Sunni controversy about Madh i-Sahabah. See Records of the Home Department File No 5/6/39, Pol

Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman in his *Pathway to Pakistan* (p 149), mentions 1903 as the year for the starting of differences between the two. He says that the differences assumed acute shape in 1903 when the Sunnis were obliged to have a separate Karbala

² Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, *op cit* p 149

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Shiahs and Sunnis arose in Lucknow on the Muharram day when the Sunnis recited verses in praise of the first four Khalifas. According to Sunnis the first four Khalifas were the rightful successors of the Prophet and to chant verses in their praise and appreciation was a duty of every Musalman. They took out processions on the day of Chehlum with long bannered poles known as Charyari Jhanda. The Shiahs retaliated. In response to Madhi Sahabah they started reciting Tabbarrah that is curse on the first three Khalifas maligning them for their succession and praising Firoz an assassin of one of the three Khalifas. This was not a healthy sign. The processions of Shiahs and Sunnis sang the praises of their respective heroes and collided. The years 1906 to 1908 were a troublous period in the history of the United Provinces when serious rioting took place between these two sections causing death of a number of them.³ The deplorable situation needed an inquiry commission to find out a solution. A committee was appointed in October 1908 under the Chairmanship of Mr Justice Piggott a High Court Judge to examine occurrences of the previous years and whether there had been any alteration in the privileges of each sect to ascertain whether any custom which is not an innovation is nevertheless calculated to annoy any other sect and to give its recommendation for future guidance.⁴

The committee studied the situation examined witnesses and made a report on December 7 1908. Its recommendation said that on the days of Ashrah Chehlum and 21st Ramazan no poems or verses or other forms of words asserting the praises or purporting to be in honour of the Khalifas Abu Bakr Umar and Usman may be sung chanted or recited by any person along the route of any Taziya or other Muhammadan procession or in the hearing of any such procession or by any assembly or in any public place.⁵

Home Department F No 5/6/39 Pol
Confidential DO No 938 CX Nalmital September 7 1936 to
Mr M G Hallett Csl CIE ICS Secretary to Government of India Home
Department Simla (Home Department F No 15/5/36 Political)

⁴ *Ibid*

MADH-I-SAHABAH CONTROVERSY

The Government accepted the recommendation for the prohibition of Madh-i-Sahabah on the above mentioned days but was reluctant to issue a pronouncement that the public recitation of Madh-i-Sahabah at all times and under any circumstances was a provocation and an offence against public safety. Truly speaking, the authorities believed that there should be no general prohibition of utterances of verses in praise of their Khalifas, and therefore they refrained from giving any pronouncement except for Ashraah, Chehlum and 21st Ramazan. Since the recitation of Madh-i-Sahabah was prohibited for three days in a year, the Shuahs thought that they had secured their object.⁶

Till 1935 there was a lull in the Shiah-Sunni dispute on the Madh-i-Sahabah and Tabbarrah issues. But in 1935 the controversy again came to the fore. The Sunnis considered the restriction on the recitation of Madh-i-Sahabah an infringement of their right. On the day of Chehlum in 1935 the Sunnis defied the order and recited Madh-i-Sahabah. An All-India Madh-i-Sahabah Day was celebrated and a complete hartal observed.⁷ The year 1936 witnessed a stronger Sunni movement. But there was a split among the Sunnis themselves on the question of the means to be followed for the attainment of the sanction for Madh-i-Sahabah. A section of the Sunnis formed the so-called constitutional party whose aim was to present before the Government their demands in regard to the recitation of Madh-i-Sahabah in public. The other section consisted of the Ahrars who did not believe in constitutional methods and wanted to take out processions with public recital of Madh-i-Sahabah on every Friday from the Tila Mosque. This led to riotings and disturbances.⁸ The need for a commission was again felt by the Government. Therefore it appointed a committee known as the Allsop Committee which, while accepting the right of the Sunnis to recite the Madh-i-Sahabah, did not allow them recitation in Lucknow in view of the grave situation prevailing there.

⁶ Home Department, F No 5/5/36, Pol

⁷ Home Department, F No 5/6/39, Pol

⁸ Home Department, F No 15/5/36, Pol

KHAI SAR MOVEMENT IN INDIA

In 1938 the report of the Allisop Committee was published which did not satisfy the Sunnis. They resorted to a civil disobedience movement. In the beginning of 1939 their movement met with a considerable success. Large numbers of Sunnis from Lucknow were arrested and batches of Sunnis from the adjoining districts and provinces started pouring into Lucknow⁹. In all 378 persons were arrested for publicly reciting the Madh : Sahabah in contravention of the prohibitory order.

A huge meeting was held in Tila Mosque after the Friday prayers. It was attended among others by Maulana Husayn Ahmad Muhammad Sajjad and Amir Shariat Bihar. Maulana Husayn Ahmad in his speech said that no power on earth could detract them from the goal. It was an all India Movement now¹⁰. With the passage of time the restlessness and resentment of the Sunnis was on the increase. The agitation after a short time got beyond control. A Sunni mob entered the Council House disturbed the Ministers and threw away files from the table. The mob was so furious that help of the police was sought. This alarmed the Government. The Governor raised the question at a meeting of the Council of Ministers on March 22 1939 and there was a discussion between the Ministers and the leading Sunnis. The solution they arrived at was that the Sunnis would be given an opportunity to recite the Madh : Sahabah at a public meeting and in a procession every year on the Barahwafat day with the condition that the time place and route would be fixed by the district authorities. An official communique was issued but it administered an overwhelming blow to the Shi'ahs. They did not lag behind and like the Sunnis started a civil disobedience movement. They argued that the reports of the previous two committees (1908 and 1939) had upheld their view point and the permission for the Madh : Sahabah now accorded was contrary to the reports. Large numbers of Shi'ahs of respectable families courted arrest and canvassed that if the Madh : Sahabah was actually recited pardah

The Hindu March 23 1939 Madh : Sahabah Agitation

The Bombay Chronicle March 18 1939

nashin ladies would march on the streets with Tabarraḥ on their lips and would offer themselves for arrest. The Shiah civil disobedience was no less enthusiastic than its Sunni counterpart. The Director of the Information Bureau, while reporting the case on Shiah-Sunni controversy rightly said that 'the sanction of the Madh-i-Sahabah has set up among the Shiāhs conditions of intense emotional hysteria' ¹¹

The Khaksars could not tolerate the friction between the two powerful sections of the Musalmans, and naturally interrupted Allama Mashriqi who was anxious to bring about an honourable settlement announced that he would issue 'very serious orders' to 2000 Khaksars and 800 Janbāzs to take effective measures if the two sections did not come to terms within a month ¹². In a telegram to the Government of the United Provinces, Mashriqi said that he had issued orders to 3000 Khaksars to effect a settlement of the Madh-i-Sahabah question at Lucknow ¹³. Janbāzs were asked to be ready to proceed to Lucknow while the Khaksars held rallies all over the Punjab. Later the decision for the Janbāzs was dropped but the Khaksar volunteers in the Punjab were asked to check the Shiah Jathas of Punjab from proceeding to Lucknow. They tried their best to dissuade the Shiāhs who had assembled at Lahore and Amritsar Railway stations to proceed to Lucknow, but failed ¹⁴.

Unsuccessful to stop the Shiah movement, Mashriqi announced his intention to go to Lucknow and actually reached there on August 23, 1939, and called on the ministers of the UP Government. The Khaksar organ *Al-Islah* also pleaded vehemently in its columns for a compromise ¹⁵. As a result of all this the situation

¹¹ Home Department, F No 5/6/39, Pol. Note by DIB on Lucknow Shiah-Sunni controversy about Madh-i-Sahabah

¹² Notes on the Khaksar Movement (Secret), Home Department, F No 74/1/40, Pol (Section A), p 105 (17)

¹³ The original telegram was thus, 'Orders 3000 Khaksars issuing, forcible settlement Lucknow dispute. Ready cooperation Government provided reasonable conditions acceptable. Shia Sunni offered. Please write intention'. See Philips Talbot, *op cit*, p 127

¹⁴ Home Department, F No 74/1/40, Pol (Section I), p 105 (18)

¹⁵ *Ibid*

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turned in favour of the Khaksar programme. The Shi'ahs suspended the anti Madhī Sahabah agitation until a definite result came out of the negotiation between the parties involved. Mashriqi claimed that he had succeeded in securing the suspension of the Shi'ah agitation and communicated to the Khaksar headquarters in the Punjab to prevent volunteers from coming to Lucknow. But it was too late and by the time the order reached them a number of Khaksars had already entered Lucknow in accordance with the final orders published in an issue of the *Al-Islah* of August 25, 1939.¹⁶ The volunteers came into clash with the people and the authorities in Lucknow violated law and order and disturbed the peace. Apprehending more trouble the authorities took security measures against Mashriqi and his volunteers and arrested them on September 1 under Section 107 Cr. P.C. But Mashriqi secured his release the next day after furnishing an undertaking not to return to Lucknow for a period of one year. He left for Lahore the same day with a number of Khaksars.¹⁷ This episode lowered the prestige of the Khaksars. The Ahrars and other rival groups made fun of Mashriqi's unqualified apology. And there were skirmishes between the Khaksars and Ahrars.¹⁸

Now who were the Ahrars? The Ahrars first appearing at the annual session of the Congress in 1939 at the instance of Maulana Azad were a body of what were called nationalist

* *Ibid*

¹⁶ Home Department F No 74 1/40 Pol (Section I) p 105 (19). The undertaking was written by Mashriqi and presented to the jail officers in the presence of Khan Bahadur Hafiz Ahmad Husayn, a member of the Legislative Council. The undertaking runs as follows:

I hereby give an undertaking that for a year after the date of the withdrawal of the notice under section 107 I will neither enter the United Provinces nor permit or order batches of the Khaksars from any other province to enter the United Provinces. Khaksars of the United Provinces will be instructed not to interfere in the Lucknow Shia-Sunn dispute. I give this letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government for his assurance. Sd Inayatullah

See Philips Talbot *op cit* p 187

Home Department F No 1 0/39 Pol p 14

See Telegram R No 454-CX dated (recd) September 1 1939 from Chief Secretary UP to Government of India and all Provincial Governments

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Muslims Their organisation came to be known as *Majlis-i-Ahrar* with Attaullah Shah Bukhari as its President ¹⁹ To work for the attainment of freedom, cooperation with other communities and to combat communalism were some of its objects ²⁰ The *Majlis* was pro-Congress through and through, and followed its foot-steps in all walks of life As stated in the last chapter when a Sikh-Muslim dispute on the question of the demolition of a mosque in Shahidganj, Lahore, occurred, the Ahrars failed to give any material support to the Shahidganj agitation Mashriqi was not slow to seize this opportunity and made the most of it to put fresh vigour into his agitation Consequently the Khaksar Movement again gained momentum throughout the Punjab This worsened their relations Since the Ahrars were pro-Congress which favoured the Madh-i-Sahabah agitation, the Ahrar sided with it and joined the agitation The Khaksars were not against Madh-i-Sahabah but they did not want a split, they desired to bring about an amicable settlement between the Sunni and Shiahs It was due to this that when Mashriqi secured his conditional release, the Ahrars hooted him to avenge the wrong done to them in 1935 ²¹ Mashriqi denied having offered an apology, and to convince the people of his statement, he again came to Lucknow on September 12 in contravention of the assurances given by him to the UP Government The Government arrested him and put him in jail for one month ²² The news of the arrest was received in Khaksar circles in the Punjab with great resentment, and thousands of Khaksars took the trains from the Punjab to Lucknow to rescue their Allama The commander of the Khaksars in a statement said that in the event of a conflict with the UP Government, about, 25,000 Khaksars would be sent to Lucknow from the Punjab ²³ Jagadhari, in Ambala

¹⁹ Aziz al-Rahman Jami Ludhianvi, *Rais-ul-Ahrar Muallana Habib al-Rahman Ludhianvi aur Hindustan ki Jang-i-Azadi*, p 144

²⁰ *The Tribune*, March, 28, 1939

²¹ Home Department, F No 74/1/40 Pol. (Section A) and F No 5/3/1936 Pol

²² *Ibid*

²³ *The Bombay Chronicle*, September 2, 1939

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district was made a base for operations against the UP Government

And indeed within a few days of the arrest of Allama Mashriqi thousands of Khaksars assembled in Lucknow started a civil disobedience campaign and defied the orders under section 144 Cr P C With the entry of the ex soldiers from the Punjab and N WFP who combated the police and caused casualties to both sides the situation deteriorated It became more alarming when prominent members of the UP Muslim League justified the action of the Khaksars and condemned the Congress ministry of the United Provinces for its attempt to crush civil liberties by inhuman methods ⁴ The Khaksar organ *Al Islah* in its issue of October 6 1939 again appealed to the Khaksars all over India to march into UP to secure the release of Mashriqi The appeal was responded to in different quarters with great enthusiasm and the Khaksar influx into UP became a common feature of the day They would not buy railway tickets and when checked assaulted the Railway officials and the police By October 8 3000 Khaksars from the Punjab and N WFP had crossed the provincial boundaries and assembled in Bulandshahr They resisted the police which was coming to arrest them The inevitable result was police firing killing 6 and wounding 14 of them

The police firing on the Khaksars in Bulandshahr caused considerable consternation in the Punjab There was widespread resentment and many papers and organisations expressed their sympathy with the Khaksars The corpses of six Khaksars were motored to the Punjab and tremendous condolence and heartiest tribute was paid to the martyrs all over the province ⁵ They won so much goodwill of the people that many newspapers and organisations previously hostile to the Khaksars expressed their profound attachment to them and condemned the UP Government The Muslim League openly associated with the Khaksars and condemned

⁴ Home Department F No 74/1/40 Pol (Section I) p 105 (20)

⁵ *The Bombay Chronicle* September 26 1939

Home Department F No 74/1/40 Pol (Section I) p 105 (20)

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the Congress ministry of the United Provinces for playing a game of dividing the Shi'ahs and Sunnis on the questions of Madh-i-Sahabah and Tabarraḥ ²⁷ In a telegram of 372 words to the Viceroy Mashriqi explained his ideas as follows

'My imprisonment and that of hundreds of prominent Khaksars by the United Provinces Government and their intention to crush the Khaksar Movement need not detain me further from announcing our attitude towards the war I consider bargaining even with an enemy in trouble mean and unmanly Moslem character forbids it Islam prohibited double dealing England is now engaged in struggle involving life and death and most certainly India's future also Bania mentality at this crisis is unworthy of a great people like the Musalmans and we must help England frankly if we want to make her friendship real and sincere Bitter experience of Congress Ministries for the last three years has taught all ryots to know that the British were the much better rulers Moslems, if they want to escape annihilation, must decide now not to be ruled by majority at all costs We must prove to the British again that we Musalmans are the actual defenders of India and therefore, we, above all, have natural, also inheritary, right to control it BLOOD AND RULE HAVE ALWAYS GONE TOGETHER IN ALL HISTORY

I doubt if the Indian National Congress can supply a single soldier for the defence of India anywhere Any posing, therefore, by a party that cannot deliver goods is ridiculous and preposterous Only Khaksars all over India, who have rendered selfless and practical social service irrespective of caste or creed for past nine years, can claim playing game of blood at this moment Or again the Punjab Premier can give real aid for defence of country I have thought over the problem and have closely examined all real, false and conditional offers I hereby declare that within three months of this announcement I shall be able to place at the disposal of Your Excellency thirty thousand well drilled and best-disciplined Khaksar soldiers after minimum military training for internal military defence of India, ten thousand for Police pur-

²⁷ Home Department, F No 74/1/40, Pol (Section I), p 105 (20)

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poses for maintaining internal peace and another ten thousand of the very best quality for help of Turkey our ally if need be for fight on European soil Government has only to test us in order to prove Khaksar's fidelity to Motherland to the last drop of his blood I request widest publicity of this declaration as I am in prison -³

Negotiations between the Government and the admirers of Mashriqi and his movement were going on and as a result thereof he was released from Lucknow Jail on October 14 1939 He reached Lahore three days later

How far the Congress League tussle played a part in this controversy is also a factor of no small significance The report of the Director of the Information Bureau and the other leading Leaguers held the Congress ministry of the United Provinces responsible for this fracas According to the former the controversy was deliberately encouraged by the Congress in order to split the Muslims Maulana Husayn Ahmad Madani and the Ahrars were the Congress stooges receiving money from the organisation for their deeds and accentuated the trouble while the Sunnis were pushed by one hand the Shi'ahs were received by the other A split was natural and the Muslim political movement on the whole apparently weakened ⁴

Chaudhri Khaliq uz Zaman from this personal experience makes the same observation According to him the Government had permitted the Sunni Madh i Sahabah procession a right that they did not enjoy previously He tried to persuade the Sunni leader Shah Muhammad Usmani to drop this privilege but having secured a right it was difficult to surrender Maulana Zafar ul Mulk another Sunni leader was even prepared to allow the Shi'ahs to take out a procession of Qadh i Sahabah (criticism of Sahabah) and the Congress ministry was willing to give this right

⁴ Protest from Inayatullah Mashriqi from Central Jail Lucknow October 4 1939 Home Department F No 74/6/41 Pol (I), pp 5-6

⁵ Note by the DIB on Lucknow Shi'ah-Sunni controversy about Madh i Sahabah Home Department F No 5/6/39 Pol pp 4-5

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to Shi'ahs. When Jawaharlal Nehru asked Khaliq-uz-Zaman what was his opinion about Qadh-i-Sahabah, he replied that the allowing of Madh-i-Sahabah was a mistake on the part of the ministry and to give the right of Qadh-i-Sahabah to the Shi'ahs would be a blunder. It meant that the Congress wanted a division between the two great sections. Ultimately Maulana Azad intervened and with the help of Khaliq-uz-Zaman, called a meeting of Shi'ah and Sunni Leaders in the Council House (Lucknow). His best efforts were not favourably taken by the Sunni Ulama and they opposed him. 'It did not doubt,' says Khaliq-uz-Zaman, 'that as far as the Maulana was concerned he was really very sincere in his attempt, but a few Muslim Congressmen in the Assembly for party considerations were secretly undermining what Maulana Azad was doing openly. I could see from the trend of their talk at the meeting that they were quite out of tune with the Maulana's attempt. However, some tentative decisions were reached which we were to discuss amongst ourselves. Before the meeting on the next day, as I feared, the whole confidential talk of the meeting had become public property. Maulana Inayatullah of Firangi Mahal informed me that a section of Congress Muslims were playing a farce and were not for a settlement.'³⁰

Dr Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad in *A Note on the Khaksar Movement* has also thrown some light on the incident which goes to prove that the Congress Government of UP were responsible for precipitating split between the Shi'ahs and Sunnis. 'I got so tired,' he wrote, 'that I spoke to Mr R Kidwai (Rafi Ahmad Kidwai), the then acting Premier of UP, that he might write down himself the conditions of settlement we would accept in toto. He did write out the terms but his Congress colleagues refused to ratify them.'³¹

So far as the Shi'ah-Sunni controversy, in which the Congress

³⁰ Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman, *op cit*, pp 212-16

³¹ Home Department, F No 6/5/39, Pol, See also Muhammad Noman, *op cit*, p 378

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ministry have been charged with creating split between the two sections of Muslim is concerned it can be said that whatever the Congress ministry did their intention was not to create a split. Want of administrative experience and pressure of the Congress Sunni Ulama may be some of the reasons. There is conclusive evidence that the permission to recite Madh i Sahabah was given under the pressure of Sunni Ulama. According to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai the agitation had crossed all limits and finding a chance a Sunni mob entered the Council House reproached the ministers strewn their papers and damaged the furniture. The mob was so furious that police had to be called to clear the hall.²¹ The Government thus bowed down to the rioters. It may be possible that some Congressmen would not be willing to bring about a rapprochement between the Shiah and Sunnis but only on this basis to accuse the Congress ministry cannot be justified. While Madh i Sahabah controversy was at its climax Hayatullah a Congressman from Lucknow wrote to Dr Muhammad Ashraf the Congress Secretary that the issue of Madh i Sahabah would obstruct their meetings in one or two places. He was trying to avoid it but also ready to face it. This also goes to prove that Congressmen were not as much interested in the Shiah Sunni dispute as was propagated by the Leaguers.²²

In 1939 Germany declared war on the Allies. The Congress attitude was sympathetic though it refused cooperation. But when the British Government declared war on behalf of India the Congress ministry resigned. The new Government of the United Provinces in view of emergency started negotiations with the Khaksars and reached an agreement on November 4. The agreement provided that all the Khaksars of other provinces would leave the United Provinces and the Government would remove the ban imposed on the Khaksars and would release those imprisoned or under trial. In return the Khaksars agreed to obey all

²¹ Chaudhry Khaliq uz Zaman *op cit* p 71

²² A ICC Papers F No 48/1937

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orders for the maintenance of peace³¹ These conditions were carried out immediately by both the sides

The Khaksar volunteers, when back home, received a rousing ovation and their campaign in the United Provinces was hailed as a great episode, enhancing the prestige of the organisation. The influx of Khaksars in UP started with the Shiah-Sunni dispute which brought them face to face with the Government. Though the Shiah-Sunni relations were still half-bridged, yet the Khaksars emerged from this campaign as champions of the Muslim cause against the alleged pro-Hindu policy of the Congress ministry of the United Provinces.



Gul Hayat Institute

³¹ *The Bombay Chronicle*, October 16, 1939

CHAPTER V

VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS A PROBLEM

IN THE WAKE of the national upsurge the formation of volunteer organisations in the thirties had become fashion of the day. The Red Shirt Movement had suffered a temporary set back and the Khaksars, the Congress, the League and the RSS volunteers had become the most powerful organisations. The highest numbers of volunteers existed in the United Provinces where over 74 000 people were estimated on the roll and fresh entry was on.¹ In United Provinces the number of Hindu and Muslim volunteers belonging to various political parties rose from 32 000 and 22 000 in April 1939 to 35 000 and 30 000 respectively in October 1939. In North West Frontier Province the membership of the Muslim National Guard and the Muslim League volunteers rose to 10 700 from 7 780. In Bombay the strength of the Muslim League volunteers shot up to 2488 from 898 within six months. The figures of other provinces were also not discouraging. The extension of franchise and circulation of political literature resulting in mass awakening led to the mobilization of youth in voluntary associations all the more.²

Besides the Khaksars who were an eye sore to the Government of India and whose military type drilling uniform and spade had attracted Government attention and who while parading in thoroughfares of the Punjab reminded one of the growth of private

¹ Home Department File No 74/1/40 Pol (1)

² *Ibid*

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armies, many other volunteer organisations have cropped up. The most prominent among them were the Mahavir Dal, the Hindustan Seva Dal, the Rashtriya Swayam-Sewak Sangh, the Kishan Sabha, the Trade Union, the Desha Sewikas, the Hindustan Scouts Association Dal, the Arya Yuwak Sangh, the Agni Dal, the Ahrars, the Muslim National Guard, the Urdu Lashkar, the Muslim League Volunteers, the Ittihad-i-Millat, the Congress Volunteers, the Shakti Dal and the Hanuman Prasarak Mandal.³

Each of the above organisation had its distinctive uniform, badge and flag and even landlords in UP and Bihar had recognised the necessity of their different symbols. Of the above, the Khaksars carried Belchas, the Hindustan Scout Association and Arya Yuwak Sangh provided themselves with lathis and knives, the Mahavir Dal put on swords while the other associations carried sticks. The Khaksars, the Agni Dal and the Arya Yuwak Sangh were the only organisations that paraded their volunteers in military fashion. Of them the Khaksars Movement was late in forming a volunteer organisation but it had attracted more attention and earned a name as an efficient body of Muslim volunteers. The Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Kashmir, Sindh and several other states had come under their powerful spell having a strength of 400,000 volunteers approximately. The organisation was so well equipped that its many-sided activities created suspicion and misapprehension.

³ Out of the above volunteer organisations Mahavir Dal claimed to have a strength of 50,000 volunteers and was mostly in the Punjab and its neighbouring provinces. The Hindustan Sewak Dal had its hold on the Maharashtra, UP and CP. It claimed to have 40,000 volunteers on its roll. The RSS was very powerful in UP and CP. They had founded a Central Hindu Military School at Nagpur, of which Dr B. S. Moonje was General Secretary. (See B. S. Moonje Papers available in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library New Delhi—File 18/1934, 41). The Kisan Sabhas were mostly found in Bihar, UP and Bengal. The Trade Unions were active in Bombay, Calcutta, UP etc. The Desha Sevikas were the association of young ladies wearing coloured saris and found rendering services in meetings. The Scouts were students meant for first-aid training. Majlis-i-Ahrars founded in 1929, was a Muslim Nationalist association. They were very small in number. The Congress and the League Organisations were the most powerful among all and had thousands of volunteers on roll.

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so much so that it was said to have been receiving foreign aid to overthrow British Raj ⁴

It was a strange coincidence that like India in England also the British Government had been facing the same state of affairs in the thirties and it adopted a preventive measure by passing the Public Order Act in 1936 to prevent the dissemination of authoritarian doctrines in the country. The act prohibited the wearing of uniforms in connection with the political objects and the maintenance by the private persons of association of military or similar character ⁵. It also prohibited the use and display of offensive weapons and even the use of threatening words at public places ⁶. But in India the application of an order on the model of the British Public Order Act was out of question because of the popular ministries that obstructed the passing of such laws in provinces. Nevertheless the growing volunteer organisation uncontrolled as they were posed a formidable menace to law and order and needed strict vigilance on the part of the Government.

In 1869 the Indian Volunteer Act was passed which provided that the loyal subjects of His Majesty if found fit by the Officer Commanding would be enlisted. Protection of life and property and preservation of peace were considered the primary duties of volunteers. It also provided for the formation of volunteer corps in any part of British India with the sanction of Governor General of India in Council or of the local government ⁷. But the Act remained confined to paper only. The necessity of enrolling volunteers was felt by the Congress as early as 1887 when in its third annual session at Madras it resolved to form a volunteer corps capable of rendering assistance to Great Britain in the event of any serious complications ⁸.

Home Department F No 111, O Pol (I)

⁴ Home Department F No 74 3/40 Pol (I)

Home Department F No 74/3 40 Pol (I)

⁷ The Tribune August 20 1914

⁸ AICC Papers 1887 resolution V. See also resolution 16 of 1914 All India Congress Session Madras in which it again urged upon the Government the necessity of volunteer organisation

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In 1906 Mr S S Thorburn, a retired Punjab Civilian, contributed an article in the reputed journal, *East and West* edited by Mr Malabar. Thorburn's experience of services in the Punjab had convinced him that an Indian militia could be raised from the Punjab for the defence of this country. A carefully considered scheme was drafted but it suffered a setback from the British Government.⁹

In September 1913, when the honourable Mir Asad Ali asked in the Imperial Legislative Council whether Government would consider the advisability of raising a purely volunteer force 'from among the war-like races of India' Major General Birdwood replied that Government did not consider the advisability of such a question.¹⁰ He further added 'Indian Christians and Parsis are enlisted in the force, provided their enrolment is acceptable to the Officer commanding the corps concerned. I may add that individual Indians are also eligible for enrolment under the same considerations'. Thus the eligibility of 'Individual Indians' seemed to be out of question.¹¹

In 1914 the World War I broke out with a dramatic suddenness and the question of India's national defence and safety was considered foremost by the people of India. Maharaja of Burdwan, presiding over a meeting at Calcutta commended the spirit in which the people of Calcutta proposed to raise a volunteer corps. At the Mayo Hall meeting, Allahabad, Pandit M M Malaviya also desired the formation of volunteer corps but regretted that neither in the present nor in the future their demand was to be fulfilled. The Madras Bar was also interested in this movement. In the Punjab a meeting was convened under the presidency of Mr Bevan Petman, Government Advocate, who adopted a resolution on the model of Calcutta and Madras to raise a Volunteer Corps.¹²

Lord Kitchener had been enlisting fresh recruits in England

⁹ *The Tribune*, August 26, 1914

¹⁰ *Ibid*, August 20, 1914

¹¹ *Ibid*, August 26, 1914

¹² *Ibid*, August 20, 1914

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and training them for service. But India was ignored¹³

The decision of the Government of India not to accept the numerous offers made for volunteering services administered a severe blow to educated Indians. They could not be silent spectators of what was going on in India. Their formation was considered inevitable. Hence the first meeting of the All India Volunteer Conference was held under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru in the Congress Pandal on the morning of December 27 1920. More than 2000 volunteers attended the meeting. The first resolution regarding the aims and objects of the volunteer organisation said that an organisation be formed with a view to develop the feeling of brotherhood amongst all volunteer corps of India and to bring them under one constitution and system of training so that they may prove more useful for services at all public functions¹⁴. Thereafter the formation of volunteer organisation became common and numerous organisations sprang up in a short time.

Already the Government was afraid of the volunteer movement and as the days rolled on it stuck to its conviction. It issued a notification against volunteers during the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movement and arrests became common. The fear and suspicion of Bolshevism creeping into India also frightened the Government and forced it to consider a special legislation. The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act 1911 was considered insufficient and the need of a special legislation was felt not only to break down existing unlawful associations but to deter young and comparatively guiltless persons from joining these bodies and to discourage the supply of pecuniary assistance¹⁵. The All India Congress Committee presided over by Gandhi at its meeting of January 17 1922 at Bombay requested the Government to withdraw the notification against the volunteers. But it was not heeded¹⁶.

The mounting activities of the Khaksars which resembled Nazi

¹³ *Ibid* August 26 1914

¹⁴ *Ibid* January 16 1921

¹⁵ *The Times* December 27 28 1921 and January 22 1922

¹⁶ *Ibid*

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and Fascist tactics were becoming the main concern of the Government. The Khaksar propaganda in West Asia embarrassed the British Government and it raised great consternation. In a letter to the Viceroy, the Secretary of State for India, expressed his profound anxiety about volunteer organisations and wrote, 'Looking broadly at the situation so far as these volunteer organisations are concerned and casting one's mind back to the days when the Mughal Empire was falling to pieces, one cannot help seeing some parallel between these present day bodies and the roving bands of armed persons such as the Pindaries, whose services were, I should imagine, available to the highest bidder. It certainly looks as if, were we to withdraw our control from India. History in this respect would assuredly repeat itself'²⁷

Many volunteer organisations clarified their position to convince the Government of their sincerity. The Congress in a note said 'This organisation is meant to train our people in public service and make them more efficient and disciplined citizens. As Congressmen all their activities are necessarily based on peaceful action, the service of the community and the promotion of unity in India. They are utterly unlike any organisation which aims at violent action. Every volunteer must always bear in mind and every instruction must emphasize this basic conception of volunteer's duty. All military analyses are, therefore, out of keeping with our organisation. The training should consist of instruction in physical culture and regular constructive work in the service of the community. Every volunteer should be expected to perform some service in his town or village regularly or to do some useful constructive national work'²⁸. But such declaration could have no effect on the Government.

The Government, therefore, required the details of various volunteer organisations. It also desired to inquire about their particular uniform and whether their members underwent any sort

²⁷ Extract from a private letter of the Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, dated March 9, 1940

²⁸ See Jawaharlal Nehru Papers F No 108/1939

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of drill of a quasi military character with or without weapons¹⁹ It was reported that the Khaksars the Agni Dal the Arya Yuwak Singh the Hindustan Seva Dal and the Youth League drilled in military pattern and either kept knives spades swords or Lathis The Government therefore viewed all organisations which adopted a regular uniform and used any kind of weapon as potentially dangerous to public safety and it considered that the formation of a uniform policy for the control of all volunteer organisations was a crying need of time²⁰ The Viceroy opined that some sort of registration should be made compulsory for volunteer organisations to enable the Government to know about their object and strength The registration form should not be of sweeping nature but it should furnish the list of their leaders office bearers and members Failure to give the requisite information would render an association to be treated as unlawful²¹

The Home Department did not concur with the above view of the Viceroy It felt that the registration of volunteer organisations would unnecessarily create trouble for the administration²² It also believed and to a great extent rightly that minor organisations could comply with the Government circular but wide-spread and powerful organisations would hardly give satisfactory return Failure to comply the orders of registration would leave Government no alternative but to enforce compliance or declare the organisation unlawful To the Home Department any kind of restriction on volunteer organisations would invariably produce resistance finally leading to civil disobedience²³ Moreover harmless associations like Boy Scouts or Cadet Corps would also have to come under the same condition and if they connived at the order the Government would be forced to declare them unlaw

See extra t from a note by Home Member dated April 4 1940 Home Department File No 74/3/40 Pol (I) p 1

¹⁹ Ibid p 6

²⁰ Ibid p 9

Extract from a note by Home Member dated April 4 1940 Home Department File No 74/3/40 Pol (I) p 11

²¹ Ibid 12

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ful notwithstanding their genuine sympathy with the organisation. This would involve the Government in an embarrassing position, precipitating a conflict between it and the organisation.²⁴

In view of the above drawbacks in the registration, the Home Department considered it undesirable to rouse popular agitation by introducing a policy of doubtful efficacy.²⁵ But it considered that the formation of some sort of policy to deal with volunteer organisations—private armies as they were called—was a necessity.²⁶

What were the views of Provincial Governments towards volunteer organisations? The Secretary to the Government of India sent out a circular to all the Provincial Governments and Chief Commissioners to consider the question seriously and to ascertain as to what their attitude was with regard to the volunteer movement which existed in almost all provinces and constituted 'a potential source of considerable danger to the peace of India' and as these organisations were 'largely communal' constituted on all India basis what would be uniform policy to control their militant character.²⁷ The Home Department for the interim period suggested that it would be advisable for all Provincial Governments to suppress the 'private armies' endangering public safety and even after this if these bodies were found to be drilling with arms which tended to threaten the public order the Government would issue notifications under Rules 54 and 58 of the Defence of India Rules.²⁸ But if these orders were still to be defied the Home Department suggested that steps would be taken to declare the defiant organisation unlawful under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act and the action against the bodies which existed over more than one province would be taken under the Defence of India Rules with the

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ *Ibid*, 18

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Secret letter S No 5, No 74/3/40, Pol Government of India Home Department, from E Conran Smith, CIE, ICS, Secretary to Government of India dated Simla, April 30, 1940 (p 99) Home Department, 74/3/40, Pol (I)

²⁸ *Ibid*, p 100

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consultations of the Government concerned ²⁹

The Provincial Governments readily responded to it. Different opinions were sent by different provinces to the Central Government. The Government of Bihar welcomed the proposed course of action and appreciated the desirability of a uniform policy throughout the country ³⁰. In the opinion of the Government of Madras 'the effect of such action would not be great if proceedings were taken only against the organisations found drilling with arms. It suggested a complete ban on all the organisations' ³¹. The Government of Assam gave a whole hearted concurrence to the Central Government's circular ³². The Chief Commissioner of Ajmer Mewar informed the Secretary that the method outlined by the Central Government suited the country in the prevailing situation. His opinion was based on a report of the Superintendent of Police who said 'I consider the various volunteers to be not only serious menace to law and order but that they constitute a potential threat to the existence of Government. I would make no differentiation between organisations that drill with offensive weapons and those that do not. I would ban all organisations which claim a military character or profess to impart instructions in military matters or whose members wear a distinctive uniform. The Commissioner citing the above report regretted the isolated action by the Provincial Government and deplored the absence of any well defined and coordinated country wide policy' ³³.

²⁹ Secret letter to all the Provincial Governments from E. Conran Smith, Secretary to the Government of India, Simla dated April 30 1940. Home Department 74/3/40 Pol (I) p 101.

³⁰ See the letter of Mr Y. A. Godbole, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar to Secretary to the Government of India dated May 9 1940. Home Department F No 74/3/40 Pol (I) p 106.

See letter of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary (Home) Government of India dated May 9 1940. Home Department F No 74/3/40 Pol (I) p 110.

Letter of the Chief Secretary to Assam Government to the Secretary Home Department dated May 11 1940. Home Department F No 74/3/40 Pol (I) p 111.

³¹ Chief Commissioner's letter to Secretary Home Department dated May 21 1940. Home Department F No 74/3/40 Pol (I) p 121.

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The Government of the Central Provinces and Berar held entirely different views. It reported that the majority of the volunteer organisations in their provinces were purely of mushroom growth and none of them posed a menace to the harmonious working of the administration.²¹

It further said that Mahatma Gandhi was encouraging the recruitment of volunteers and the provincial Government were of the opinion that the Congress was watching the action of the Government in relation to volunteer organisations and in case a uniform policy was followed, it would launch a civil disobedience movement. Contrary to the opinions of others it held that the Government's policy in relation to volunteer organisations would raise hue and cry and even the most moderate section of public would resent it.²²

The Agent to the Governor-General at Quetta welcomed the formation of a uniform rule regarding axes, spades, lathis, knives which were actually not arms but could be used as weapons during communal disturbances.²³

The Government of the Punjab and the United Provinces treated the subject fairly in details. They made very comprehensive though differing replies. The Punjab Government dittoed the proposal for a uniform policy to be followed. Since it was the home of Khaksars, it believed that the function of any organisation even of a 'semi military' character was a menace to the smooth working of the administration. It also thought that in the Punjab the activities of the Anjuman-i-Khaksaran served as an example to Sikh and Hindu organisations and if such organisations, having even quasi-military attitude, had not been prohibited, they would prove fatal to the peace and tranquility of the province. Thus the Punjab Government supported the original plan put out in the Government

²¹ Chief Commissioner's letter to Secretary (Home Department), dated May 22, 1940. Home Department, F No 74/3/40, Pol (I), p 124.

²² See Chief Commissioner's letter to Secretary (Home Department), dated May 22, 1940. Home Department, File No 74/3/40, Pol (I), p 124.

²³ See Chief Commissioner's letter Secret No 447/S-7-Misc/40, to Secretary, Government of India, p 142.

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of India's letter of April 30 1940²⁷

The Government of the United Provinces expressed their awareness of the volunteer movement going on nominally in their provinces but denied the allegation of the volunteer organisations having involved in communal rioting and refused to admit that the Khaksars though overwhelmingly Muslim had shown leanings towards communal disturbances. The provincial note discussed the Muslim League and the Congress volunteers but indicated its abhorrence against the Youth League which happened to be in reality a tourist organisation working underground and possessing a certain number of fire-arms. It showed its unwillingness to impose restrictions on volunteers either for their drilling or for carrying arms to be used as weapons. It felt that owing to differences in political situations each province should be left free to deal with volunteer problems in accordance with the requirement of the situation. The question of warning to be given to volunteers should also be left to the discretion of the provincial Governments. Thus the substance of their replies was that they have had no real difficulties with volunteer associations. To take action now against any of them would cause a row. It is neither necessary nor desirable to precipitate a conflict.²⁸

The Central Government having received the views of provinces was now in a position to analyse the situation. The views expressed by the provinces in accordance with their respective political conditions indicated considerable difference of opinion which the Home Department could not ignore. At the same time it was evident that the growth of these organisations had reached a stage where a definite policy was required to be formulated. The World War II had begun and in a very short time it became apparent that it would be more devastating than World War I. The Muslim

See Secret and Confidential Letter of the Chief Secretary to Government of Punjab to Secretary Government of India Home Department dated Simla May 20 1940 Home Department F No 74/3/40 Pol (I) p 119

²⁸ See Confidential Letter of the Chief Secretary, Government of U.P. dated Nainital May 9 1940 Home Department File No 74/3/40 Pol (I) pp 107-9

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League and the Congress had declined to support the country-wide Civic Guard Movement inaugurated by the Government, and the decision of the Congress to abandon the creed of non-violence and to enrol more volunteers convinced the Government of the necessity for some practical steps. But as law and order was the responsibility of the provincial Governments, their opinions were not to be ignored.²⁹

Sir Richard Tottenham, Secretary to the Government, Home Department was of the opinion that if the Government of India contemplated to take some action against the volunteer bodies, while wishing to avoid precipitating a conflict, the only course lay open to it was to announce a warning to the mischief mongers and appeal for cooperation to those who wished to have peace. After a thorough study of the issue the Secretary further held that the proposal to take action against those volunteer organisations having arms being used as weapons was not proper. He undoubtedly admitted that the 'open display' of arms was objectionable but what was the guarantee that volunteer organisation having no arms like lathis, spade, axes, swords would not use them in case of emergency. They could be collected and kept in readiness by organisations professing to have no arms. Therefore he pleaded that action should be taken against the whole conception of volunteer associations and no association should be spared. He made the following suggestion to the Government of India roughly as a basis for an announcement:

'Being convinced that solidarity is the only remedy for feelings of insecurity, and recognising the natural desire of large number of the inhabitants of India, irrespective of colour, creed, caste or political party, to combine and do their bit for the safety of the country, the Government have recently started the Civic Guard Movement, in order to provide a legitimate and useful outlet for

²⁹ See Secret DO No 74/3/40, Pol Home Department, Simla, June 18, 1940 to J G Lathwaite, CSI, ICS, Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy from R Tottenham, enclosing a copy of his letter dated April 30, 1940 to Provincial Governments, pp 16, 18

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the feelings

It is with the greatest regret that they have learnt the decision of certain political bodies to boycott the civic guards and the intention of one of them to expand their own volunteer organisations while at the same time abandoning to some extent the creed of non violence to which they have so long been pledged

The Government of India are convinced that the multiplication of volunteer organisations mostly constituted on communal or party lines so far from reducing the feelings of insecurity occasioned by the war will only create a vicious circle and so accentuate those feelings

They have no desire to take action without warning against these volunteer associations which have hitherto been allowed to function without interference They have decided however that the time has come to issue orders under the Defence of India Rules prohibiting drilling of a military nature or of the wearing of unofficial uniform by any associations that is not specially recognised by the provincial Government concerned (or by the Central Government where such organisations are of an All India character) They have no doubt that many of the members of these associations would find a better outlet for their enthusiasm in the civic guards and that the public generally will feel greater confidence in those bodies than in the different and often rival organisations that now exist

If these measures are not found to be sufficient further action may have to be taken to declare such organisations to be unlawful associations ¹

Apart from the above the Defence of India Rules also could be of immense help to the Government Rules 54 58 and 59 of the Defence of India Rules prevented the carrying of articles capable of being used as arms and gave power to the Government to control unlawful drilling and restrict the wearing of unofficial uniforms Now the question that naturally arises is what was it that the

Sir Richard Tottenham's letter dated Jun 25 1940 Hom. Department L No 73/3/40 Vol (I) pp 19 21

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Government wanted to prevent and to divide the activities which it considered dangerous

Drilling, uniform and the arms were the things that were the concern of the Government ⁴¹

Drilling was the main activity of the volunteer organisations. It obviously created a sense of 'private army' to supplant the British Government. Ostensibly these were the Boy Scouts but they functioned under approved control and their only object was physical training in educational institutions. But other volunteer organisations misused drilling and considered it a seedling to private army, and it was thus which the Government wanted to be declared unlawful ⁴²

Connected with drilling was the question of uniform which indicated an organisation whose members were ready to act together for a common end. Even if the members of an organisation did not take up drilling but put on a certain type of uniform, it was also considered to be objectionable. The Congress Volunteers who wore some distinctive uniform but did not drill or carry arms were also considered a menace as it did excite the general public—forcing the masses of their separate entity. Action under Rule 59 was suggested for this ⁴³

Then there were arms which these organisations used during the drill and presented no little danger to the Government. It could be controlled under Rule 54. Carrying of arms by the members of an organisation, resorting to drilling and wearing uniform was considered a 'clearest evidence' of using force and therefore a restriction on it was essential ⁴⁴

After a thorough study of the subject it was considered that drilling was the fountain of all mischief and action should be taken

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 23

⁴² Sir Richard Tottenham's letter dated June 25, 1940, Home Department, File No. 73/3/40, Pol (I), p. 24

⁴³ Sir Richard Tottenham's letter dated June 25, 1940, Home Department, File No. 73/3/40, Pol (I), p. 24

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 25, 26

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against it under Rule 59 and no action under Rules 54 and 58 was considered advisable

The vital question confronting the Home Department was whether action should be taken by the Central Government or should it be left to provincial Government. The attitude of United Provinces and the Punjab has already been stated. While the Government of UP considered it primarily the responsibility of the provincial Government and asked it to be left to their discretion the Punjab thought it otherwise and preferred it to be left to the Centre. This gave rise to an embarrassing position. It would certainly be difficult for a province where volunteer organisations were not creating any problem to restrict drilling or wearing of uniform but at the same time the absence of a common policy would make action more difficult in provinces where it was badly needed. This led to a heated discussion in the Imperial Council. Ultimately the Central Government agreed that the Government of each province would exercise a reasonable discretion in enforcing the orders as circumstances demanded.⁴⁵

The orders issued in connection with the volunteer policy of the Government brought forth Press comments. They pleaded that the Government wanted to ban all associations for the sake of Civic Guard. Sir Richard Tottenham in a press communique dated August 19 1940 clarifying the stand of the Central Government said that not an association as such but only certain activities were banned. Military drilling and wearing of a uniform resembling military or official uniforms were no less than the 'imitations of military methods'. Military methods were designed for a certain object that is the display of disciplined force. Those who copied these methods had the same object in view and therefore only those activities were banned. It further explained that the proposition that private armies were dangerous in principle and that they would do much harm to society if permitted to function on communal lines would warrant Government action under the Defence of India Act.

⁴⁵ Sir Richard Tottenham's letter dated June 25 1940 Home Department File No 73/3/0 Pol (I) p 26

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The declaring of an undesirable association as unlawful was likely to give offence to the people. The Government of India, therefore, instructed provincial Governments that there was no use of filling Jails. It was however thought expedient that leaders or commanders who defied the orders⁴⁶ were to be prosecuted. Thus we see that the volunteer movement presented a problem to the Government and in spite of drastic checks the Khaksars and other volunteer organisations continued their activities unabated.



Gul Hayat Institute

⁴⁶ Home Department, File No 73/3/40, Pol (I), pp 52-54

CHAPTER VI

BAN ON KHAKSARS

THE SHIAH SUNNI controversy (discussed in the foregoing pages) in which the Khaksars meddled in their own way and the consequent emergence of Mashriqi as a champion of Muslim cause had enhanced his prestige and power.¹ Reaching the Punjab he decided to widen the scope of his movement. This could be secured by two ways. Firstly by increasing the circulation of the party organ *Al-Islah* to some 2500 copies and secondly by recruiting about 25 lakh new volunteers within six months. And he applied himself to this task. The first thing he did was to nominate governors for various provinces. He republished his pamphlets *Aksariyat ya Khun* and *Bayt ul Maal* with the addition of some impressive paragraphs. The former being the Presidential Address delivered by him in 1938 at Indore had already won distinction and the revised text attracted public attention all the more. Mashriqi in the revised text said

At this time from Peshawar to Cape Comorin and from Karachi to Rangoon there are in whole of India 2500 centres of work. In our register there are entered more than 2½ lakhs of trained Khaksar soldiers and there is no end of sympathisers. In our treasury named Bayt ul Maal there is immovable and movable property including cash amounting to about Rs. 20 lakhs.

¹ Home Department File No. 74/1/40 (Section I) p. 105 (21). See Notes on the Khaksar Movement p. 105 onwards.
Mashriqi *Aksariyat ya Khun* p. 18.

Not only did the pamphlet furnish information about the organisation, it also threw light on the general policy of the Khaksars. In that very pamphlet to get new recruits from India he inspiringly wrote 'The suzerainty always belongs to the people who can shed blood. We should prove to the English people that we the Musalmans alone have the right of being guardians of Hindustan. The reins of the Government of Hindustan should be in our hands alone. All the histories of the world show that governance and shedding of blood have gone together. No nation can claim to govern Hindustan except Musalmans'.³

Like *Aksariyat ya Khun*, *Bayt-ul-Maal* also makes a seditious reading. It says, 'The next stage of the movement, which I want to attain, is that in every circle, in every district and in every tehsil there should be military establishment of Khaksars. The Quran gives distinct orders that the Musalmans, to oppose their enemies should have as far as possible material for power especially cantonments of horses so that they may strike terror into the hearts of their enemies and the enemies of God. In short I want that in every district, there should be 50 young horses at least and 50 tents and along with the horses and tents there should be carts and mules for carrying luggage, saddle, ropes, pegs, sword, daggers, gunpowder, army musical bands. In that way only can Islam force conquer. In this way alone can we muster thousands and lakhs of soldiers in one camp. The time when we can command soldiers to lay down their life and property is yet distant'.⁴

The passages quoted above reveal a drastic change in Mashriqi's thinking and tone compared to what it was nine years ago. The passages, without any iota of doubt themselves speak of the intention of the Khaksar leader which was to supplant the British Government in India by use of force. Truly speaking, this form of the movement was not novel. Mashriqi, from the very inception of the movement, had military motives in view and trained the

³ *Ibid*, p 11'

⁴ Mashriqi, *Bayt-ul-Maal*, pp 5, 7, 8

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Khaksars to oust the imperialists from India

The Government could not connive at the publication of the pamphlets which had spread sensation in British circle. Government officials apprehended that if the Khaksars were victorious English men women and children throughout India would be massacred. It would be more disastrous than the mutiny as it would be a revolution of Muslims throughout India.⁵ Mahatma Gandhi and Mashriqi were compared and it was said that while the former held out the hope of getting Swaraj within a year and induced thousands of people to go to jail the latter by holding out the hope of driving the English at an earlier date had succeeded in enlisting thousands of Muslims for the Khaksar organisation.⁶

What happened to the Pamphlets as also to the Khaksars remains yet to be unfolded. In view of the alarming situation the pamphlets were proscribed. Security was demanded from the Muhammadan Steam Press which printed the pamphlets and the party paper *Al-Islah*. As it failed to furnish the security *Al-Islah* had to cease publication and it had to go to some other press in Delhi to resume publication. Government servants were prohibited from joining either the Khaksar or other political organisations and under Rules 58 (I) and 54 (I) of the Defence of India Rules drilling of a military nature and carrying of arms were declared strictly prohibited throughout the Punjab.⁷ These orders applied to all organisations alike but the Khaksars took it seriously and resolved to violate them. The infuriated Mashriqi proceeded to Delhi from Lahore to seek an interview with the Viceroy but failed. He therefore in a press statement reiterated that he did not consider that the restriction on drill affected the Khaksars which was purely a socio-religious movement. But the Punjab Government stood by its former announcement. Mashriqi then sent out secret messages to Khaksars both inside and outside the Punjab to send volunteers and Janbazs to Lahore to lay a bed of corpses.

Home Department File No 74/2/40 Pol (I)

Home Department File No 74/2/40 Pol Section (I) p 1

⁵ Home Department File No 74/1/40 Pol Section (I) p 106 (21)

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round Sir Sikandar's 'Charpoy' in the event of clash between the Khaksars and the Government.⁸

The call of the great leader was received by thousands of Khaksar volunteers like a thunderbolt. The agitated Khaksar volunteers started rushing to Lahore. The intelligence staff was after them and Mr J T M Bennett, the Deputy Inspector General of Police (CID) of the Punjab, informed all Superintendents of Police about their anti-government activities. He further informed his administration that the Khaksars were not only ready to offer resistance to their arrest but they would attack the police. He asked them to persuade the 'Khaksars from resistance and to deal with them effectively if they actually do resist'.⁹ But nobody had any control on the situation which was worsening speedily. A plan was hatched that 313 Khaksars should march to the Badshahi Mosque in defiance of Government's orders. The number of 313 had a unique significance. The intention was to arouse religious passion as it reminded the Khaksars of the 313 followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam who accompanied him to his first battle to sacrifice their lives for him.¹⁰

By coincidence the session of the All-India Muslim League was going to be held in Lahore on March 19, 1940. Therefore as a precautionary measure the Police of the adjoining districts was also called there to maintain law and order. The situation was tense and collision seemed imminent. In his *A Note on the Khaksar Movement*, Dr Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad says that when the relation between Mashriqi and Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, had turned from bad to worse, he interviewed both of them and implored them to end the hostility. But because of their personal equation he failed to conciliate. Sir Sikandar told Sir Ziya-ud-Din that his action was merely to avoid Hindu-Muslim conflict, which was brewing in Lahore as it was rumoured that Mr Birla had

⁸ Home Department, File No 74/1/40, Pol (Section I), p 105 (22)

⁹ Confidential letter No 1825-54 CDSB, dated Lahore, March 20, 1940 from DIG of Police to all SPs of the Punjab

¹⁰ Home Department, 74/1/40, Pol (Section I), p 105 (22)

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given Rs 50 000 to non Muslims in the Punjab and had promised a further lakh for organising a counter movement To Mashriqi it was a lame excuse and the conciliation proved abortive Be that as it may the tussle between the Government of the Punjab and the Khaksars was on the brink of explosion ¹¹

According to their programme at about 10 30 a m on March 19 1940 the Khaksars began assembling near the Unchi Mosque in defiance of the order of the Government of the Punjab A Police force was rushed to that place and obstructed the movement A company of Khaksars with sharpened Belchas attacked the police In self defence the police opened fire causing death of 31 and injuring 63 Khaksars ¹² The Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of Police also received serious injuries from spades ¹³ Within no time the news of this incident was flashed throughout the Punjab The military was posted and the Anjuman i Khaksaran was declared as an unlawful association under section 17 of the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Act and certain places used as headquarters of the organisation were notified under section 17 (a) ¹⁴ The Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government instructed all Deputy Commissioners in the Punjab to carefully follow the provisions of Section 17 A of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1909 and to prosecute the Khaksars unless they were satisfied that the Khaksars intended to give up their connection with the movement Any individual found contributing to or assisting the Khaksar operations was to be prosecuted ¹⁵

In another letter the Punjab Government informed the Deputy Commissioners that the District officers were experiencing difficulty

¹ Home Department, File No 111/40 Pol (f) p 23

² Home Department File No 111/40 Pol (f) p 23

Note on the Khaksar Movement in the Punjab Home (Political) File No 5/10/194

³ The Punjab Government's Notification No 1997 HG 40/1382, dated March 19 1940

⁴ Confidential letter No 1858 86 CDSB from Secretary to the Punjab Government to all Deputy Commissioners in the Punjab dated March 20 1940

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in tackling the situation and therefore it was unnecessary to proceed against persons unless they had been guilty of some illegal acts. But the case of Janbazs and other Khaksar leaders was somewhat different and they were to be severely treated even if they had 'ceased to wear the outward emblems of the Khaksar Movement' ¹⁶

According to the instructions a thorough search of the Khaksar offices was made, pre-censorship imposed and curfew promulgated under Section 144 Cr P C. The same day the police raided the Idara-i Aliyah, the Khaksar Headquarters at Ichhra. The Khaksar took it as a last straw on the camel's back. Hundreds of them were found posted on duty, they refused to lay down their Belchas and intended to resist. Tear gas was used by the police to save the situation. Surrounding the office by surprise, the police seized records and crippled the movement in the Punjab. This action was taken to prevent the growth of 'private armies' and also to check military activities on the part of non-official volunteer organisations which posed a danger to the peace and tranquility of the country ¹⁷

Not yet satisfied with the barbarity meted out to the Khaksars in the Punjab, it wanted to persuade all the provincial Governments to declare the Khaksar organisation as an unlawful body. A letter was sent by the Chief Secretary of the Government of the Punjab to the Chief Commissioner of Delhi to this effect, and a conference of the Home Member, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, the Senior Superintendent of Police, Delhi and the Home Secretary was convened. The Chief Secretary required in his letter action to be taken against the Khaksars and proposed the following action:

- (i) the arrest of Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi, the Khaksar head who was in Delhi,
- (ii) the declaration of the Khaksar organisation as an unlawful

¹⁶ Confidential letter No 2096-2124 CDSB of the Chief Secretary to Government of the Punjab to all the Deputy Commissioners of the Punjab dated March 28, 1940

¹⁷ Home, Political (I), File No 28/3/1944

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ful association under Section 17 of the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1908

(iii) the pre-censorship of news and

(iv) the disconnection of the leader's telephone in Delhi¹⁸

The Delhi Conference accepted the recommendation of the Punjab Government declared the Khaksar organisation as unlawful arrested Mashriqi and proscribed the *Al Islah* the party organ published from Delhi. The Khaksars became wild with rage. Hundreds of Janbaz Pakbazs and Khaksars who defied the Government order were put behind the bars and mercilessly treated. Khaksars in particular and other bodies in general had become victims of the ban and according to the official data about 200 private volunteer organisations with a membership of about two lakh were affected¹⁹. Justifying the action of the Punjab and Delhi Government the Viceroy in a telegraphic message to the Secretary of State for India said on March 21 1940

"This (the arrest) was considered necessary in view particularly of orders contained in official organ of Khaksars to effect that quota from other provinces should march on Lahore. He was arrested on the night of 19th in Delhi. Also decided the Chief Commissioner Delhi should follow example of Punjab and by notification under Criminal Law (Amendment) Act declare Khaksars organisation to be unlawful association"²⁰

The Central Government thereafter wrote to the provincial Government to follow suit and specially asked the Chief Secretary, to the Government of UP (March 20 1940) to issue a notification declaring the association as unlawful. Bombay Madras Central

¹ *The Bombay Chronicle* June 7 9 1941. The number of persons detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rule in centrally administered areas as disclosed by E. Conran Smith in reply to P. N. Sapru was 238. The number of those detained as Security prisoners without trial was 192 as stated by E. Conran Smith in reply to Mr. V. V. Kalikar. This included the Congressites the Khaksars and others. See *The Council of State Debates* Vol I & Vol II 1941 pp 170 71 245 respectively.

The Council of State Debates Vol II 1940 p 84

² Home Department File No 74/1/40 Section (II) p 8

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Provinces, Sind, Punjab, Bengal consented²¹ but the Government of United Provinces projected a different viewpoint saying that the volunteers had been law-abiding and that there was no attempt on their part to send Khaksars from United Provinces to defy the ban in the Punjab. Moreover they were very close to the Muslim League and Jinnah's appeal for peace had produced considerable effect²². The Government of N-WFP also felt the same way and considered it inadvisable to declare the Khaksar association unlawful²³.

No one can doubt the wisdom of the action of the Governments of United Provinces and North-West Frontier Province in leaving the Khaksars organisation unrestricted. When Mr K. Santhanam asked Sir Reginald Maxwell in the Legislative Assembly about the nature of the Khaksar drill and activities, he replied that it was not really of a military kind. 'They go through some form of drill but I should not describe it as military,' he said. This statement proves that the steps taken by the Punjab Government against the Khaksars was more high-handed than they actually deserved²⁴.

The declaration of the Khaksar organisation as unlawful became a subject of heated discussion in the Legislative Assembly. Dr Sir Ziya-ud-Din a protagonist of the Khaksars, asked Mr Maxwell, whether he knew of the offer of fifty thousand Khaksars to fight on the Allies' side in the war? How then could their activities be regarded as prejudicial to the efficient prosecution of the war and public order? He further inquired whether in view of full cooperation which Allama Mashriqi wanted to give to the Govern-

²¹ *The Bombay Chronicle*, January 6, 1941

²² See Telegram R No 147-CX, dated March 21, 1940 from Chief Secretary to Government of UP, Lucknow to Secretary, Home Department. Also see Chief Secretary UP's letter to Secretary, Home Department, dated June 17, 1940 Home Department, File No 74/1/40, Pol (Section II), p 10

²³ See Telegram R No 31-BI, dated March 21, 1940, Peshawar, to Secretary, Home Department. Home Department, File No 74/1/40, Pol Section II, p 11

²⁴ See *The Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol IV, 1939, p 3503

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ment did the Government intend to release him ? In reply Sir Reginald Maxwell spoke in detail on what he regarded as Mashriqi's anti Government activities quoted passages from the *Al Islah* to augment his argument and asserted that he was arrested with a view to preventing him from acting in a manner prejudicial to efficient prosecution of the war. He denied the offer of 50 000 Khaksars made to the Government by Mashriqi and refused to say anything about his release. Thereupon Sir Ziya ud Din reminded Maxwell about the telegram of Mashriqi offering 50 000 Khaksar volunteers for the war sent to the Viceroy which was detained by the Provincial Government and his own letter enclosing a copy of the telegram sent to the Viceroy. He regretted that such important communications were detained which could have far reaching effect on their relations. Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan and other Muslim Councillors also took up the matter stubbornly.⁷³

On the other hand Mr V V Kalikar in the Council of States raised the question about the ban on volunteer organisations. His resolution for lifting the ban was mainly in relation to the Hindu voluntary organisations which had come under ban in the wake of Khaksar activities. He expressed his concern for Shri Hanuman Vyayam Prasara Mandal and Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh which provided only physical training to its members and were not wedded to any political body. Sir A P Patro replying to Mr Kalikar said that the object of all the volunteer organisations was no other than to form a national army. He contended that the intention of all the organisations was military drilling otherwise Dhoti and Kurta were enough for social service.

The incident of March 19 and the inhuman treatment of the Punjab Government in quelling the Khaksars had won them myriad sympathisers who looked down upon the action of the Punjab Government. Agitation favouring the Khaksars were inevitable.⁷⁴ United Provinces Dera Ismail Khan and Ahmadabad

The Legislative Assembly Debates Vol II & IV 1940 pp 208, 1671

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Home Department Pol (I) File No 26/2/1942 Political

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became the centres of agitation and demanded immediate release of Mashriq.²⁷ But the Government would not yield²⁸. Instead it proceeded with serious steps. Strict vigilance was kept on the press. The Information Bureau informed the Home Department that the *Tulu-i-Islam*, a Urdu monthly magazine, released from Delhi, published pro-Khaksar articles and editorials. It also reported that a certain Chaudhry Ghulam Ahmad, B A, of the Home Department contributed articles to it under the *nom de plume* of Parwez. These articles were of non-political and religious nature, but they were objected to on the ground of Ahmad being a member of the Home Department.²⁹

The annual session of the All-India Muslim League, as stated above, had been called for March 22, 1940. The March 19 incident had led people to believe that the session had been cancelled. The opponents of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan had blackened his political career. Mr M A Jinnah was oblivious of the tyranny being committed on Muslims in the Punjab and it was insisted that Jinnah should take the matter into his own hands. But Jinnah, a man of firm determination as he was, did neither think of postponing the Lahore session nor was he willing

²⁷ The Muslim Association of Dera Ismail Khan passed the following resolution

‘This representative meeting of the Mussalmans of Dera Ismail Khan, vehemently demands from the Government of India the immediate release of their beloved great leader Hazratullama Inayatullah Khan Mashriq; and in very strong words demands from the Government of the Punjab that it should forthwith remove the charge of violence from the Khaksars so that in the present regime of war the atmosphere may become pacified.’ Home Department, Political, File No 74/8/1940, Pol (I)

²⁸ Home Department (Political), (I), File No 28/2/1942

²⁹ The Home Department considered the case and wrote ‘Rule 19 of the Government Servants Conduct Rule, 1926 provides that a Government servant may contribute anonymously to the Press, but must confine himself within the limits of temperate and reasonable discussion, and that, if his connection with the press is contrary to the public interest, Government may withdraw his liberty to contribute. In this case as the articles are of a religious and non-political nature and are contributed anonymously the conduct of the clerk does not seem objectionable.’ See Home Department, File, No 33/20/41 Pol (I)

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to overlook the Khaksar affair. As scheduled the session started on March 22 and Jinnah took up the Khaksar tragedy. By passing a resolution Jinnah won back the outgoing Muslims. The resolution placed on record the League's deep sense of sorrow at the tragic incident of March 19, expressed sympathy for the aggrieved, demanded an impartial committee of inquiry and appealed to the Government to rescind their orders declaring the Khaksars to be an unlawful association at an early date.³⁹ Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang, a Khaksar leader of Hyderabad, started negotiations with the Government with a view to bring about the withdrawal of restrictions on the Khaksars and the order declaring them as a lawful association. But nothing came out of his efforts. Sir Sikandar Hayat in an Assembly speech made it clear that the Government would withdraw the orders only when it was satisfied that the Khaksars would not attempt to defy law and order. Towards the end of 1940 the Anjuman-i-Khaksaran appeared to be out of existence, as most of its officials were arrested or shadowed and no sign of its revival was visible.

After the arrest of Mashriqi who was put in the Vellore Jail (Madras), the responsibility of continuing the movement fell on the shoulders of his two lieutenants. These were Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi of Peshawar and Dr. Muhammad Ismail Nami of Lahore. Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi was a shrewd politician and from 1922 to 1939 had been to jail many times. On the occasion of the Prince of Wales' visit to Peshawar he raised an agitation and was sent to jail. He then joined the *Sarhad* of Peshawar as a sub-editor. In 1930 he formed the Muslim Naujawan-i-Sarhad. When the Khaksar movement was in the making he acted as its Salar-i-Jang and by sheer dint of hard labour he became the lieutenant of Mashriqi. In 1940 he toured the districts of Ferozpur, Amritsar, Jullunder, Ludhiana and Ambala to reinforce the Khaksars in the Punjab. He attended camera meetings of Khaksars at Aligarh.

M. H. Sayyid *op cit* pp. 327-8. Muhammad Raza Khan *What Price Freedom* (Madras 1969) p. 60. Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan *The Communist Triangle* (Allahabad 1942) p. 42.

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and Meerut which decided that negotiations for a settlement with the Government should continue, and in the case of failure, the order of Mashriqi requiring thirty thousand Khaksars and thirteen hundred Janbazzs to reach Lahore should be given effect to. Rumours also were circulating in many places that he had set up the Khaksar headquarters at Meerut and was directing the Khaksar activities from there. In the official circles he was considered as a clever and dangerous agitator and a keen Khilafatist ³¹

His other lieutenant, Mr Muhammad Ismail Nami, joined the movement in 1937 and by 1939 was considered to be one of the most powerful leaders of the organisation.

In February 1940, when Mashriqi visited Delhi on the proscription of his pamphlet *Aksariyat ya Khim*, he took Dr Nami with him and after his arrest Mashriqi reportedly proclaimed him as Amir, and he took up the administrative work of the movement. He published statements in the *Baghi*, the *Ihsan* and *Adakar*, demanding removal of the ban and release of Mashriqi. He further insisted that no one save Mashriqi was authorized to negotiate with the Government, and failing these demands he would move to Lahore with 30,000 Khaksars and 13,000 Janbazzs to translate his dream into action. The activities of both the lieutenants were closely watched and the Punjab Government wrote to the Home Department that it was of the utmost importance that they should be placed under restraint, being the most active organisers of the Khaksar movement, in the capacity as members of the Idara-i-Aliya appointed by Inayatullah Khan before his arrest ³². The Home Department, therefore, issued order for their immediate arrest which was done. The former was arrested, while the warrant against the latter continued chasing him from one place to another for a long time.

³¹ Home Department, File No 74/4/A/40, Pol (I)

³² See letter of the Chief Secretary to Government of Punjab to the Secretary, Government of India, Home Department, No C-777, SDSB, dated Simla, E May 24, 1940

CHAPTER VII

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SINCE THE DECLARATION of the Khaksars as an unlawful association and detention of Mashriq in the Vellore jail Madras the demand for the restoration of both was steadily growing Sir Richard Tottenham the Additional Secretary to the Government of India Home Department in his letter dated March 7 1941 to the J D Penny Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab commenting on the Khaksar organisation remarked that the aimless existence of the Khaksar organisation presented a problem which containing as it did elements of danger The Punjab Government totally shared this view and in reply to the Additional Secretary wrote that the Khaksars were gradually becoming a more disturbing element who presently had concentrated all their energies on securing the release of Mashriq The Punjab Government advised Sir Richard to resist the movement to the last because if he and other Khaksar leaders were released the movement would again grow Not knowing the future intentions of the organisers of the movement he was at any rate satisfied that if law and order continued to be enforced the movement would die of inertia¹

The above assessment of the Khaksar activities after the arrest of Mashriq was not unfounded As a matter of fact it did not

¹ Secret letter No CSSB from Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government to Additional Secretary Government of India Home Department dated Lahore March 23 1941 Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) Pt II pp 98-100

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wane and new developments in the Punjab made soon themselves felt. The Khaksars distributed printed Urdu leaflets emphasising the policy of the party as being cooperative to the Government but pointing out that unless the Khaksar leader was soon released, they might court arrest and continue the agitation.² 'Allama Mashriqi day' was observed on May 2, 1941 in Patna by the display of emblems and flags on houses and shops.³ An influx of Khaksars into the Punjab from other provinces continued and though their number was meagre, the reinforcement from outside to continue the agitation might have the effect of resuscitating the 2000 old Punjab Khaksars who had dissociated themselves from the movement.⁴ The influx of Khaksars from the N-WFP indicated a number of 172, from United Provinces 125, from Bihar 105, from Sind 27 and from Bengal 12, and they had started creating trouble in Rawalpindi, Multan, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar and were extending to others districts.⁵ A report said that besides Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi and Dr Muhammad Ismail Nami, two new influential men—Ghulam Mustafa Bhurguri of Sindh and Miyan Ahmad Shah, Bar-at-Law, of N-WFP had also joined the Idara-i-Ahyah, the Khaksar High Command. This had further alerted the Government.⁶ The mounting resistance of the Khaksars and the counter action of the Government was in no way to be beneficial to either of the parties. Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad, the Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, who was the well-wisher of both of them, realising the gravity of the situation, wrote to Tottenham—'From what I have been able to see, the release of the Allama or even a gesture which may ultimately lead to his release will create very good impression

² Home Department, File No 18/1/1941, Pol. Fortnightly Reports on Political Situation in India, January 1941

³ Home Department, File No 18/5/1941, Pol. Fortnightly Report on Political situation in India for the month of May 1941

⁴ Secret letter of HD Crank dated May 23, 1940 from Simla to Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member, Governor-General's Executive Council, Home Department, File No 74/1/A/40, Pol (I), pp 1-3.

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*

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among all the persons interested in the Khaksar Movement ⁷ In this connection the considered view of the Punjab Government was that they would not succeed in getting the rising agitation under control unless the neighbouring provinces took stringent action to help the Punjab Government ⁸ The Governments of Bombay Madras Bengal Central Provinces Sind and the Punjab had declared the Association as unlawful after the incident of March 19 and the Punjab Government insisted that NWFP UP and Bihar should also make a similar declaration to ease their difficulties But if they did not agree the Punjab Government suggested that they could help by prohibiting Khaksars under the Defence of India Rules from proceeding to the Punjab The Khaksar situation in Lahore and Rawalpindi was critical and their influx from NWFP posed a great danger to the Government of the Punjab ⁹ Some Khaksar batches had planned to take direct action Ahmad Shah Dr Ismail Nami and their fellow Khaksars did not agree with this attitude The latter had sent a telegram from Calcutta to Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah in response to his appeal to the Khaksar leaders. The telegram said Regarding your recent statement I the present Head of the Khaksar Movement delegate authority to you for honourable peace with the Punjab Ministry including removal of the ban of February 28 release of Allama Mashriqi and others compensation to the survivors of those killed refund of fine and return of property confiscated by the Government ¹⁰ Mr Jinnah accepted the invitation and Dr Nami to facilitate his effort for peace ordered suspension of the movement temporarily ¹¹ But the

⁷ Sir Ziya ud Din to Tottenham dated Aligarh May 22 1941 Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) Pt 1

Secret letter of H D Craik dated May 23 1940 from Simla to Sir Reginald Maxwell Home Member Governor General's Executive Council. Home Department File No 74/1/40 Pol (I) Pt 1

⁸ See personal telegram dated May 31 1940 from the Governor of the Punjab to the Governor of NWFP Home Department File No 74/A 1/40 Pol (I) p 14

⁹ Home Department File No 74/A 1/40 Pol (II) p 54

¹¹ *The Eastern Time* Lahore July 12 1940

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Government of the Punjab was not willing to withdraw the ban. The Central Intelligence Bureau was of the opinion that the withdrawal of ban from the Khaksars would be asking for trouble at a time when other political parties had turned to mass movement.

The Communist Party was also put under ban but they were permitted not to carry on their normal party programme and ideology but to ventilate through public propaganda their hatred of Fascism and to encourage a martial spirit in the people to join war. The Khaksars were not considered fit to carry on such a programme because they wanted to keep up their separate entity. They wished to act as a body to advance the prestige and influence of their organisation and this was an eye-sore to the Government. The war situation in Europe and the Far East had forced the Government to think in terms of war efforts. Since the Khaksars were considered an obstacle in the war, the Government was not willing to do away with the ban, but since the Communists expressed their hatred of Fascism which benefitted the Government in their war efforts, restrictions imposed on them were relaxed.¹²

Now the only alternative open to the Khaksars was to shift their headquarters from Lahore to Aligarh which they immediately did and resumed the publication of *Al-Islah*. Between March 12 and 18, 1941 three meetings of the leading Khaksars, attended by Miyan Ahmad Shah, Dr Muhammad Ismail Nami, Moulavi Ahlullah Khan, Dr Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad and Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung and others, were held. Relations between the Khaksars and the Government were reviewed and it was decided that a deputation should wait on the Government to clear up misunderstanding and to assure the Government of the basic loyalty of the organisation. Miyan Ahmad Shah was appointed the 'Qaid' (leader) of the movement and it was suggested that the Qaid and Sir Ziya-ud-Din should discuss the question with Jinnah.¹³

In November 1941 a section of leftist Khaksars met in Delhi.

¹² Home Department, File No 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt 1 (Intelligence Bureau HD) p 149

¹³ Home Department, File No 74/1/41, Pol (I), p 56

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to discuss how to secure the release of Allama Mashriqi. The counsellings of Miyan Ahmad Shah for patience were set aside. The meeting decided *inter alia* that two Khaksars should offer themselves for arrest daily and on reaching the jail they would start fasting.¹⁴ Miyan Ahmad Shah the rightist did not participate but with all the power at his command tried to persuade the Khaksars to abandon their activities. He failed.

As decided unanimously the Khaksars offered themselves voluntarily for arrest and Fatehpuri Mosque became the centre of fasting for them until the Khaksar leader was released. Slogans like Allama Mashriqi Zindabad Allama Mashriqi Azad ho Khaksars Zindabad and Hukumat i Bartanba barbad ho were echoed.¹⁵ In Sindh a new movement in support of the Khaksars was inaugurated to organise the Muslims who took a pledge to wear a black badge on the right arm as a mark of resentment against Mashriqi's detention. They declared themselves as Fida'in i Islam (Devotees of Islam) and called Inayatullah Khan Allama Mashriqi as Amir Shariat (leader of the Community).¹⁶ Secret and open correspondence between the Khaksars was intercepted and code letters were never delivered to them.¹⁷ It is interesting to quote from one of the letters written by a Khaksar to a Salar in a code language.

I have received your letter. All the relatives of India are willing that the marriage (meaning agitation) should be performed very early. The condition of the father is critical. The brisk preparations for the marriage are in progress. The date has not yet been fixed. The time the date will not be fixed till complete and adequate arrangements have been made. All the

¹⁴ Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) Secret report dated November 26 1941 p 154

¹⁵ Secret report dated Delhi November 26 1941 Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) p 154

The Khaksar Movement Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) p. 171. In UP the Punjab N WFP Bhopal Hyderabad there were renewed Khaksars activity pp 172-73

Ibid p 182

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guests attending the marriage will assemble at Delhi. It is expected of you that you will grace the occasion with your wife and children. The bride's (Government) relations are not prepared to compromise on any terms. Therefore the marriage will have to be performed under compulsion¹⁸

The policy of the Government of United Provinces was lenient to the Khaksars. It was willing to negotiate with the Khaksar leader Miyan Ahmad Shah as he had been very co-operative in the past. But his activities to the Central Government were prejudicial and it telegraphically served a warrant of arrest on him through the Chief Secretary to the UP Government. But Sir Hallett intervened and wired the Home Department to hold the order of Shah's arrest in abeyance and permit him and others to go to Vellore to interview Mashriqi to bring about a settlement.¹⁹ The warrant of arrest was therefore deferred temporarily and Shah was allowed to negotiate with the Government.²⁰ Miyan Ahmad Shah in his letter dated October 17, 1940, addressing to the Chief Secretary, the Government of UP, wrote that he had been pressed by responsible Khaksar leaders to take charge of the Khaksar movement and before accepting the leadership he would like to discuss the matter with Allama Mashriqi and if he succeeded in persuading him to make a definite promise with regard to the policy of cooperation with the Government during the war, he would request the Central Government to release him and it would work as a check not only on Mashriqi but on the most extreme element amongst the Khaksars. He complained of the unsympathetic attitude of the Central Government in withholding

¹⁸ This letter was addressed to Sayyid Habib Ali Ajmeri from Delhi. Sayyid Habib Ali was the Naib-Hakim-i-Ala of Khaksar organisation in Ajmere. Secret Report, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, File No 74/1/41, Pol (I), pp. 181-82.

¹⁹ See Telegram R No G/66 dated and received August 7 1940 from Governor, United Provinces to Home Department, File No 74/1-A/40, Pol (J), p 117.

²⁰ See Telegram No 2959 dated Simla August 8, 1940 from Home Department to Governor, UP Home Department File No 74/1-A/40, Pol (I), p 118.

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Mashriqi's pension and issuing warrants of arrest under the Defence of India Rules ²¹

This letter provided a hopeful opportunity for a compromise between the Khaksars and the Government and the Governor of UP drew the attention of the Viceroy to it. The Governor said that the offer of cooperation is primary and entirely genuine and that the proposal for the release of the Allama is secondary and mainly important as a condition necessary for successful cooperation ²² But the Viceroy turned down the request. He wrote to M. G. Hallett, Governor of the United Provinces:

I feel no doubt whatever on the material that I have seen that the Khaksar movement is in fact a dangerous organisation of a communal character while even if it may be prepared in its own interests to support government in present circumstances it is in fact the nearest approach in India to a well organised private army. It is only a few months since we publicly recognised the danger of such organisations and any move on our part which may be interpreted as amounting to the acceptance of active help from the Khaksars as an organisation would be most unwise. I am certain. Although the movement is at the moment quiescent—thanks to the action taken against its leaders—it is as I suggest above still potentially violent in character and I do not think it is going too far to suggest that this attempt at negotiation is dictated under a threat more or less veiled of a renewal of violent activities ²³ Regarding the release of Mashriqi and cancellation of the warrants he said that submission of those persons would be unconditional and he did not desire anything but compliance with law ²⁴

The unfavourable attitude of the Centre is reiterated in another

²¹ Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) Pt II p 6

²² See Confidential letter of M. G. Hallett, Governor of UP to Lord Linlithgow, 12.12.40. Home Department File No 71/1/41 Pol (I) Pt II

From Lord Linlithgow to Sir M. G. Hallett dated December 8 1940
Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) Pt II p 9

²³ *Ibid* p 12

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letter written to the Chief Secretary, Government of UP dated March 7, 1941, in which attention of the provincial Government is drawn to the future of the Khaksars. The letter asked the UP Government 'to aim at their extinction'. But the Government of UP did not consider it advisable 'to extinguish the Khaksar movement with a display of ruthlessness that would not be tolerated by public opinion in the case of a body the external professions of which are religious and social service and which has the sympathy of the great body of Muslims'. He had in mind the other side of the picture and imagined how the Khaksar could be rendered more useful or at any rate less harmful to the Government. Reiterating his Government's stand on the Khaksar movement he communicated to the Home Department that the Governor was in favour of the release of Mashriqi, whether conditionally or unconditionally; the acceptance of any offer of help which the Khaksar might make, provided it could not impede in any way the prosecution of war, and the cancellation of warrants against the Khaksars to bring them closer to the Government.²⁵ A thorough reading of the correspondence leads one to conclude that the stand of the UP Government was quite balanced and that is why it did not come in clash with the Khaksars.

Later Miyan Ahmad Shah also wrote to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy expressing his disappointment at the failure to bridge the gulf between the Khaksars and the Government. He said that he had started his effort with the aim to prove to the Government that the Khaksars were perfectly loyal and were not an obstacle in the prosecution of war. In the aforesaid letter, he appealed to the Viceroy to withdraw the ban on the Khaksars, to release Mashriqi and Bashir Ahmad Siddiqi from Vellore and Lahore Jails respec-

²⁵ Secret letter from the Chief Secretary, Government of UP, to Secretary Home Department, dated Lucknow March 19, 1941. The letter of March 7, 1941 sent to the Government of UP from Centre is not traceable. It is from the reply of Chief Secretary, Government of UP's letter of March 7, 1941 that the present author has quoted. Home Department, File No 74/1/41, Pt (I), Pt II, p 94.

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tively and to cancel the warrant against Dr. Nam²⁶

The Home Department again in a harsh tone replied to Miyan Ahmad Shah that even membership of the Khaksar organization is now technically an offence. It follows that those who resort to active support to the movement render themselves all the more liable to the penalties of the law.²⁷

This attitude of the Home Department showed lack of understanding of Indian politics. Apart from the Khaksars there were the Congress and other affiliated bodies whose activities were far more anti-war. But the Government either ignored or took mild steps against them. This differential treatment was undoubtedly intended to crush the Khaksar movement. How could there be a compromise between the Khaksars and the Government when the latter was determined to wipe out the very existence of a movement calculated to render service to the Government and the people of India. To the credit of the Khaksars it may be added that notwithstanding the adverse attitude of the Government they continued to foster friendly relations between the Government and themselves. Even prior to this Mashriqi wrote from the Vellore Jail Madras to the Viceroy a frank letter which could have been appreciated even by a man of mediocre talents and brought the Khaksars to their side but the pre-conceived notion of the Khaksar being a potential danger and also a preferential treatment checked them. Mashriqi wrote: "The situation in Europe has become grave. The Punjab Premier (I submit) is unnecessarily sowing bitterness in the minds of Khaksars and it is high time that we should finish all our animosities and give everything for the defence of India. I am ready to organize all men at my disposal to shed the last drop of blood in accordance with the plan H.E. lays down. Let H.E. make his gesture of removal of ban on us, release all prisoners and

²⁶ Letter of Miyan Ahmad Shah Bar-at Law, Bengali Kothi, Aligarh, dated August 24, 1941. Home Department File No. 4/ 9474. P. 1, 7 pp. 22-23.

Letter from Sir Richard Tottenham, Additional Secretary to Government of India (Home) to Miyan Ahmad Shah, Bar-at Law, dated Simla, September 11, 1941. Home Department File No. 24/1641. Pol. (I) pp. 26-27.

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he will find me ready to do as he bids

'The Punjab Premier has confiscated my personal money and thrown the family of twelve to starvation. He is resolved to starve to death hundreds of Khaksars in the mosque. It is time all this bitterness should cease.'²⁸ But this also fell on deaf ears.

Ultimately, though late, reason prevailed on the Central Government. The Shah was permitted to interview Mashriqi and between June 13 and December 7 no less than 9 persons had been deputed to Mashriqi to ascertain his view and even then neither was he released nor tried by any court but continued detained in Jail. Miyan Ahmad Shah, therefore, in sheer desperation and thinking lest the Khaksars should indulge in some violent activities decided to take the Khaksar affair in his own hand. Informing the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, he wrote 'Even previous attempts were made to bring the Government and the movement closer, but unfortunately the feelings of distrust on the part of the Government were running high and consequently every offer of cooperation was regarded with suspicion. I have had dealings with the UP Government and all agreements arrived at in relation thereto are still being acted upon by the Khaksar organisation without grumbling. I trust my taking up the policy of the Khaksar movement into my own hands will pave the way for closer cooperation and friendship between the Government and the movement. Of course, a friendly gesture on the part of the Government will make the task much easier.'²⁹ Thus the assumption of leadership of the Khaksars by the Shah was timely. After the arrest of Mashriqi the Khaksars were like a rudderless boat threatening here and there and needed a steerman who could pilot their boat on a turbulent ocean. They now got in Miyan Ahmad Shah, a man of acumen and far-sightedness.

²⁸ Mashriqi's letter to Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Home Department, File No 74/6/40, Pol (I), 1940.

²⁹ Letter of Miyan Ahmad Shah to the Private Secretary, Viceroy, dated Aligarh, March 17, 1941. Home Department, File No 74/1/41, Political (I), Pt II, p 75.

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In the Punjab Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was often subjected to critical question about the Khaksars. To the question how it could be possible to revoke the orders declaring the Khaksars as an unlawful body he would reply that it depended on the fulfilment of certain conditions. These conditions were firstly the Khaksars should confine their activities to social work secondly they should give an undertaking not to defy the orders of the Punjab Government and thirdly the Khaksars who had come to the Punjab from outside should go back. And also an unambiguous pronouncement should be made by the leaders that during the war social service too would be done in one's individual capacity and that there would be no drilling and no uniforms badges or symbols would be worn by the Khaksars.³⁰

Meanwhile Khaksar and Muslim League circles were discussing the report of the committee appointed to inquire into the Lahore incident of March 1940 under Sir Douglas Young and Ex Justice Mr Niamutullah. The report held that while the police order against the Khaksar procession and the police firing in reply to Khaksars action was justified the police acted in a revengeful spirit in rounding up Khaksars and firing on them after the main procession had been dispersed.³¹ This threw the Khaksars into a fit of insane fury it was Jinnah's effort which pacified them. The President of the All India Muslim League discussed the matter with the Punjab Government but the latter's stubborn attitude prevented a solution coming out.³²

From Vellore Jail where he was detained Mashriqi informed the Government of his intention to end his life by fasting if the Government did not release him and his 1500 followers languishing in different jails. Failing to get an accommodating response from the Government he started his self imposed penitential fast on 27th March 1941. His slogan in his own words was to

* Home Department File No 74/1 A/40 Political (I) p 57

³¹ Home Department, File No 74/A-1/40 Pol (I) p 57. See also File No 74/4/41 Pol (I) Pt I and II

³² *Ibid*

purify the soul and ultimately release it from the body"³³ The Government of India refused to accept that the fast was in any way distinguishable from a hunger-strike and decided that Mashriqi should be treated as an ordinary hunger strike prisoner

The fast of Mashriqi and the general condition of the Khaksars in Jail caused no small amount of consternation Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad, Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, called on Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan at Hyderabad, Deccan and requested him to reconsider the Mashriqi affairs Sir Sikandar pleaded that it was for the Central Government to release the Khaksar leader Himself he would have no objection to his entry in the Punjab if the Central Government released him The Vice-Chancellor then interviewed Sir Richard Tottenham on November 19, 1941 and assured him of the sincerity and cooperation of the Khaksars during the war The charge of connection with the Nazis and Fascists against Mashriqi was strongly objected to by Sir Ziya-ud-Din who said, on the basis of telegrams and letters pouring into his office, that the Muslims were generally harbouring strong resentment over the Government attitude towards the Khaksars Sir Ziya-ud-Din thus pressed for immediate release of Mashriqi³⁴ Mr M A Kazmi also represented the Khaksar case to the Legislative Assembly and requested the Government to deal with the situation diplomatically³⁵

In a few days, the 'penitential fast' reduced Mashriqi to the point of sinking Miyan Ahmad Shah, Sheer Zaman Khan and Abdul Samad Khan proceeded to Madras to see Mashriqi and explore the possibility of a settlement Mashriqi disclosed that he had already submitted some proposals to the Central Government

³³ See telegraphic information sent from the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras to Secretary, Home Department, dated October 24, 1941—Home Department, File No 74/4/41, Pol, (I), Pt I and II

³⁴ Letter from Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad to Sir Richard Tottenham Additional Secretary, Government of India, Home Department, dated Aligarh, November 21, 1941, Home Department, File No 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt I, Sec B, p 46

³⁵ *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol IV-1941, pp 753-54

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and that never would he stoop before the bureaucratic Government for justice. The proposals were

- 1 The Khaksars would continue to be a peaceful organisation until the conclusion of war
- 2 The Khaksars would not use the Ukhuwwat badge or uniform that contravened Government orders
- 3 Belchas were to be abandoned until further orders
- 4 No parades and similar performances would be held
- 5 All Khaksars titles would be given up temporarily with the exception of Hakim i Ala
- 6 The Hakim i Ala of each province would be responsible to ensure that the Khaksar movement in his province would not become extinct
- 7 Good relations with the Government would be part of their permanent policy³⁶

These proposals were free from any risk to the Government of India's prosecution of the war effort. The Government threw them into the channel of the routine forwarding them and calling for opinions of the provincial Governments. The Punjab Government to which the proposals were sent telegraphically stood by its earlier decision to the effect that the condition precedent to the release of Mashriqi should be a public pronouncement by him winding up the entire Khaksar movement. It further suggested some more conditions if the release of Mashriqi was considered necessary by the Government of India. They were (i) The movement of Mashriqi would be restricted within the area of Madras Presidency and he would not be allowed to organise the Khaksars movement or address any public meeting (ii) Should Mashriqi wish to take part in social service he could do so individually he would not make any statement to the press (iii) It would be in the discretion of the Punjab Government to review all cases in which Khaksars had been convicted³⁷

¹ Copy of A Report on Khaksar Affairs Home Department File No 744/41 Pol (I) Pt I p 81
DO No 8068 CDSB Punjab Civil Secretariate Lahore Dec 30 1941

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These, more or less, were the same proposals that Mashriqi had himself laid before the Government. The suggestions of the Punjab Government appeared to be an excuse to gain time. Miyan Ahmad Shah requested Sir Richard Tottenham to meet the unanimous desire of the entire Muslim community by giving a favourable consideration to Mashriqi's proposals and order his release. 'His condition,' he added, 'as I have seen him is dangerously serious and nothing remains in his body except tissues. He cannot walk even two steps without leaning on something, nor can he talk even five or six sentences at a time. I am afraid he may break down any moment and finish. Moreover, the cell in which he has been put appears from its very size to be one in which convicts condemned to death are usually kept. If he were, therefore, to die, say, within a fortnight, this sort of solitary, dark and unairy cell will certainly shorten his lingering life by a few days.'

From what I have seen of the Allama, I may say that he is nearing his death. Therefore, very urgently I point out that his letter of 19th instant may be immediately favourably considered and his release ordered without any further loss of time.³⁸

The above information of Miyan Ahmad Shah sent to Tottenham was not exaggerated. Allama Mashriqi himself in a letter dated March 10, 1941 to Dr Rafiq Ahmad Khan of Aligarh Muslim University said 'My last days are nearing. It will be alright if I receive a reply and I am released. Otherwise I am going to die. I am not going to change my decision nor do I repent for it. I am happy because I am going to lay down my life for the sake of Government.' Concluding his letter he asked him 'Again gird up your loins. Do not let my face be blackened. Save the honour of Islam. Even now if you give up your loins and many thousands of persons again come forward, then Viceroy is certain, just as it happened at Lucknow. We will all return home.'

Home Department, 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt I, Section B, p 142

³⁸ Letter from Miyan Ahmad Shah to Sir Richard Tottenham, Madras December 21, 1941. Home Department, File No 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt I, Section B, p 132

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happily else my dead body will reach you ³⁹

When the contents of the above letter were released to the Press discontent and excitement among the Khaksars prevailed. In Cawnpore Lucknow Aligarh and Saharanpur the activities of the Khaksars were on the increase. Rumours gained currency that soon the Khaksars would march to the Capital of India wearing uniforms and Belchas and the last pitched battle would be fought. Nishan-i-Ukhawat appeared on every arm and marching of Khaksars in single files reappeared.

A representative meeting of the Musalmans of Dera Ismail Khan in a strongly worded resolution demanded the cancellation of ban and the release of Mashriqi.

The Working Committee of the All India Muslim League in its meeting at Delhi on November 17 1941 also expressed grave concern over Mashriqi's fast and resolved that the prolonged and indefinite incarceration and detention without trial of Allama Mashriqi is causing grave concern not only to the members of the Khaksars organisation but to the Musalmans generally. In view of the changed situation the committee urges upon the Government of India to reconsider their policy and release Allama Mashriqi without delay ⁴⁰

Even the CID Special Branch Lucknow sent a Memorandum to the Chief Secretary Government of UP saying that the Press reports about the fast of Allama Mashriqi were creating agitational moods in UP. A meeting⁴¹ was held at Lucknow on November 14 1941 and proposals were made that Khaksars should march through the city and disobey the Government ban on their organisation. A certain Mubarak Husyan dissuaded them and gave orders instead that a fast should be observed on November 15 and prayers be said in Aminabad Park for the release of Allama

³⁹ Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) Part I

⁴⁰ Home Department File No 74/8/40 Pol (I) Resolution passed under the Presidency Sahibzada Fazal Dad Khan President District Muslim League editor of *Mujahid* in a meeting held on November 15 1940 in Russell Park.

Home Department File No 74/4/41 Pol (I) Pt I and II

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Mashriqi After prayers, a leading Khaksar, Ghulam Qadir, addressed the Khaksars and other Muslims and declaring that Khaksars were not afraid of death ⁴²

Amidst these happenings Sir Ziya-ud-Din again drew the attention of Sir Richard Tottenham to the deteriorating situation In a letter he pointed out 'It is now the 22nd day of the fast On account of the changed conditions there exists no point to detain Allama Mashriqi in jail Even Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan is now willing to allow him to reside in the Punjab without restrictions I request you to communicate the decision of the Government of India to me at an early date ⁴³ Under the above pressure and in view of his deteriorating health, the Government of India released Mashriqi in January 1942 from the Vellore Jail, but restricted his movements to the boundaries of Madras presidency

For this belated decision partly the Central and partly the Provincial Government were to blame Not that the Centre ignored such an important subject totally but its mistake lay in the fact that it relied on provinces absolutely Even prior to the resolutions and letter of the Muslim League and Sir Ziya-ud-Din, the Home Department had sent a circular letter to the Chief Secretaries of all provincial Governments inquiring their views as to the future policy to be adopted in regard to the Khaksars ⁴⁴ Different opinions were received by the Centre The Chief Commissioner of Delhi in his letter dated March 15, 1941 informed the Home Department that 'while it would be difficult if not impossible for Government to extinguish the Khaksar movement altogether in the immediate future, the policy should be to prevent any expansion and to keep extinction in view as the ultimate *desideratum*' The Government of Bihar suggested 'It is a purely sectarian organization of a confessedly militaristic type, and one of its proposed aim is to

⁴² *Ibid*

⁴³ Letter of Sir Ziya-ud-Din to Secretary, Home Department, dated November 23, 1941, Home Department, File No 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt I and II

⁴⁴ See Sir Richard Tottenham's letter No 74/1/41, Pol (I), Home Department, dated March 7, 1941

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work for the seizure of power it seems unnecessary to aim at the total extinction of the movement. But the release of Allama Mashriqi and other leaders without a reason would merely enable the movement to revive with renewed vigour and would be interpreted as either a machiavellian design or a sign of weakness.⁴⁵ The attitude of the Government of the United Provinces this time again was sober and objective. In the past neither did it ban the organisation nor oppose it. It chose the middle path. The Chief Secretary to the Government of UP wrote to the Home Department that it was not possible to extinguish the Khaksar Movement without a display of ruthlessness and that would not be tolerated by public opinion in the case of a body the external professions of which are religious and social service and which had the sympathy of the great body of Muslims.⁴⁶ Thus the differences on the Khaksar question prevented the Central Government from taking any bold step.

Meanwhile the question came up before the Legislative Assembly. Sir Sayyid Raza Ali in a speech in the Assembly said that Allama Mashriqi had been released but his liberty had been curtailed and he was not allowed to go anywhere outside the Madras Presidency. With the support of many members of the House he presented a resolution requesting the Government to lift the ban on Allama Mashriqi and the Khaksars. He put a question to the Home Members: Can the Government reasonably justify the present ban against the Khaksars continuing in spite of the liberal action they have taken with reference to the Communists and those who were convicted for various offences by Court of Law?⁴⁷ Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad said that there was an allegation at one time that the Khaksars were fifth columnists and that they

See letter of the Chief Secretary to Government of Bihar sent to Sir Richard Tottenham dated March 19 1941.

Letter of the Chief Secretary Government of UP to Secretary Home Department dated March 19 1941 No 518 CX (Secret).

⁴⁷ *The Legislative Assembly Debates* Vol III 1947 (Sixteenth Session—September 14 to September 24 1942) pp 414 415 460 463 465 467 479 480 483.

were in touch with the Nazi organisation. If this was established and proved, he had nothing to say, otherwise the ban should be lifted. He presented two criteria to judge the *bona fides* of any organisation. Firstly, was that organisation helping or obstructing war efforts? Secondly, was that organisation likely to create communal trouble and widen differences between Hindus and Muslims? He discussed at length the non-communal approach of the Khaksars, their offer of 50,000 soldiers to assist the Government in the war and concluded that by no stretch of imagination were they anti-war or communal.⁴⁸

Sir Ziya-ud-Din was followed by Mr Husayn A Laliye and Khan Bahadur Shaykh Fazl-i-Haq. Mr Haq supported the ideology of the Khaksars, their simplicity, discipline, self-sacrifice, which were typical of the early periods of Islam. He reminded the House that military drill and uniform were consistent with Islam 'for every Musalman is a soldier in the service of Allah and his community'.⁴⁹

Sayyid Murtaza Khan staunchly pleaded that the movement did not have vicious designs or violent intentions against the Government. He quoted a Persian line

'Don't look down upon Khaksars, there may be
an occasion to find out a real master rider from
that dust'.⁵⁰

During the Assembly debates Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan, Raja T. Manavedan, Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maithra, Mr Jamna Das M. Mehta pleaded the case for the withdrawal of ban from the Khaksar Movement.⁵¹

The Assembly debate brought out the point that the rights which were enjoyed by the Congress volunteers, the Seva Samiti

⁴⁸ *Ibid*

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

⁵⁰ *The Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. III, 1942 (Sixteenth Session, September 14 to September 24, 1942), pp. 414, 415, 460, 465, 467, 479, 480, 483

⁵¹ *Ibid*

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volunteers the Hindu Mahasabha volunteers should not be denied to the Khaksars

But this time the Central Government in view of the serious situation that needed immediate action intended to relax the restriction on Mashriqi and the Khaksars and communicated their decision to the Punjab Government. But the Punjab Government still insisted on its previous stand and reported to the Centre⁷ that the Khaksars were a dangerous organisation which would be far better ended than mended.⁸ It considered the suggestion for the release of Mashriqi as premature because in spite of the ban being imposed the Khaksars were organising under Hilal Ahmad a well knit organisation. It considered the change in the policy of the Central Government as inopportune and stated that the experience of the Punjab Government had shown that not the slightest trust can be reposed in any undertaking given by the Allama who is so unbalanced as to be constitutionally incapable of abiding by any undertaking.⁹ The Punjab Government stood by its opinion like a solid rock and thought that the removal of the ban followed by the return of the Mashriqi to the Punjab would result in the restoration to him of his former position. It also felt and to a great extent rightly that the immediate result of the removal of ban would be a resuscitation of all the parallel communal organisations bent on arming themselves in self-defence. The Punjab Government therefore viewed the Central Government's decision with grave apprehension and expressed its strong opposition to any relaxation of restriction on the movement or its leader.¹⁰ The Central Government was in a dilemma.

But the forces for conciliation were still at work. Sir Ziya ud Din wrote to Tottenham that he had requested Sir Sultan Ahmad to act as mediator to settle the issue whose outcome might be of

⁷ Confidential letter of the Punjab Government Punjab Civil Secretariat No 5210 CDSB Lahore May 27 1942 to Tottenham Home Department File No 74/4/41 Pol (I) Section C p 73

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ *Ibid*

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great use to both the parties Sir Ziya-ud-Din also referred to a telegram Mashriqi had sent from Madras saying that the Government of Madras threatened to rearrest him. He pleaded that the rearrest of Mashriqi would be unwise.⁵⁵ Mashriqi himself informed Sir Sayyid Sultan Ahmad, the mediator, that if the ban continued till the Christmas, he would start for Lahore on his own and if interfered with he would resist it until death.⁵⁶

Now there was no alternative left to the Government. Persuasion and force having already been amply used, the Central Government ultimately took a positive step. The Khaksar question was brought before the Legislative Assembly on September 22, 23, 1942, and the Assembly endorsed the Government action of lifting the ban. To be in accord with the Centre, all provincial Governments and Chief Commissioners also cancelled the orders they had issued under the Defence of India Rules. Mashriqi reciprocating in a statement said that activities of the Khaksars were to be of such a nature as to cause no anxiety to the authorities as long as the war lasted. 'I am convinced,' he added 'that the programme of a Khaksar at this eventful moment is to make himself ready for selfless service irrespective of caste or creed and to be of utmost use to all.'⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Letter of Sir Ziya-ud-Din to Sir Richard Tottenham, dated Aligarh, August 20, 1942.

⁵⁶ Telegram of Allama Mashriqi to Sir Sultan Ahmad, dated December 12, 1942.

⁵⁷ Home Department, File No 74/4/41, Pol (I), Section C.

Though ban was lifted from the organisation yet certain restrictions on drill and belchas were still in force. Therefore *At-elan*, a Khaksar newspaper of UP in its issue of October 23, 1942 threatened the Government to withdraw even these restrictions. It wrote

'The Government of India may well labour under the delusion that they can end the Khaksar movement through a policy of complete taciturnity which they have been adopting for sometime past. The paper reminds the Government that no movement has fizzled out in this way, on the other hand it has gained momentum gradually. The efforts made by the Government of India in 1940 to crush the movement have failed, because instead of weakening it, it has in fact considerably strengthened the movement much as the Khaksars have, by making valuable sacrifices, become hardly soldiers imbued with an

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Mashriqi now proceeded to Delhi. Reaching there on January 2 1943 he was received at the railway station with thundering acclamation. Soon after his arrival he addressed a meeting in Queen's Garden (which was in contravention of section 144 order in force in Delhi). While expressing thanks to the Government for withdrawing the ban he exhorted all Khaksars to express similar thanks to God and to Government in mosques on January 8 1943. In the evening a private meeting was convened in the Taj Hotel where Mashriqi stayed. It was attended by influential members of the organisation. The intelligence staff was exercising a close watch on Mashriqi and secret reports were despatched to certain provinces.⁵⁹

On March 19 1943 (the date on which clashes between the Khaksars and the the Punjab Police had taken place three years ago leading to the ban on the Khaksar organisation) in most of the

unconquerable spirit of achieving their goal. Home Department Political File No 8/7/194- Pol (I)

Some of them were as follows

- (i) Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi
- (ii) Mir Ghulam Qadir Nazim-ul Alam UP
- (i i) Professor Muhammad Rafique of Aligarh UP
- (h) Professor Durrani of Aligarh UP
- (v) Muhammad Aslam Chishti of Lahore
- (vi) Bashir ud Din Janbaz of Kalitha Karnal district Punjab
- (vii) Hafiz Ibrahim Salar of Khurja UP
- (viii) Abdul Rashid Quresh C ty Salar of Lahore
- (ix) Muhammad Umar C ty Salar of Delhi
- (x) Muhammad Yaqub Hakim Ala of Delhi
- (xi) Ch. Zahur Ahmad of Delhi
- (xii) Muhammad Idris Salar Sadar Bazar Delhi etc

Copies of Reports sent to

- (i) WD Robinson IP Superintendent of Police CID (A) Special Branch Punjab Lahore
- (ii) G D Parkin IP SP CID Special Branch UP Lucknow
- (iii) J P Morton IP Central Intelligence Officer Punjab and Delhi Lahore
- (i) E J Beveridge, IP Asstt Director (S) Intelligence Bureau Home Department Government of India New Delhi (See Home Department File No 74/4/1 Pol (I) Pt III

Punjab towns 'Khaksars Day' was observed. Khaksars appeared wearing black badges to mourn 'the martyrs killed in the clash with the barbarians'. Wreaths were laid on the graves and flowers were strewn at the site of the incident with two minutes' silence in the mosques.⁶⁰ There was considerable activity in N-WFP, the Punjab, United Provinces and Bombay. The people all over the provinces were asked to join the organisation. Contributions were raised from Muslims and new officers were created for the organisation. Camps were revived and preparations were made to hold 'Khaksar Military Training Camp' in United Provinces. Jhansi, Ajmer, Kohat, Ahmadnagar which had not yet felt the slightest impact of the Khaksar movement were now its torch-bearers.⁶¹ The *Al-Islah* had been banned with the arrest of Mashriqi and a Security of Rs 1000 was demanded from its publishers in November 1942. This ban continued even after the change in the situation. Mashriqi was irritated. He saw Secretary of the Home Department. He also contacted Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad and brought to his notice that some Khaksar prisoners were still rotting in Jail. He requested him to meet Sir Reginald Maxwell or Sir Richard Tottenham on the earliest possible date and pressing on them the absurdity of not lifting the ban on their paper.⁶² In the absence of *Al-Islah*, Mashriqi's orders for the Khaksars appeared in the *Zamindar* (Lahore), the *Iqbal* (Rawalpindi), the *Radiance* (Aligarh). These orders emphasised the militant aspect of the movement. The newly started paper the *Al-Askariat* (Lucknow) and the *Sulian* (Bombay) lifted the Khaksar material from the above papers.⁶³ The situation once again threatened to be alarming and shook up the Home

⁶⁰ Extract from Daily Report No 18, dated March 24, 1943 received from the Central Intelligence Officer, Lahore, Home Department, File No 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt III

⁶¹ Extracts from the Report on the Situation in the Punjab, Bombay etc Sec Home Department, 28/5/48, Pol (I), Branch. Also see File No 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt III

⁶² Mashriqi's letter to Sir Ziya-ud-Din Ahmad, dated June 30, 1943, Home Department, File No 74/4/41, Pol (Internal), Pt III

⁶³ Home Department, File No 28/5/43, Pol (I)

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Government A warning to the Khaksar organisation was again contemplated

To begin with the Viceroy wrote personal letters to all provincial Governors drawing their attention to the tumultuous activities of the Khaksars and sought their views. The thing that constrained the Viceroy besides the Khaksar activities was the emergence of the Muslim League by that time as a most powerful force in Indian politics. As is discussed in the succeeding pages the relation between the two instead of being harmonious had worsened and a clash appeared to be inevitable²¹

Paradoxically this time all the provincial Governments¹ with the exception of Bombay admitted that there had been mild revival of the Khaksar movement but they did not consider it a menace. The Governments of Sindh, Assam, Bengal, Berar and Madras treated the matter mildly and while admitting signs of revival they thought that it was insignificant to take notice of. The Government of United Provinces went to the extent of suggesting that Khaksars could be dealt with by ordinary administrative means and not by the reimposition of the ban which would create questions of greater importance than the one which it is intended to solve. Only the Presidency of Bombay saw a potential danger in the revival of Khaksar movement and to put down the menace at the

For details see the following correspondence between the Provincial Government and Home Department

- (a) Letter of the Chief Secretary to Sindh Government dated May 31 1943
 - (b) Letter of the Chief Secretary to Assam Government dated June 4 1943
 - (c) Letter of the Chief Secretary to Bengal Government dated May 31 1943
 - (d) Letter of H. J. Twynham Government's Camp Berar dated June 6 1943
 - (e) Letter of the Chief Secretary to Madras Government dated May 8 1943
 - (f) Letter of the Addl. Secretary to Bombay Government dated June 11 1943
 - (g) Letter of the Chief Secretary UP Government dated May 28 1943
- Home Department File No 74/4/1 Pol (I) Pt III

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earliest possible moment, it suggested that if the Government considered it advisable for the ban to be reimposed the Government of Bombay would 'acquiesce gladly in such a decision' (The views of the Government of the Punjab do not appear in the proceedings of the Home Department. May be its attitude was consistent with its previous attitude which was hostile to Khaksar movement)

A critical study of the period following the lifting of the ban shows that the Khaksars had resumed almost all of their previous practices with slight modifications. Fortnightly reports of the provincial Governments confirm this view, but these Governments did not entertain much fear from the Khaksar organisation. It was only the Centre which took it seriously. Sir Richard Tottenham wrote to Mashriqi:

It is apparent from reports the Government of India have received from various provinces that your followers are indulging in activities which transgress not merely the spirit but the letter of your undertaking. Camps ostensibly for the purpose of social service have been held despite the instructions that social service shall be performed individually. Khaksars have performed military drill, have appeared in public in uniform and have carried Belchas.

It is impossible to believe that these breaches of the undertaking have taken place without your connivance or consent. I am therefore to convey to you a final warning that if, after a fortnight from the date of this letter, it appears to Government that these activities on the part of the Khaksars are continuing in any part of the country, Government will conclude that you have failed to honour your word and will immediately reimpose the ban on the Khaksars Association.⁹⁵

This appeared to be the prelude to the reimposition of the ban. Mashriqi therefore issued instructions deleting certain items of the Programme, such as holding of camps, tying of Ukhawat badges

⁹⁵ Letter from the Addl Secretary to Government of India to Inayatullah Mashriqi, dated July 19, 1943, File No. 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt III

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and display of any kind of military activity⁶⁶ But the Khaksars in general were not in concurrence with the Mashriq's departure from the past A meeting of the Khaksars of Delhi was called to consider the situation in the light of the warning given to the Khaksars While adhering to the instruction of Mashriq it decided that the Khaksars should go bare headed with a copy of the Holy Qur'an hanging in their neck to Muslim masses to apprise them of how the British Government was persecuting them⁶⁷ The Khaksar press also did not budge an inch from its previous stand In a roaring voice it backed the Khaksars and wrote more profoundly than ever

The duty of the Khaksar is clear The future of our country the future of Millat is at stake Let us not be deluded by the prizes being offered⁶⁸

Thus the Khaksars had become a problem to the Government of India before and during the imposition of ban as also after its cancellation

Gul Hayat Institute

* See Mashriq's letter to Tottenham dated July 22 1943 for the instruction

Home Department File No 74/4/41 Pol (I) Pt III Extract from CID Lahore Secret Simla's Report dated August 5 1943

* *The Radance* (Aligarh) dated August 27 1943

CHAPTER VIII

NAZI CELL AND MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

IN 1939, THE international situation, as a result of the rise of totalitarian states in Europe, again deteriorated, and led to World War II. Germany under her powerful dictator, Hitler, appeared on world stage as a challenge to the British Empire. The Germans were said to have developed their contacts all over the world and even in India.

In April 1939, Dr. Schacht, an Ex-president of the Reichsbank, who paid a visit to India, was interviewed by the Khaksar Leader Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi. The Central Intelligence office reported that their meet impressed the Ex-President so much that he had promised Mashriqi 'German gold' for his movement. He also reported that prior to the visit of Dr. Schacht, Nazis in the Punjab had evinced keen interest in the Khaksar movement.¹ The Central Intelligence Bureau also had a report that Mashriqi called on Hitler during one of his European tours and Khaksar leaders were in touch with German agents through a 'Turkish General'.² This was spicy material to feed to the Anglo-Indian Press which spotlighted what it called the Khaksar-Axis connection.

Allegations made by responsible men in public life also suspected Khaksar-Axis connection. In a letter to one of his friends, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru expressed surprise as to the sources from which

¹ Home Department, File No. 111/40, Pol (I), pp. 95, 96.

² Home Department File No. 111/40, Pol (I), Intelligence Bureau (Home), Secret, p. 95.

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Khaksars were getting money. He said that in Government circles it was believed that the funds came from the Nazis.³ In the UP Legislative Assembly in 1939 the Khaksars were accused of receiving financial support from the Nazis and other foreign powers amounting to Rs 17 lakhs.⁴

Rumour ran afloat in Bombay and P C Joshi and his Communist Party also believed that Dr Sacht had given Rs 70 000 to the Khaksar organisation and that the Khaksars had totally come under Nazi influence. Suresh Banerji, a labour leader of Bengal and Aswani Ganguli also held the same view.⁵ A letter from one named Tawhid from Gaya written to an authority of Golden Mosque Lahore—the main mosque in which the Khaksars had taken refuge in 1939—was intercepted by the Punjab CID. It made a mention of financial assistance in vague terms.⁶

Some Germans in India also confirmed that the Khaksars received German money to oppose British rule in India. Men like Schulz, a German intern in Ahmadnagar when interrogated (December 1939) corroborated the authenticity of the news. Schulz, a German Christian by birth had lately embraced Hinduism. Bron Ehrenfels, another German intern, also affirmed Schulz's statement adding that he was told by Dr Urchs, the Nazi leader in India, about money being supplied to the Khaksars.⁷

Of the rumours the most widely current about the German connection were the statements of Shankarlal Bansal, the Forward Bloc emissary to Japan, and Soumen Tagore, a Bengal Communist. The former stated that the German Consul at Kabeahad had informed him that there was an army of four lakhs of Khaksars who were nourished by German money, while the latter told a friend during a conversation that the Khaksars were being paid

³ *Ibid* (Letter of Pt Jawaharlal Nehru to V K K. Menon dated April 3 1939 Home Department File No 111/40 Pol (I) p 95)

Home Department File No 74/1/41 Pol (I) Pt II p 185

⁴ *Ibid* p 95

⁵ Home Department, F1 No 111/40 Pol (I) p 97

Home Department File No 111/40 Pol (I) p 96

by Hitler⁸

The suspicion of the Government for the *raison d'être* of a Khaksar-Axis connection was further confirmed by a number of messages broadcast in Hindustani from the 'Azad Muslim League' Radio station in Germany and received on 19.72 metres at 20.00 hours. The messages broadcast, on examination, were found containing instructions for the Khaksars and meant to alienate Muslim sympathies for the Government. The treatment meted out to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the refusal of permit to Haj pilgrims constantly figured in these broadcasts.⁹

Italy was also said to be involved in the affair. It was well known that the Italian Minister in Kabul, Signor Qurano, had deputed a man named Muhammad Aslam, the translator at the Italian Legation to India, to collect informations and photographs of the Khaksar disturbances in Lahore. Two Italian women, Signor Mazzini and Signora Ungaro, had been reported present in Lahore during the Khaksar-Police clash in March 1939.¹⁰ In July 1939 the Italian Consul General denied the allegation that Fascist powers had financed the Khaksars or that they were interested in Indian affairs.¹¹ But the main source of monetary help was believed to be German, the Italians acting as mere agents.¹² Many newspapers styled Khaksars as 'German Fifth Columnists' and commented on the Khaksars' pro-German ideology. They compared the use of belchas and mock-fight, to German pre-war preparations. Reports regarding the liaison of the Japan Government with the Khaksars through the Japanese Counsel-General also gained currency in the early days of 1940. The same year a certain Muhammad Amin sought Mashriqi's instructions for opening a Khaksar branch at Celebes (Dutch East-Indies). He

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ See extract from survey No. 39 of 1943 for the week ending October 2, 1943. Home Department, File No. 28/5/43, Pol (I), p. 15

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16

¹¹ Home Department, File No. 74/1/41, Pol (I), Pt. II, p. 185

¹² See extract from survey No. 39 of 1943 for the week ending October 2, 1943. Home Department, File No. 28/5/48, Pol (I), p. 16

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appeared to have received inspiration from a Khaksar branch founded at Nairobi (East Africa) in 1939¹⁵

The Khaksars were also accused of inciting tribal leaders to stir up trouble on the Frontier. The well known leader Khushhal Khan had participated prominently in an unsuccessful revolt engineered by the Italians against the Afghan Government in August 1939. In 1940 he sent overtures to Mashriqi offering the support of 13 000 Afghans in the coming revolution. What was that revolution remained obscure. Fazal Ilahi one of Faqir Ispahani's agents who toured the rich plains of India for the collection of funds for the Faqir disclosed in the Punjab that he had been sent by him to get in touch with the Khaksars in India to assist them in throwing off the British yoke. Both Khushhal Khan and Fazal Ilahi had connections with German and Italian Legations in Kabul apparently for subverting the British in India.¹⁶

The Information Bureau first did not believe the authenticity of the reports regarding the German Khaksar alliance but a thorough search later on pointedly said that the messages were necessarily genuine.¹⁷

The applause that the Khaksar Movement received at the Aligarh Muslim University was great with students and some Professors freely participating in it.

Aligarh shot into prominence with Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan¹⁸ who founded the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College there in 1877 for the liberal education of the Muslims. By steady efforts the tiny college grew into a University in 1920 and became the forerunner of many of the socio political movements. Aligarh

¹⁵ Home Department File No. 74/1/41 Pol (I) Pt II p 185 foreign connection

¹⁷ Home Department File No. 28 5/43 Pol (I) Extract from survey No. 39 of 1943 for the week ending 2nd October 1943 p 16

¹⁸ *Ibid*

Born in 1817 entered British service and retired as a Munsif. Founded MAO College in 1877. Opposed the Indian National Congress, a great educationist and reformer died in 1898.

School opposed the Indian National Congress in 1885,¹⁷ welcomed the partition of Bengal in 1905 and took a leading part in the formation of the Muslim League in 1906. Hitherto Aligarh School pursued a policy of cooperation with the British Government but from 1907 a wave of anti-British attitude blew over there, and in 1920, during the Khilafat-non-cooperation days its old alumni founded a counter University—the Jamia Milliyah.¹⁸

Since Aligarh was the cultural, educational and political centre of the Indian Muslims every movement was nourished here by the students. The reception of the Khaksar movement among students and professors should not therefore be astonishing. University students paraded side by side with local Khaksars, attended camps and performed meritorious social service. *Radiance*,¹⁹ the party organ had started publication in Aligarh under the editorship of a student assisted by Professor Amir Hasan, Dr Rafiq Ahmad and Mr Durrani.²⁰ The *Radiance*, while supporting the cause of the Khaksars pleaded for cooperation with all. It wrote: 'Khaksars are peaceful and law-abiding everywhere. They are everywhere anxious to cooperate with the authorities as with other communities for the maintenance of public order and security of the country.'²¹

It was during the heyday of the Khaksar Movement that the Government focussed its attention on the Aligarh Muslim

¹⁷ Sir Sayyid opposed the Indian National Congress on the ground that the movement was premature. Muslims were educationally backward and the Hindus were ahead of them. He intended that these 'two eyes' of our mother country may shine bright with equal grace and brilliance. It was only possible when the two attained equal educational status. Sir Sayyid therefore devoted himself to the development of Muslim education.

¹⁸ In 1920-21, during the Khilafat Movement, a section of the old alumni of the MAO College disaffiliated themselves and founded a National University at Aligarh in opposition to the Aligarh Muslim University. Later on it was shifted to Delhi and was named as Jamia Milliyah.

¹⁹ It was a weekly started in the first week of February 1941. This is not to be confused with the present *Radiance* published from Delhi.

²⁰ Home Department, File No. 74/8/41, Pt. (i), pp. 76-93.

²¹ *The Radiance*, May 15, 1941. Also see *Ibid*, May 22, 1941.

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University and the Intelligence reported that besides dozens of students Professor Abdul Sattar Khairi Professor Babar Mirza Professor Zafar ul Hasan Dr Lodhi Karim Hyder Dr Abdul Aziz Dr Mansur Dr Ali Hyder Professor Rahmatullah Mr Abid Ahmad Ali Mr Ahmad Wahab Khairi Dr Rafiq Mr Obaydullah Durrani Dr Amir Hasan Abdul Aziz Memon Dr Niyaz and Mr Bashir Ahmad Khan were also its active members. They instigated students and got them enrolled.² Even Dr Sir Ziya ud Din the University Vice-Chancellor was said to have sympathy with the Khaksars.³ Some of them had been to Germany married German women and brought with them the Nazi ideology introducing it in the Khaksar Movement. The Intelligence Bureau wrote to the Home Department that the information they received suggested the existence of what we call the German cell in the Aligarh University which was most active and powerful.⁴ The Home Department sent a statement of its own findings to the Director of Information Bureau and sought further information about Professor Abdul Sattar Khairi Professor Babar Mirza and Dr Zafar ul Hasan etc.⁵ In his reply Mr H J Frampton added some more facts to the knowledge of the Home Department. He observed that (i) Professor A S Khairi had the privilege of receiving a copy of Hitler's Reichstag speech of 1933 (ii) he was asked for a report on a student who wished to write a life of Hitler in 1934 (iii) he was in touch with the German Consulate who sent him a copy of an article on the Hitler's Youth Movement (iv) he sent his greetings to Hitler on his birth day and was thanked by him.⁶

Home Department File No 74/841 Pol (I) p 8

Ibid

Home Department Intelligence Bureau Government of India Smla dated August 16 1939 to H J Frampton Deputy Secretary to Government of India Home Department File No 111/40 Pol (I) Nazi Propaganda in Aligarh University

² Letter of the Home Department sent to Director Information Bureau dated July 27 1940 (Home) File No 111/40 Pol (I)

Letter of H J Frampton Dy Secretary to Government of India (Home) to the Secretary (Home) dated February 10 1941

NAZI CELL AND MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

The Khaksar Movement and a Nazi Cell in the Muslim University led to the development there of an anti-British attitude. The Secretary of State for India realised that the aim of the Khaksar Movement had changed from 'social service and general uplift of the people' to that of militant preparation. 'In view of the increasing military character of the movement,' he wrote to the Viceroy, 'I feel sure that Sikandar showed both courage and wise statesmanship in promulgating an order banning the more martial side of its activities. It would certainly seem that the movement is assuming an All-India importance.

A thing that has puzzled me a good deal is to find a man like Sir Ziauddin attending a private meeting of the organisation, and thus brings me to the existing situation in connection with the Aligarh University. The reports which have been coming in as the atmosphere which prevails there are certainly somewhat disquieting. In a recent report by the Central Intelligence Bureau it is stated that considerable pro-German propaganda is being carried on by no less than four of the Professors at the University.²⁷ Sir Findlater Stewart of India Office also asked for information about the 'Nazi Cell' at Aligarh from the Home Secretary, Mr R. M. Maxwell. The Secretary replying said that latest reports in his possession revealed little of 'German propaganda in the University and that the elements formerly engaged in such propaganda are now directing their energies to the support of the Khaksar movement'.²⁸

As stated above the Central Intelligence Bureau had informed the Home Department of the existence of a 'Nazi Cell' making inroad in the Khaksar students of Aligarh and no less than fourteen staff members were said to have been assisting the promotion and propagation of Khaksar-Nazi relations in the University. On the top of the movement were Professor A. S. Khan, Dr M.

²⁷ Extract from a private letter of the Secretary of State to the Viceroy, dated, May, 1940, Home Department, File No 111/40, Pol (I), pp 8, 9.

²⁸ Sir Stewart's letter to Maxwell, dated January 9, 1940 and Maxwell's reply, secret D O to Sir Stewart, dated May 18, 1940, Home Department, File No 111/40, Pol (W).

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Babar Mirza Professor Zafar ul Hasan Dr Lodhi Karim Hyder who propagated Nazi dogmas And Dr Abdul Aziz Dr Asghar Ali Hyder Abid Ahmad Ali Ahmad Wahab Khairi Dr Rafiq Ahmad Mr Obaydullah Durrani Moulavi Azizi Memon and Mr Bashir Ahmad Khan preached among the Khaksar students hostility towards the Punjab and British Governments

Let us first acquaint ourselves with the Professors who were said to have sponsored the Khaksar Movement in the Muslim University Dr Abdul Aziz and Dr Asghar Ali Hyder They graduated in science from the University of Allahabad and proceeded to Berlin where they did their PhDs They married German women and only for this they were suspected of sowing seeds of dissension against the British Mr Abid Ahmad Ali took his M A degree in Arabic from the Aligarh Muslim University in 1927 and was selected as a lecturer in the Department of Arabic In 1932 he left for England and took his doctorate from the Oxford University On return he joined the Muslim League and became President of the Aligarh University Muslim League He did not come out with anti British utterance his only sin was his friendship with Dr A S Khairi and Dr Babar Mirza the two most prominent active members of the German Cell Closely associated with Mr Abid Ahmad Ali was Mr Abdul Wahab Khairi who acted as Secretary to the University Branch of the League In 1939 when there occurred a clash between University students and the police on some political issue he addressed the University students and told them that the clash was directed against the British Moreover being a nephew of Professor A S Khairi he was a suspect Dr Rafiq Ahmad Professor of Botany, emerged as the most virulent Khaksar leader in the University After the clash of March 1940 between the Khaksars and the Punjab Government in Lahore he organised students for agitation against the Punjab Government's order in connection with the Khaksar disturbances Closely associated with him was Mr Obaydullah Durrani Principal of the Technical College who was reported to be in charge of the Khaksar organisation in the Muslim University

Being in charge of the University Khaksars body, he was naturally in association with Dr Rafiq in organising the agitation against the Punjab Government and the means he suggested were to be both violent and non-violent as the situation demanded. Moulavi Abdul Aziz Memon, Chairman of the Arabic Department eulogised German ammunition and German acts of chivalry and believed that they would win the war. He characterised the British as 'masters of propaganda and that veracity was not always their virtue'.

Last but not the least, the name of Bashir Ahmad Khan,²⁹ lecturer in the Department of English, appeared in the reports of the Intelligence Bureau (Home Department). The report neither called him pro-German nor anti-British but said that in his classes, instead of teaching English he began his lecture with a review of the contemporary political situation. He would also talk of communism and said that the Germans would win the war but the communist doctrines would gain an upper hand. The communist ideology had so much influenced him that he would ask his students to write an essay on 'India After Five Years'. What he expected his students to write was that instead of either German or British influence, communism would hold the field in India after the end of war.

Among those who were charged with German-Khaksars activities in the University, the name of Professor Abdul Sattar Khairi³⁰ comes on the top. His anti-British career had begun since 1915 when he went to Constantinople and laid the foundation of a society called the *Ukhuwwat-al-Islam* with the introduction of a magazine in Urdu called the *Ukhuwwat*. In 1917 he visited Scandinavia on an Anti-British campaign and after the end of

²⁹ Mr Bashir Ahmad Khan later on became Professor and Head of the English Department and is popularly known by his abbreviated name, Professor B A Khan.

³⁰ Son of Maulavi Abdul Hamid, a pensioned Government servant Professor Abdul Sattar Khairi was Professor of German and French in the Aligarh Muslim University.

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World War I in 1918 he served in the Bolshevik Propaganda Bureau at Moscow where he contacted Lenin and the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. Circumstances reduced him to poverty and in 1919 he went to Berlin to seek fortune. There he again became a moneyed man. During the Khilafat Movement he was a confirmed Khilafatist and held the view that the Khilafat Movement was the only way to secure freedom for India. In Germany he married a German girl converted her to Islam and named her Fatimah Khairi and returned to Aligarh where he got Professorship in German and French. He later joined the Aligarh branch of the Muslim League and became its President. In India also he continued his anti-British propaganda and was alleged to be in receipt of funds from Germans. His wife edited a journal entitled the *Spirit of the Time* being a resume of the German magazines and pro-Nazi reviews. She received money from German sources especially from the Allianz Und Stuttgarter Insurance Company. She regularly received copies of the *National Socialist Monthly* and some other magazines from Germany. In 1939 the Central Intelligence Office reported that Khairi was in the pay of the German Nazi party and had considerable connections in Constantinople, Syria, Lebanon, Germany, Italy, Spain and Japan. His paper the *Spirit of the Time* had a large circulation in Germany; it was said to be more popular in Germany than in the land of its origin. Khairi was asked by the German Consulate to select Muslims to receive Deutsche Akademische Scholarship for the study at Munich where he was known to be a very active propagandist of the German language and culture in the Aligarh Muslim University.

Besides being so active in the alleged Nazi propaganda, he was connected with the Muslim League and the Khaksars. The Muslim League Foreign Sub-Committee, on view of his vast experience of foreign lands, requested him to write a book showing how the Sudetan Germans organised and freed themselves for the Muslims of India to emulate them. He drew up a Foreign Propaganda Scheme which was approved by the Muslim League Foreign Sub-

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Committee Among other things the scheme suggested (i) the formation of a Central Indian Bureau for developing cultural relations and understanding with foreign nations and (ii) the opening of branches of the Muslim League in Islamic countries He himself wrote out a number of pamphlets for propaganda in Islamic countries Khairi believed that Hitler was pro-Muslim, that Fascism and Nazism were indispensable for Pan-Islamism, that to overthrow the British imperialism the Muslims of India needed German help and that he would prefer the Germans rule to the British

The next man of considerable note in the Khaksars organisation vis-a-vis German Cell in the University was Dr Babar Mirza, son of Mr Aziz Mirza Moghal, hailing from Hyderabad After a brilliant academic career at the Universities of Osmania and Bombay, he studied Botany in Frankfurt in 1927-29 and joined the Aligarh Muslim University as Reader and Chairman of the Zoology Department His visit to Germany in the years to come was regular (1930-31-38) and he attended the Nuremberg Congress of the Nazi Party in 1938 He married a German woman and having been much impressed by the Germans, he delivered a lecture on 'Modern Germany A lesson for India' at the Rampur Hamid Hall under the auspices of the University branch of the Muslim League on February 2, 1938, in which he praised Hitler and his Germany But in 1939, when World War II broke out, he offered his services to the British Government to avoid arrest

In March 1940 in cooperation with Dr Rafiq Ahmad and Mr Obaydullah he organised the students of the University for agitation against the ban imposed on the Khaksars The Intelligence reported that he was a prominent member of the Nazi Cell at the University

Next to Babar Mirza in importance was Professor and Chairman of the Economics Department, Dr Lodhi Karim Hyder, son of Miran Nadir Ali of Matore, Kahuta Tehsil, Rawalpindi and cousin of Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid, Assistant Director of the Intelligence Bureau Proceeding to England from the MAO

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College on a Government Scholarship in 1909 he graduated from Cantab in Economics in 1912 and then went to Germany. There he fell ill and was nursed by Fraulein Wolf ohn a German girl who was a college friend of Dr Hyder. Towards the end of the war he returned home. His sojourn in Germany aroused considerable suspicion in the British circle in India.

Fraukin Wolfsohn was eager to come to India to marry Dr Hyder and applied for a passport. Dr Hyder's movements were shadowed but on the recommendation of K. B. Abdul Majid Colonel Kaye (the then Director Intelligence Bureau) made no objection to her arrival in India. But while giving permission Col Kaye recorded a note that but for the Khan Bahadur's recommendation he would not have consented. The Khan Bahadur had guaranteed Dr Hyder's entire loyalty to the British Government and declared that the lady was not anti-British but of Jewish German blood. She reached Bombay on March 9 1923 and was married. In 1939 while returning from England the couple did not land in Germany afraid of being stranded if war broke out. In August 1939 a secret report stated that Mrs. Hyder was on espionage to the Nazi and this was the reason why Dr Hyder's offer of his services in connection with the interrogation of German internees were not accepted by the Government.

Next in importance is Mr Zafar ul Hasan Professor of Philosophy who openly told his classes that Germany Italy and Japan were the friends of Islam and the Muslims must seek the support of these countries. Among the Germans he enjoyed a position of esteem and was visited by the Vice-Consul for Germany in 1938. He was offered a scholarship by the Alexander Von Humboldt Institute in Berlin and in the middle of September 1939 he reached London from Vienna. He was in correspondence with Dr Pausch Vice Consul in India for Germany. He also married a German woman.

Thus there is a long list of members of the staff who married German women and were consequently suspected. This being the condition of the staff it was difficult for the Government to arrest

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all of them. However delay might have caused greater dissemination of Nazi Propaganda. Therefore E Conran-Smith, Secretary to the Government of India, in an Express but most secret letter wrote to R F Mudie Chief Secretary to the Government of United Provinces that the Government of India, being convinced of the existence of a Nazi Cell in the Muslim University justified immediate recourse to Defence of India Rules 129 (I) (a) and 126 (I) (b) for search of the houses of the above named professors and their immediate arrest if found guilty. Utmost secrecy was cautioned and the CIOs and Deputy CIOs, were asked to render every assistance. The Secretary, while heaving a sigh of relief, at the summer vacation when most of the students had gone to their homes lessening chances of a student demonstration, warned the provincial Government to meet the situation firmly in case of a student demonstration.³¹ The Viceroy also wrote to the Secretary of State about these instructions to the UP Government in connection with the arrest of nine members of the teaching staff against whom, there was strong suspicion of prejudicial activities.³²

In compliance with the above instructions the Government of UP made a thorough search of the houses of Professor A S Kham and others on July 8, 1940, and he and his wife, Fatimah Kham were arrested. The former was detained in Dehra Dun jail while the latter in the Nainital Jail. Dr Babar Mirza was in Hyderabad for his summer vacation. When he returned to Aligarh on July 15 1940 the Central Government telegraphically asked the UP Government to search his house. But the Chief Secretary to the Government of UP in a telegram to the Home Secretary said that a search would be 'undesirable and probably fruitless' and while admitting that he was connected with the Nazi Cell it was also possible that there might be reaction to such a move as

³¹ Letter of the Secretary (Home) to Chief Secretary UP, dated Simla, May 30, 1940, Home Department, File No 111/40, Pol (I), p 137

³² Viceroy's telegram to the Secretary of State, dated June 1, 1940 Home Department, 111/40, Pol (I)

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Mirza was regarded as quite a popular figure³³ among University students. In view of Dr Mirza's outstanding personality the contemplated search was avoided.

The main victims of the search being Professor Khairi and Mrs Khairi their family was reduced to great hardship and it would be interesting to narrate briefly their cases. In the search their house produced German magazines, German papers and some letters of German friends. Since Mrs Khairi was editor of the *Spirit of the Time* the existence of this material was inevitable. But no trace was found of German Cell or any direct correspondence with the German Consulate or German Government. Nevertheless they were arrested. Their elder son and two younger daughters were kept at Aligarh and the local District Magistrate looked after them³⁴. Sometime later both daughters of the Khairis were allowed to go to Nainital to reside with their mother at Government expenses. The elder daughter Miss Zainab Khairi refused to avail of the privilege but the younger one aged 11 accepted the offer. It appears from the records of the Home Department that Mrs Khairi was granted Rs 2 and her younger daughter Re 1 per day for expenses³⁵.

Abdul Rahman Khairi (17) and Zainab Khairi (18) son and daughter of Professor A S Khairi made representation against the unjustified arrest of their parents for their alleged anti British attitude. In their letters they refuted the charge and made a mention of their pitiable circumstances but the Government refused to listen³⁶.

Secret Intelligence Bureau Home Department DIBUO No 101/For/40 (1) dated October 12 1940

See Confidential DO Letter No 139 dated July 9/10 1940 from District Magistrate Aligarh to the Chief Secretary to Government of UP Lucknow

³³ Home Department File No 18/33/40 Pol

³⁴ See Abdul Rahman Khairi's letter to Viceroy through the Vice-Chancellor Muslim University dated December 4 1940. Sir Akbar Hydari Member of Viceroy's Executive Council Department of Information and Broadcasting also presented an appeal of Professor Khairi's brother Dr Abdul Jabbar Khairi on behalf of Professor Khairi but with no effect. Shams-ul Ulama Moulavi Sayyid Ahmad Imam of the Jama Masjid Delhi had gone to Secretary to plead their case.

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Thereafter Sir Shah Muhammad Sulayman, Vice-Chancellor of the Muslim University asked for an interview with the Secretary to the Home Department to present a duly signed declaration of Khairi. The Shah ultimately went to Delhi on November 15, 1940 to plead the case of Professor Khairi and continued writing to Conran-Smith but failed to secure his release.³⁷ Sir Sulayman's Delhi visit was to convince the Secretary that Professor Khairi was now different from his former self. He put up a draft to the Secretary for his consideration, and contended (a) that he had himself served a notice on Khairi and since then Khairi did not appear to have shown himself in any way anti-British, (b) that his paper the *Spirit of the Time* attacked the Bolsheviks and not the British and that he had discontinued this paper after a warning was served on him, (c) that his motive for publishing advertisements from German firms was only to finance the paper, (d) that he tried to secure scholarships from Germany because of the feeling that Hindus were getting more scholarship than the Muslims.³⁸ The Secretary in his reply to the Vice-Chancellor wrote a long letter, justifying the arrest of Professor and Mrs Khairi. He pleaded that Mrs Khairi was 'an enemy subject by origin and her restriction in time of war is no less justified than the restriction of several other persons of enemy origin whose sympathies are suspected of remaining with Germany in spite of their formal acquisition of British citizenship'. Moreover 'Khairi's interest in the promotion of Indo-German relations involved correspondence relating purely to Germany's political aspirations'. He concluded that the restrictions imposed on the couple for a period of war was justified.³⁹ But Sir Sulayman was not disheartened and continued his efforts for Khairi. In his letter to the Secretary,

³⁷ Sir Shah Sulayman's letter to Conran-Smith dated November 8, 1940, Home Department, File No 111/40, Pol (I)

³⁸ Home Department, File No 111/40, Pol (I), p 46

³⁹ Letter from E Conran-Smith, Secretary to Government of India, (Home) to Hon'ble Sir Shah Muhammad Sulayman M A , LL B , D.Sc , Vice-Chancellor, Muslim University, Aligarh undated Home Department, File No 111/40, Pol (I), pp 166, 167

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Government of India he again wrote I would however again press for your kind consideration the question of giving some maintenance allowance to their children against whose innocence there can be no suspicion Mr Khairi has already exhausted all his leave his salary is automatically stopped His children are badly in need of help and their condition is pitiable ⁴⁰ The reply received by the Shah was the same and no consideration was given

As a matter of fact the sufferings and privations of Khairi's son and daughters were great Abdul Rahman Khairi wrote to his father

we are here in great difficulties we have not a single pie. The winter is approaching and we have got no warm clothes my *lehaf* is also falling to pieces I have got no shirts to wear no shoes except one pair which is old and in breaking position and which can't last long I have not even one anna to write a letter to you so this will be the last letter For this letter also I borrowed from Ibban to send you ⁴¹ Khairi's daughter Zainab Khairi who never wrote to him since his imprisonment ultimately was constrained to write to him about the severe straits which they were led to So many things have reached a point she wrote where immediate action has to be taken servants have to be paid their three months pay Bills are to be paid I am getting worse and worse and need medicines which are costly ⁴² My head is troubled continually by these problems what now what then I simply can't go like this The world is full of evil thoughts. They won't leave already a troubled family in peace Specially my

Letter from Sir Shah Sulayman to E Conran Smith dated Aligarh February 18 1941 Home Department File No 111/40 Pol (1)

Letter from Abdul Rahman Khairi to Professor A S Khairi dated Aligarh September 27 1940 Professor A S Khairi mentioned this letter in one of his letters sent to M A Jinnah dated October 12 1940 from Dehra Dun District Jail See Home Department File No 111/40 Pol (1) p 177

Zainab was of very delicate health as she had been operated for appendicitis. She passed intermediate in the First Division and was preparing privately for B A

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position is so delicate. So many things have reached the breaking point. My trouble is getting worse. I need constant care and no worries. The best thing for me in this position would be to marry. Then many things would be solved by themselves.⁴³ This was the extremity of their desperation.

Whether Professor Abdul Sattar Khairi and Mrs. Khairi were in close alliance with the Nazi Cell is still a mystery. While Khairi and his wife were in detention till the end of the war, the other Professors of the Muslim University were keenly watched.



Gul Hayat Institute

⁴³ See Professor A. S. Khairi's letter to M. A. Jinnah, Dehra Dun Jail, October 12, 1940. Home Department, File No. 111/40, Pol (I), p. 127.

CHAPTER IX

KHAKSARS AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

THE KHAKSAR ORGANISATION as already discussed was intended for social service to all irrespective of caste colour and religion Hindus and Sikhs could also become its members some Hindus in the Punjab had joined it. They had no intention to participate in politics but it was impossible for them to keep away from it entirely. They were concerned with socio economic problems which brought them face to face with political problems and in the India of 1930's no social organisation could escape politics.

In 1936 the Congress Committee decided to launch a mass contact movement to step up its political activities and win sympathies of the masses who had kept aloof from the national movement. A meeting of the UP Provincial Congress Committee was held on August 27 1936 under the chairmanship of and at the residence of Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to discuss the question of mass contact movement. Among the main participants were Pt Jawa harlal Nehru Acharya J B Kripalani Acharya Narendra Deo Keshav Deo Malviya and Dr Sampurnanand¹. In June 1936 the Provincial Conference passed a resolution to develop ever closer association between the masses and the Congress organisation and called upon all Congress Committees to further this policy by working among the masses and taking part in their day-to-day

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struggle, by making large number of members to the Congress, by making the primary committees of the Congress work and help in shaping Congress policy² The mass contact movement grew to popularity and resulted in the success of the Congress in the election that immediately followed, enabling the Congress to form ministries in most of the provinces The Khaksars had nothing to do with the Congress ministries being a social organisation It continued to function smoothly But as the days passed the Khaksars got an idea that the Congress ministries were unjust to the Muslims

The Congress ministries had become an eye-sore to the Muslim League which found repression and atrocities being committed on the Muslims 'Drunk with success and power,' says Muhammad Noman, 'Congressmen were swept off their feet Every move of the Congress was, and is, a step in the direction of Hindu domination'³ The installation of Congress ministries immediately led to the introduction of Bande Matram in the Legislative Assembly sung at the opening of each day's proceedings, and opening of Hindu institutions It naturally provoked the Muslims who considered it a Hindu Raj 'Ever since the advent of Congress Ministries,' to quote Noman again, 'the impression had gone round that Swaraj, which to the Hindu mind is synonymous with Hindu Raj, had been established and the Hindus could impose their will, trample upon Muslim rights and sentiments, and play havoc with the life and property of the Muslims'⁴ The League appointed committees under the presidentship of Raja Muhammad Mehdi of Pirpur and S M Sharif to investigate the Muslim complaints against the Congress Raj The Pirpur Report and the Sharif Report unanimously declared that the Muslims were the worst sufferers and Congress ministries purely resembled the Hindu Raj Mr A K Fazl-ul-Haq, Premier of Bengal, in a pamphlet entitled *Muslim*

² *The Hindustan Times*, September 3, 1936

³ Muhammad Noman, *Muslim India* (Allahabad 1942), pp 371-372

⁴ Muhammad Noman, *op cit*, p 374 Also see Ram Gopal, *op cit*,

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Sufferings under Congress Rule charged the Congress ministries with partial and unjust treatment of the Musalmans under their rule. Never before in India's history he points out have riots taken a heavier toll of life and property within such a short space of time as during the two and a half years of Congress administration in some of the Provinces of India. In almost all of these riots and outbreaks Muslims have admittedly been the principal sufferers. Was this merely a coincidence? looting, arson, assault, murder and mass terrorisation of which our helpless co-religionists condemned to live in predominantly Hindu areas under Congress were the pitiable victims. The Muslim case remains that during the Congress regime they were condemned to live in terror and to suffer these atrocities while the law moved tardily or did not move at all.⁵

This was what the League thought of the Congress Raj. But Mr. Gopinath Srivastava, a Congressite in his book *When the Congress Ruled* refuted the charges, praising the Congress doings during its 28 months of stay in office.

Maulana Azad feels that the League's charge was a mere propaganda against Congress ministries. From his personal experience in the Parliamentary sub-committee he said that there was no injustice done to the Muslims by the Congress ministry. But this much he also admitted that there might be cases of individual injustice but that it was not due to communal reason but because of the weaknesses of human nature and that such individual injustice could not be avoided under the best of circumstances.⁶

Of late many evidences have come to light which prove that the Congress organisation had turned to communalism and the Congress ministries were treating the Muslims inhumanly. In the papers of the All India Congress Committee one would find scores of letters of responsible and even unlettered Muslims mentioning the

⁵ A. K. Fazl ul Haq *Muslim Sufferings Under Congress Rule* (December 1939) pp. 1-18.

Maulana Azad *India and Her Freedom* (Longmans 1959) p. 21. See also D. G. Tendulkar *Abdul Ghaffar Khan* p. 310.

atrocities of the Congress ministries, sighing and groaning under its rule. These letters addressed personally to the Congress President and the Secretary in Urdu and English shatter the conviction of those who claim that Congress Rule was a boon and throw ample light on the much controversial and disputed period of Congress Raj.⁷ These letters simply say how the innocent Muslims were subjected to brutalities in the presence of Congress members and their despairing cries were laughed at. This did not spare even the Congress Muslims who gave their all in the services of the Congress.⁸ Sulayman Jinnah, Secretary District Congress Muslim Mass Contact Committee wrote to Nehru from Jabalpur

'The root of the disease I believe lies in the anti-National activities carried on from time to time by the various town and district Congress Committees which have, I hold, frightened the Muslim masses as to their religious integrity and their share in the future administration of the country and thus kept them away from joining hands with the masses in the fight for freedom. I myself have experienced that many of the office-bearers in the district and town Congress Committees have no clear head with regard to their Muslim brethren. Often I have been witness to the most shocking treatment being meted out to them by these workers of our organisation.'

He begged Pt. Nehru to take a tour of the country addressing Congress Committees and to impress upon Congressmen what 'their should be attitude towards the Muslim masses, point them out their 'sins' which I am sure are often many, and give them a clear cut programme of Muslim mass contact'.⁹

⁷ *A-ICC Papers*, Mass Contact Movement. Letters of Ashfaq Ahmad, Vakil, Rai Bareilly, to Pt. Nehru, dated January 14, 1939, Muhammad Ifukhar Husayn Faridi to Congress President, dated January 10, 1939 from Moradabad, S. U. Faridi from Meerut dated January 15, 1939, Shaykh Waris Ali from Manmudabad to Azad dated August 20, 1940. There is an extensive list of letters which the space forbids. See File No. D-7/1938-39, File No. 11/1940.

⁸ Letter of Sulayman Jinnah to Nehru, dated April 24, 1938 available in the *A-ICC Papers*, File No. G-32/1938.

⁹ *Ibid*.

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Mr Habibullah Executive Officer of Meerut Municipal Board also threw light on mounting communalism and wrote to Jawahar Lal Nehru that it was in the local bodies that the communal feelings were hatched and that he could say without fear of being contradicted that communal feeling could only disappear when the majority community give protection to the minority. He briefed him that in almost all Municipalities and District Boards sufficient Hinduism prevailed. No Executive Officers from the Muslim community were appointed and everywhere in UP all Executive and high officers in Municipalities were Hindus. Only in Dehra Dun the Executive Officer happened to be the brother of Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and it was through his influence that his brother could continue on the post. He complained that even the most competent of the Musalmans was declared as sluggish and insensible. Conspiracies were made and articles were written to papers against those a few Muslim officers who happened to hold any responsible post. Presenting his own case he wrote that in Ajmer where he worked for four years he raised the income of Municipality from Rs 5 13 000 to Rs 7 73 000 without fresh taxation and the reserve fund from Rs 60 000 to Rs 3 88 000 in spite of increasing expenditure and without impairing efficiency in any branch of administration. No Hindu of Ajmer he asserted can blame me for Pro-Muslim views but still I was an eye-sore for them. They could not see eye to eye a Muslim getting Rs 700 per month from the Municipal fund. They first started agitation against me personally took deputations to Government Officers sent memorials and wrote articles to the *Hindustan Times*. Consequently the whole Hindu population was up against me bringing no special charge but inefficiency which is so wide. Instead of enrolling Muslims as members of the Congress with due deference to your opinion I would suggest to find a solution to root out the causes which is not difficult. It requires an open heart towards the minority not to endanger your own majority but only to give their due share. Unless it is done Muslims as a class cannot join Congress. Enrolment of Muslims as Congress members can have

no effect The poison shall remain there and it can cause death at any moment ¹⁰

The Congress office received letters of complaints not only from Muslims but Christians also objected to the way in which the Hindus treated them Lately, the Christians had shown their interests in the Congress and its mass contact movement But the way in which the Congress was drifting to communalism had frightened the Christians Their missions met with a 'very stiff opposition' from the Hindus, presumably Congressmen How communalism was making inroads into the Congress organisation can very well be known from a letter of A W Moore, Mission House Shikohabad, UP, India To Pt Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr Kailash Nath Katju he wrote 'But there is seemingly a growing tendency to mix politics and religion to such an extent that this cooperation is becoming increasingly difficult The other day, Dr Katju, when I sat in your meeting at Shikohabad, I first saw written on the gate the word 'OM' Then when you were seated, the first thing on the programme was for the local Brahm to place a tilak on your forehead, and offer coconuts into your hands'

'It seems to me that if you want the cooperation, as I am sure you must, of non-Hindus you must keep Hinduism as such out of public meetings, and warn against opposition to non-Hindu faiths being carried on the name of Congress ¹¹

It was a departure from the Congress policy A cleavage was evident and parting of ways was inevitable Muslims were going to the opposite direction Mr Asaf Ali, a staunch Congressman, stated that at that critical period many Muslims asked questions which it was difficult to answer They inquired why responsible

¹⁰ Letter of Mr Habibullah to Pt Jawaharlal Nehru, dated April 22, 1937, available in the *A-ICC Papers*, File No 41/1937 Mr Habibullah was appointed the Executive Officer of Kanpur Municipal Board by Sir M G Hallet, Governor of UP on the recommendation of Public Service Commission in 1941 Thank God he is still alive and the present author had the honour of seeing him in Kanpur

¹¹ Letter of Mr A W Moore to Pt Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr Kailash Nath Katju, dated April 20, 1938, available in the *A ICC Papers*, File No G-32/1938

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Muslim leaders who were in the Congress previously were severing their connection from it. Why Iqbal's¹² song, *Sare Jahan sey Achha Hindustan Hamara* was no more sung at Congress meetings and only *Bande Matram* was recited¹³. The change is apparent.

Ram Gopal reviewing the position of the Congress ministries rightly says. The indiscretions committed at lower levels of the administration were capable of correction at the annual stock taking of administrative activities but the Congress Government stayed in the office for barely two years and had no time for correction. Two years was too small a period for the curing of chronic ills¹⁴. It is in the background that one has to study the Khaksar attitude to Indian politics.

The Khaksars did not regard the Congress as a communal body but the atrocities perpetrated on the Muslim minority naturally pained them. To get rid of the pitiable situation the only course that lay open to them was to organise their volunteers to assist the Muslims. The imposition of ban administered a severe blow to the Khaksars whose object was not to fight against any Government but to rectify tyranny and give protection to helpless. This is evident from a letter of Sir Malik Feroz Khan Noon written to Sir Reginald Maxwell Home Member of Council New Delhi. The letter says

Agha Ghazanfar Ali Advocate Bulandshahr (UP) who is a Khaksar came to see me this morning and represented to me the pitiable condition of the Musalmans under the Minority Provinces particularly during these Congress Civil Disobedience Lawlessness. He informed me that the Mussalmans of UP Bihar and CP are most disturbed and he is not quite sure how many of

* Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal the philosopher and great Urdu poet is popularly known as the poet of the East. He presided over the Annual Session of the All India Muslim League at Allahabad in 1930 and his presidential address turned out to be the forerunner of the idea of Pakistan. He died in 1938.

D G Tendulkar *Abdul Gaffar Khan* p 310

Ram Gopal *Indian Muslims A Political History 1857-1947* (Asia 1959) pp 262-63

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Mussalmans scattered in the villages of these provinces have been murdered and their property destroyed. Consequently there is a feeling amongst the Mussalman circles that the Muslim Minorities of these three provinces at least should be given the power to organize volunteers for self-protection. Agha Ghazanfar Ali further requested that the ban on the Khaksars be lifted.¹⁵

Continuing his letter Sir Feroz Khan strongly commended this request to the Viceroy.

'It will be a source of considerable satisfaction to the Muslim Minority in these three provinces to have Musalman volunteers to give them succour in case of need. In many places in the UP law and order has broken down and probably the police withdrawn. To whom are these poor people to look for protection, and then if the Government refuses to allow them to organize themselves for self-protection, I consider it a real hardship, and I would strongly urge on the Government to remove the ban on the Khaksars in these three provinces almost immediately. Agha Ghazanfar Ali informs me that the Chief Secretary of the UP told him that he had no objections to raising the ban against the Khaksars in the UP.'¹⁶

This letter is a conclusive proof that the Khaksars were never hostile to Congress or League and if they approached the authority for the lifting of the ban, it was only for self-defence. In the forties they were busy with their own problems and had hardly the time to think of any other problem confronting to India. But a drift was soon to come.

With the declaration of the World War II (1939) India launched a vigorous fight for independence. Congress ministries had resigned as India was made a party to the War.¹⁶ The League observed 'the Day of Deliverance or Thanks giving' all over India in jubilation of the resignation of the Congress Ministries.¹⁷ With

¹⁵ Letter from Sir Malik Feroz Khan Noon to Sir Reginald Maxwell, dated, New Delhi, September 17, 1942, Home Department, File No. 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt I, p. 188.

¹⁶ *The Bombay Chronicle*, December 8, 1939.

¹⁷ Jinnah in a statement said

'I wish the Mussalmans all over India to observe Friday, December

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the passage of time the war situation grew bad for the Allies. Russian retreat in Europe and Japan's entry in the war as well as its attack on Burma caused panic among the people of India.¹⁴ Its initial success on the Eastern Frontier of India led all the statesmen of the world to think seriously about India. Marshall Chiang Kai shek, the Chinese leader, President Roosevelt of America and Dr. Evatt the Australian Foreign Minister expressed their anxieties for India.¹⁵ The question was as to how full support of India could be secured. It was a vexed question. India would not lend its support till something substantial was done for it. In view of the Chinese, American and Australian pressure the British had to make a serious attempt to end the deadlock.²⁰ On March 11 1942 the Churchill Government announced its intention to send Sir Stafford Cripps to India with a constitutional scheme accepted by His Majesty's Government. Sir Cripps prior to this mission had achieved distinction for his diplomacy in Russia about the war and was expected to tackle Indian constitutional issue also. Reaching India on March 23 1942 Sir Stafford Cripps started consulting political parties and gave his Draft Declaration. The proposals said that for the realization of self government in India steps would be taken to create a new Indian Union having full status of a Dominion by common allegiance to the Crown but equal to

22 as the day of deliverance and thanksgiving as a mark of relief that the Congress Governments have at last ceased to function. I trust that all public meetings will be conducted in an orderly manner and with all due sense of humility and nothing should be done which will cause offence to any other community because it is the High Command of the Congress that is primarily responsible for the wrongs that have been done to the Mussalmans and other minorities. See Mohammad Noman *Muslim India* p. 397.

¹ Ram Gopal *How India Struggled for Freedom* (Bombay 1967) p. 477.

² On March 18 Roosevelt had written to Churchill: The Japanese may land on the sea-coast of Burma. They might bombard Calcutta. See Winston S. Churchill *The Second World War* Vol. IV p. 177. See also Pattabhi Sitaramayya *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol. II (Bombay 1947) pp. 304-7.

Hirendranath Mukerjee *India Struggles for Freedom* (Bombay 1948) pp. 186-187. See also S. K. Majumdar *Jinnah and Gandhi: their role in India's quest for Freedom* (Mukhopadhyay 1966) p. 186.

them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any respect of its domestic and external affairs²¹ The Declaration provided the establishment of a constituent assembly but until the new constitution was framed the British Government would be responsible for the defence of India and invited the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country²² But it did not make an advance on the August Offer²³ It only offered India a plan for the constitution-making body to be framed after the war was over Both the Congress and the League rejected it and Gandhi called it 'a post-dated cheque, on a bank that was obviously crashing'²⁴

Japan was knocking at the gates of Burma and people in their thousands were coming to India, leaving their hearth and home Japan's invasion of India at any moment was considered a possibility Therefore, there was no alternative left to the people of India but to start a new campaign—the Quit India Movement to drive the British out of India²⁵ The Movement having failed Mr C

²¹ C H Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1857-1947, Select Documents*, (Oxford 1965), pp 371-73

²² *Ibid*

²³ After the commencement of World War II Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy issued a statement on August 8, 1940 containing constitutional proposal for India which also accepted the right of Indians to frame their own constitution after war, invited all political parties to cooperate in war and finally assured the minorities that the British Government, 'would not transfer power to any system of Government whose authority is directly desired by large and powerful elements in Indian National life'

²⁴ Ram Gopal, *How India Struggled for Swaraj*, p 425 Michael Edwardes in his *The last years of British India*, (p 77) says 'The "Draft Declaration" that Cripps, took with him repeated the terms of the August Offer of 1940, but it went much further on a number of points It conceded India's right to leave the British Commonwealth if she wished This implied that 'dominion status' now meant the same as independence'

²⁵ The Quit India resolution laid emphasis on the immediate recognition of Indian freedom and ending of British rule in India It further said, 'The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom' See Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, (Asia 1966), p 506.

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Rajagopalachari formulated a scheme for Congress League settlement which popularly became known as C R Formula *

The C R Formula suggested that (i) the Muslim League should cooperate with the Congress in forming a Provincial Government for the transitional period (ii) at the close of war there would be a plebiscite in the North West and East of India where Muslims were in majority on the basis of adult franchise to decide the issue of separation from India (iii) all parties would advocate their point of view before the plebiscite was held (iv) in case of separation mutual agreement would be made for Defence and Communication and transfer of population would be on voluntary basis ²⁷

Jinnah rejected it and the deadlock continued ²⁸

Ever since his release Mashriqi devoted all his energies to the reorganisation of the Khaksars and directed them to enrol students irrespective of caste and colour for the Khaksar organisation. A separate office was created under the supervision of the Hakim Ala of the Punjab. The enrolment of students to the Khaksar organisation had a meaning. Japan's entry in war had created problems like civil defence, helping evacuees and refugees, giving first aid to the injured, distributing food, giving all sorts of social

Mr C Rajagopalachari claimed that his formula fulfilled the terms of the Lahore resolution of the League. See Rajendra Prasad *I da Divided* p 206 (Bombay 1946)

To M A Jinnah Rajagopalachari wrote (April 8 1944) Here is the basis for a settlement which I discussed with Gandhiji in March 1943 and of which he expressed full approval. He then authorised me to signify his approval of these terms should I be able to convince you of their being just and fair at all. As the Government have refused to relax any of the restrictions imposed on him to enable him to discuss or negotiate terms of any settlement I write this to you on his behalf and hope that this will bring about final settlement of the most unfortunate impasse we're in. You are aware of the intensity of my desire for a settlement. I was very glad when I found it possible to obtain Gandhiji's approval of these terms. I hope that you will bestow your fullest thought to the justice and fairness of these proposals and help to terminate a condition of affairs which is steadily causing all round deterioration in the country. See C H Philips *op cit* p 355

C H Philips *op cit* p 355-56

Hector Bolitho *Jinnah Creator of Pakistan* (London 1954) p 139
See also Ram Gopal *How India Struggled for Freedom* p 425

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service which only the student community could perform effectively and efficiently ²⁹ Five lakhs of such Khaksars were required to be kept in readiness in every province and at the time of urgency they were to take a banner and march for common service For every province he appointed officers and himself took up UP Meetings of Khaksars were marked for peace and discipline and in almost all the provinces they had 'taken an accelerated start' Since the drill in military fashion was prohibited, Namaz was substituted to 'revive its performance with the same spirit, sense of discipline and sacrificial zeal with which it used to be performed several hundred years ago' ³⁰ Non-Muslim Khaksars were not to be silent spectators of Namaz Since religion, culminating in humanitarian service, was the basis of the movement, non-Muslim Khaksars were not to ignore it They were also to perform their religious service in accordance with the dictates of their respective religion with equal zeal and discipline ³¹

These activities of the Khaksars received much appreciation from the Government which liked their idea of taking part in the defence of India Moreover, when they joined the Pioneer Defence Corps, sponsored by the Government, they were allowed to wear their distinctive uniform (hitherto banned) and keep up their individuality ³² By joining the Pioneer Defence Corps they proved that service to humanity had always been their creed and that they would not budge an inch from it in protecting the innocent millions who fell victims to war bullets ³³ The following Khaksar appeal provides proof as to their desire to serve India in social and political fields The appeal said

'Unfortunately there is spirit and disunity in the political parties in India during this critical period There is doubt as to

²⁹ Mashriqi, *Instructions to all Khaksars and Khaksar Officers in the Provinces and Indian States or Helpers of the Movement*

³⁰ *Ibid*

³¹ *Ibid*

³² Home Department, File No 28/6/42, Pol (I), p 9 See 'Policy Towards the War'

³³ *Ibid*

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who is responsible for the failure of Sir Stafford Cripps talk. This has added a block to the Indian history. It is very unfortunate that we have been prevented from taking part in the defence of our motherland. It is gratifying to note that we have refused to be treated like dumb animals. We have certainly refused the proposals for our national prestige. But how sad and unfortunate it is that we are accusing each other in the press and we are fighting like animals.

I appeal to every leader to examine the present situation in the light of realism. Consider the position. Organise yourselves like Allama Mashriqi for the defence of civil population during the fight between Japan and Britain. The Devil of hunger, death and war has no discretion of race, creed or colour. Thousands of families have perished and are going to perish. If your hearth and home, sons and wives are no more, what is the use of your life. In fact, taking this into consideration, Allama Sahib has resolved to enrol 500,000 (5 lakh) Khaksars for the defence of the hearth and home and for the defence of life and families, females and children. I appeal to the public to compel their leaders to solve the present deadlock by writing them letters from part of India to beset themselves for the cause of Indian public and to organise in one movement of Khaksars by enrolling yourselves in thousands under the lead of Allama Mashriqi. It is enough for you to inform a Khaksar residing near your residence that you are a Khaksar and will follow the Khaksar principles. You will have to efface from your mind communal bias and you will have to serve the mankind without religion, caste or creed. Restrictions are likely to be removed from the party as the preliminary steps for settlement with the Government have been taken. Hence you need not entertain fear for your enrolment in the Khaksar organisation. If we are not united during this critical period, the result will be destruction and ruination.³¹

From social service as has been stated in the foregoing lines, the Khaksars were drifting to the changing pattern of consti-

³¹ *Hindu tan ke Har Bashinde se Appeal* (Appeal to Every Indian)

This leaflet was printed and published in Bahmani Press, 5 Settabagh Street, Triplicane. It is given serial No. 10 dated May 10, 1942, issued by

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tutional development. The deadlock between the League and the Congress, the World War II and the entry of Japan in the war brought them to the political issues of the country. Truly speaking, Mashriqi was so anxious for a fair settlement of India's constitutional problem that soon after his release from the Vellore Jail, he started meeting leaders like Rajaji and others in Madras and issuing press statements to find out a way out of the impasse.³⁵

Mashriqi believed that the National Congress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, being the main political parties, must reach a settlement for independence to India. The Khaksar High Command ordered the Khaksars all over India to despatch millions of letters and telegrams to Jinnah, Azad, Gandhi, and Nehru to come to a suitable settlement, and if they succeed in bringing the leaders on one platform, their achievement would be a thing unforgettable in the history of India. Apart from their achievement being written 'in letters of gold in the history of India,' they would always be remembered as Mashriqi said 'as winners of complete independence for India'.³⁶ As these leaders were the *persona grata* of their respective communities Mashriqi believed that whatever they would decide would be final.³⁷

The Khaksar paper the *Radiance* also disseminated Mashriqi's ideas to the masses of India. It condemned the talk of 'Hindu nation and the Muslim nation'. It held that such a notion was the creation of the few 'Ministry-minded Muslims and the Ministry-minded Hindus' who did not wish to settle the Hindu-Muslim question. This attitude, the *Radiance* said, was their 'politics'. But it expressed its sound belief in the Hindu-Muslim solidarity and pleaded that they would not be separated. Asking the Khaksars

Hakim-i-Ala S S Bahmani. This appeal in the shape of leaflets was reported to have been printed in Delhi by Muhammad Yaqoob, Hakim-i-Ala of Delhi and Ajmer Province. See Home Department, File No. 74/4/41, Pol (I), Pt 1, p. 137.

³⁵ Mohammad Raza Khan, *What Price Freedom* (Madras), p. 108.

³⁶ Home Department, File No. 77/4/41, Pol (I), Pt III, p. 578.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

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to check any split between the two it said The future of our country the future of the Millat is at stake Let us not be deluded by the prizes which are being offered Let us lay aside all petty quarrels and disputes This is not the time for them ³⁸

The Khaksars were becoming day after day an influential body in India again and the leaders of the Muslim League and the National Congress both desired their amalgamation in their respective parties Jinnah even appealed to the Khaksars to join and support whole heartedly the League policy at this critical juncture But Mashriqi declared that he would openly identify himself with the Congress or any other organisations in the demand for independence for India Hitherto he was the champion of complete Independence of India and the idea of Pakistan had not found any place in his mind but in spite of this Khaksar amalgamation in League was desired by M A Jinnah Sir Nizam ud Din and Hasan Isphahani who met at Delhi to arrive at some decision with regard to a Khaksar League understanding Sayeed Ahmed of Bengal who was both a Leaguer and a Khaksar was sent to Mashriqi at Madras to hand over a message³⁹ to him which said

Upon Allama Sahib agreeing to join the All India Muslim League and declaring to that effect and requesting his followers to join the Muslim League which is the only authoritative and representative political organisation of the Musalmans in India the President of the League will be glad to have the prominent Khaksars associated with the executives of the Provincial Leagues and Allama Mashriqi will be welcomed to join the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League ⁴⁰

Mashriqi whose movements were confined to Madras presidency on the receipt of the above message called a meeting on April 26 1942 and arrived at the following conclusion

- 1 The Khaksars would cooperate with the Muslim League

* *The Radance* August 27 1943

Home Department File No 74/4/41 Pol (I) Pt III p 578

* Home Department File No 78/6/42, Pol (I) p 1

and should make all possible efforts to bring about a settlement between the Muslim League and the Congress

- 2 If the Muslim League accepted office it would give a seat in the ministry to the nominee of Mashriqi in the Central Government ⁴¹

The negotiations for amalgamation continued but could not reach a definite stage in spite of the best endeavour of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, the then General Secretary of the League, to evolve a scheme to make use of the Khaksars for Muslim League purposes ⁴²

At that time the Cripps proposals were the most current topic in Indian politics ⁴³ Mashriqi did not approve of the Cripps recommendations. In a telegram to Sir Stafford Cripps Mashriqi said, 'the British Government have sent you to rectify wrongs, reconcile and secure the cooperation of India at this late hour. Can you hope to reconcile India or secure her co-operation, when your men commit such wrongs (as have been committed on the Khaksars and their leader) or men of my position, considering the terrible price paid for showing unconditional practical loyalty. I now join the Congress, the Muslim League, and the Hindu Mahasabha in most emphatically demanding complete independence for India' ⁴⁴

He sent letters to the Presidents of the Congress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha urging them to present the demand of complete independence unitedly to Sir Stafford Cripps. 'I can see,' he wrote to them 'what he has to offer but he can very well utilize our communal differences to his own account'. He assured them of his best cooperation if they managed to be united at a time when the constitutional problem of India hang in

⁴¹ Home Department, File No 28/6/42, Pol (I), p 1

⁴² *Ibid*, p 18

⁴³ *Ibid*

⁴⁴ *Khaksars Efforts for the Freedom of India*. This leaflet was found in the M R Jaykar Papers, File No 574 available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi

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balance ⁴⁵ He viewed the Cripps proposal with grave apprehension and like Gandhi, he also called the future promises as mischievously fictitious and in no way an improvement on the August Offer ⁴⁶ He further remarked that the proposals at a time when the enemy is holding part of India firmly in his clutches and a series of phenomenal victories of this dread victor are before us are meaningless. The only question which ought to be before us at this moment is how to stem the tide of the enemy when every thing else has so miserably failed. It looks like a joke from the British not to let us defend a country to the last drop of our blood which the British promise to hand over to us wholesale after the war. I saw nothing but subterfuge and perhaps self deception in the whole conspiracy. I therefore reject the proposal in entirety unless of course every party in the land is freely allowed to defend their own country now and an Indian Defence Minister with full powers who can galvanise India at once is immediately appointed ⁴⁷ Thus the Khaksars were the first to reject the Cripps proposals and the foremost in demanding the appointment of an Indian Defence Minister.

To evolve a united demand to be put to the British, Mashriqi started correspondence with all political leaders. In a telegram dated May 5, 1942, he asked Jinnah what his condition would be for the formation of National Government. He made a similar inquiry telegraphically from Azad and Nehru. He was also in correspondence with C. Rajagopalachari who suggested to him to see Azad and Nehru and persuade Jinnah to make him shed his fear of a National Government in India, postpone all questions of the future and make a united demand for immediate National Government for India which would finally lead to complete independence and unity ⁴⁸ On hearing of the proposed visit of Azad

⁴⁵ *Khaksars Efforts for the Freedom of India*

⁴⁶ *Khaksars Reject Cripps Proposal in Entirety* Found in the M. R. Jaykar Papers File No. 574

Ibid

Home Department File No. 74/4/41 Pol. (I) Pt. I Section (C) p. 14-1

and Nehru to Madras he again wrote to Jinnah to fix a date for a talk with Azad

But there was no question of a talk between Azad and Jinnah. Azad was the most hated person in Muslim League circles. Mr Jinnah in reply to a telegram from Azad, wrote to him

'Your telegram cannot reciprocate confidence. I refuse to discuss with you, by correspondence or otherwise, as you have completely forfeited the confidence of Muslim India. Can't you realise you are made a Muslim 'show-boy' Congress President to give it colour that it is national and deceive foreign countries. You represent neither Muslims nor Hindus. The Congress is a Hindu body. If you have self-respect resign at once. You have done your worst against the League so far. You know you have hopelessly failed. Give it up.'⁴⁹ Thus the chances of a Jinnah-Azad talk were bleak. Since Azad and Nehru cancelled their proposed visit to Madras, Mashriqi issued a statement appealing to Hindus and Muslims to sink their differences to prevent the destruction of India by Japan's onslaught.⁵⁰

As time passed the demand for Pakistan grew in intensity and the Khaksars also had to yield, but they insisted that 'without independence of India, Pakistan is a mirage'. The *Radiance* in a very forceful tone asserted

'How can we let matters drift when the call of the times is so insistent? We know that if a proper move is not made here and now, the question of independence and that of Pakistan along with it will be shelved for another century. Even the idea of independence will be crushed and when even the idea of independence is not there where will the idea of Pakistan be?'⁵¹

⁴⁹ Mr M. A. Jinnah's letter to Azad, dated Bombay, July 12, 1940.

⁵⁰ Home Department, File No. 74/4/41 Pol (I), Pt. I.

⁵¹ The *Radiance*, September 10, 1943. In its issue of September 17, 1943, the *Radiance* again wrote that Mashriqi 'is now more anxious than ever because the war seems to be drawing to a close in favour of the Allies, our destiny remains in the hands of our old masters, they have laid it down that the Indians must agree between themselves as regards the future status and constitution of their country. India has risked the lives of millions of her sons. Thousands

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The question of the formation of a national Government was dropped as Jinnah refused to talk to anybody on this issue. He only insisted on his demand for Pakistan. Rajaji's best efforts to resolve the Indian deadlock proved abortive and he resigned from the Congress because the Congress refused to accept his formula and to come to terms with League.⁵² Mashriqi liked the step of Rajagopalachari and offered his sincerest congratulation for his efforts to promote Hindu Muslim Unity and assured him the cooperation of the whole Khaksar organisation for the achievement of his ideals. He appointed Sayyid Allah Bakhsh Shah of Kanpur Salari Khias Hind to start a campaign for Hindu Muslim unity and to undertake an all India tour to ask the people to compel Jinnah to see Gandhi in order to come to a settlement regarding Hindu Muslim question. In a letter addressed to Jinnah Sayyid Allah Bakhsh Shah conveyed to him: "As you have turned a deaf ear to the repeated requests of Allama Mashriqi for forging Hindu Muslim unity, I have been ordered to tour all over India and make the public realize that your despair and inaction are the only hindrances in the way to achieve Pakistan."⁵³

Meanwhile a new development took place. On July 26 1943 Jinnah was attacked in Bombay by a Khaksar named Rafiq Sabir (of Lahore) who was touring India. The intention of the assassin is yet to be known, the thing most significant in this connection was that this incident made Muslim opinion generally hostile to the Khaksars. The Movement was discredited and a large number of them left the Khaksar organisation. Mashriqi refuted the allegation

of her sons and daughters are starving today. It depends now on the action of her politicians to realize some value out of all this loss of life and property and turn it into a sacrifice or let it pass away as a pathetic tale of misery and waste and helplessness.

⁵² Richard Symonds *The Making of Pakistan* (Oxford 1949) p. 65. It should be noted that V. D. Savarkar, President All India Hindu Mahasabha, denounced the C. R. Formula and said that the scheme has actually been submitted to Jinnah without consulting any other organisations in India. He appealed every Hindu to denounce the proposal as uncompromisingly as possible. See the *Statesman* July 21 1943.

⁵³ *The Statesman* July 4 1943.

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tion that the assault on Jinnah was an organised conspiracy of the Khaksars, and assured the Leaguers of his good intentions. Differences on political issues could be there but it should not be misinterpreted. Mashriqi said that neither was he a 'rival' of the Qaid-i-Azam nor did he want to take his place. To him the Muslim League could not get a better leader than Jinnah. The assault on Jinnah was still a mystery but in April 1944 a booklet entitled *Hamla* was found on sale which attempted to show that the attack on Jinnah was the result of a deep laid conspiracy between the Government and Jinnah to discredit the Khaksar movement.⁵⁴ The truth of this booklet is still to be ascertained.

As a result of the assault the relations between the League and the Khaksars became extremely strained. The Muslim League considered it an unhealthy move. The Working Committee of the Bombay Provincial Muslim League condemned the Khaksars' campaign for Gandhi-Jinnah talk as a 'sinister move' as Gandhi regarded Pakistan as a sin.⁵⁵ Chaudhary Khaliquzzaman also, at a meeting of the All-India Muslim League, presented a resolution saying that the Khaksars had always declared that the main object of their organisation was service to humanity but they had of late deviated from their ideals. Mr I I Chundrigar supported the resolution and reminded the Khaksars of their days when League supported them. The resolution also got support from M. Gazdar and Ghulam Mustafa Shah Jilani. Mr Hami Nizami rose to oppose the resolution but was constantly hooted down in the course of his speech. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, at this stage, read out a resolution (passed at the meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League held in Delhi 1938) which said 'that any member of the Muslim League who is associated with any party whose general policy is opposed to the Muslim League shall not be allowed to become or remain a member of the Muslim League subject to appeal to the Working Committee of the All-India

⁵⁴ Home Department, File No 28/5/43, Pol (I)

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

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Muslim League.⁵⁷ He declared that in the opinion of the Council the Khaksar organisation was no longer useful to the Muslims of India. Jinnah remarked that previously the Khaksars confined themselves to social service and it was for this that he did his best to save the body from British oppression. The moment they entered politics they were a separate body. Are you or are you not satisfied that the Khaksars by their recent writings and actions have adopted a political policy and that this policy has been hostile to the Muslim League? He stressed that one of the fundamentals of the League was that it was the only authoritative representative political organisation of the Musalmans. You cannot owe allegiance to two organisations at the same time.⁵⁸

To intensify their political activities the Khaksars started Bab ul Siyasat (Department of Politics) with its headquarters at Bombay and branches all over India. Its object according to them was the attainment of immediate and a right sort of independence for India and to counter Muslim League propaganda. Sayyid Allah Bakhsh who led a campaign for Hindu-Muslim unity was entrusted the supervisory duties of Bab-ul Siyasat. Instructions were issued to all provincial Khaksars (i) to come in touch with local political leaders of various political organisations and explain to them the importance of the Khaksar Movement and the necessity of Jinnah-Gandhi talks (ii) to hold public meetings aimed at Hindu-Muslim unity and carry on press propaganda etc.⁵⁹

The Khaksar chief once again demanded that Mr Jinnah should see Gandhi for unity talks and to explore the possibility of a settlement between the Congress and the League.⁶⁰ He held out the threat of serious Khaksar-League clash this time if Mr Jinnah

⁵⁷ Home Department File No 28/5/43 Pol (I)

Home Department File No 28/5/43 Pol (I)

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

The Bombay Chronicle May 10 1944. It should be remembered that during 1937-38 Jinnah started correspondence with Gandhi for personal discussion on Hindu-Muslim question but Gandhi took no notice of it. Now the

refused to contact Gandhi with a view to arriving at a settlement.⁶⁰ While Jinnah insisted that if Gandhi had really made up his mind for self-determination, he could write directly to him. The letter Gandhi wrote to Jinnah did not show an inclination to recognise it. Therefore there was little sense in holding a talk.⁶¹ But Mashriq's efforts continued unabated. In a telegram to Jinnah he again said: 'The request of Mahatma Gandhi to meet you is in reality the prelude to the achievement of Pakistan and independence of India. Your attitude on this question is causing anxiety. I appeal to you to reconsider your attitude about Mahatma's invitation.'⁶² Gandhi, appreciating Mashriq's endeavour telegraphed him, 'My last year's request to Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah still stands, and I will be ready to discuss the question of Hindu-Muslim understanding as soon as I get better.'⁶³ This further persuaded Mashriq to press Qaid-i-Azam to accept Gandhi's offer for a settlement. But the League did not consider it a congenial move. The Secretary of the All-India Muslim League said in a telegram communicated to Mashriq: 'Qaid-i-Azam understands politics better than you. Refrain from interfering in Jinnah-Gandhi affairs.'⁶⁴

At long last, both the leaders agreed to meet to find out a possibility to put an end to British rule.⁶⁵ Gandhi believed: 'To me the unity of India is self-evident, but I will be no party to keeping the Muslims in against their will. Let them express their desire through plebiscite and they can have their Pakistan if they like.'⁶⁶ And Jinnah retorted: 'To me, Pakistan is an article of faith. It

case was otherwise. Gandhi wanted to see Jinnah on Hindu-Muslim problem but Jinnah paid no heed. See also S K Majumdar, *Gandhi and Jinnah*, p. 204.

⁶⁰ *The Bombay Chronicle*, May 12, 1944.

⁶¹ *The Dawn*, May 25, 1944.

⁶² Free translation of a Urdu Hand-bill into English printed at the Gilani Electric Press, Hospital Road, Lahore, and published from Ichhra (Punjab) Sec Home Department, File No. 74/4/41, Pt. (I), Pt. III, p. 76.

⁶³ *The Bombay Chronicle*, May, 16, 1944.

⁶⁴ *The Dawn*, May 25, 1944.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, August 31, 1944.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, September 3, 1944.

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is self evident it is the desire of the Muslims to be free in their homeland. A united India will be a Hindu dominated one in which Muslims are suppressed.⁶⁷ Jinnah did not agree with the argument advanced by Gandhi that some Muslim organisations and leaders have expressed themselves against partition. To him the plebiscite proposal was designed to give an opportunity to Hindu money bags to corrupt, divide and disrupt the Muslims and cheat them of their just right.⁶⁸

As the talks proceeded an atmosphere of pessimism and gloom prevailed and ultimately they broke down. Mahatma Gandhi not only refused to consider but emphasized his opposition to the basic demand of the Lahore Resolution⁶⁹ of the All India Muslim League. He would not recognise the hundred millions Muslims in India as a nation.⁷⁰ Gandhi started his talks on the basis of C. R. Formula which had previously received a jolt from the League.⁷¹ The C. R. Formula conceded to Pakistan more or less the same territory

Ibid

Ibid

The All India Muslim League held its annual session in Lahore on March 1940 presided by M. A. Jinnah. In his presidential address he said: "The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature. They neither intermarry nor inter-dine together and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be as built up for the government of such a state."

Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state. ...

Thus in his presidential address Jinnah laid the conception of two nations and resolved for a separate homeland for Indian Muslims. See *India's Problem of Her Future Constitution*. All India Muslim League's Lahore Resolution popularly known as Pakistan, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁷ *The Dawn*, September 26-29, 1944.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, September 19, 1944 (See editorial).

as it got in 1947 under the Mountbatten Plan⁷³ But in 1944 Jinnah had rejected it He demanded the whole of the six Muslim provinces and refused the right of Plebiscite to be given to Hindus residing in those provinces⁷³ Gandhi made a serious endeavour to persuade Jinnah to accept C R Formula, but failed The deadlock continued Gandhi said in a statement 'We have parted as friends These days have not been wasted I am convinced that Mr Jinnah is a good man I hope we shall meet again' But he added he could not accept the two-nation basis on which Jinnah insisted⁷⁴

Dr B S Moonje, the Vice-President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha also shared the above views of Gandhi When asked whether the Hindu Mahasabha would oppose with the aid of the British Government a joint demand for Indian independence put forward by the Congress and the League on the basis of Pakistan, he replied that his organisation would oppose such a demand with all the force at his command, but would work for the attainment of independence for India⁷⁵

The years 1944-1947 were a trying period for almost all political parties as also for the British Government of India About a year after the breakdown of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks, the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, presented a plan to settle the constitutional problem and convened a conference at Simla The plan 'proposed that the Executive Council should be reconstituted and that the Viceroy should in future make his selection for nominations to the

⁷³ Choudhary Khaliquzzaman in his *Pathway to Pakistan* (p 316) commenting on the C R Formula writes 'Now reading the Formula as it is and comparing it with what we ultimately succeeded in securing through the actual partition under British Government, one may be inclined to think that but for the last clause (6) all the other clauses offered by Rajaji for a compromise were far better'

⁷⁴ Choudhary Khaliquzzaman (*op cit*, p 317) further says that 'The initial objection taken by Mr Jinnah which he had repeated many times since the year 1937 was that Gandhi did not represent even the Congress and had no capacity to speak on its behalf and that he spoke rather for Hindu India'

⁷⁵ *The Dawn*, October 3, 1944

⁷⁶ *The Dawn*, September 15, 1944

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crown for appointment to his Executive from amongst leaders of Indian political life at the Centre and in the Provinces in proportions which would give a balanced representation of the main committees including equal proportions of Moslems and caste Hindus.⁷⁶ Lord Wavell invited the names of the representatives of both the Congress and the League. On behalf of the Congress its President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad presented a list consisting of three Congress Hindus two Congress Muslims and others. But Jinnah declined to accept it.⁷⁷ He expressed his inability to submit a list without an assurance that all Muslim members must be Leaguers and the Congress had no right to nominate a Muslim. He claimed that the Muslim League was the only representative body of the Muslims and it alone had the right to nominate Muslims for the Viceroy's Council. The deadlock therefore continued.⁷⁸

The war ended in May 1945 with a weakened Britain. The tempo of the National Movement in India was at its climax. National Movements in Malaya Indo-China Indonesia Burma and Ceylon further inspired the Indian nationalists. At Bombay Karachi and Madras the Indian Royal Navy and at Ambala the Indian Armed forces refused to comply with orders.⁷⁹ It was not a good augury. In view of the changed circumstances the British Government sent to India on March 23, 1946 a deputation of Cabinet Ministers popularly known as the Cabinet Mission. The nature of the work entrusted to the Mission is explicit from the speech of Mr. Attlee the British Prime Minister on the eve of its departure on March 15, 1946. He said: My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavour to help to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of Government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide.

C. H. Philips *op cit* p. 377

Humayun Kabir *Muslim Politics 1906-47 and Other Essays* (Calcutta 1969) pp. 61-67

⁷⁶ Michael Edwards *op cit* p. 87

⁷⁷ Herendranath Mukerjee *op cit* pp. 207-209

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but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision ⁸⁰

The Cabinet Mission suggested the formation of a Union of India, consisting of British India and the States dealing with Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communication, the grouping of the provinces into 'A', 'B' and 'C' classes, in accordance with their location and communal population which were to send representatives for the constitution-making body to draft a final constitution for India ⁸¹

At first both the leading political parties rejected the Plan but later on accepted it reluctantly. The election which took place in July 1946 to the Constituent Assembly gave the Congress an overwhelming majority. This pained Jinnah and he started raising difficulties which again led to a deadlock. There was a tug of war between the Congress and the League for power. Communal riots were the order of the day. Insecurity of life, chaos and confusion prevailed throughout India ⁸². Ultimately Mr Attlee made an announcement on February 20, 1947 stating his Government's intention to hand over their responsibility 'to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948' ⁸³. He presented a scheme—the Mountbatten Plan—which accepted the demand for Pakistan. The claim of the Congress and Sikhs for partition of Bengal and the Punjab was also not

⁸⁰ C. H. Philips, *op cit*, p. 378

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 382. The grouping of the province was as follows

- (A) Madras, Bombay, UP, CP, Bihar, and Orissa and three Chief Commissioner's Provinces
- (B) Punjab, N-WFP, Sindh and Baluchistan
- (C) Bengal and Assam

⁸² Lord Ismay told to Hector Bolitho 'There was slaughter everywhere. We British had all the responsibility and none of the powers. The police force was already undermined, and the civil service were frustrated and madly anxious. They were blamed by both Nehru and Jinnah for everything that went wrong'. See Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj* (London 1962), p. 110. See also P. D. Kaushik, *The Congress Ideology and Programme 1920-47*, (Allahabad 1964) pp. 7, 18, 31.

⁸³ C. H. Philips, *op cit*, p. 292

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ignored. Thus the Congress and the Leagues had come to the decisive phase of their lamentable history ⁸¹

The role of the Khaksars during these crucial years appears to have had no significance. Their silence leads one to conclude that their activities revolved round the achievement of independence for India and to achieve it they backed the demand for Pakistan.

They lastly appeared on June 10 1947 while the Council of the Muslim League was meeting in the Imperial Hotel New Delhi to ratify the Mountbatten Plan for Partition. This time their demand was an undivided Pakistan stretching from Karachi to Calcutta. They were not satisfied with the policy of the Muslim League which had accepted a truncated moth eaten Pakistan. Armed with belchas they made their way to the site of the session rebuking Jinnah and the League. The police after some resistance repulsed them ⁸². This was their last public appearance.

⁸¹ Leonard Mosley in his *Last Days of the British Raj* (p. 110) says: "It was a panicky state of mind which made them (the Indian leaders) easy prey for the Mountbatten policy of let's get it over with and get out quickly. They were embittered and disillusioned. For neither of them was this any longer the India they had known and loved and their attitude was rather like that of a madly doting father whose daughter has run away with the wrong man."

⁸² Pyarelal *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase* p. 330. G. Ailama *Qaid-e Aam Jinnah* p. 453.

CHAPTER X

EPILOGUE

IN THE TWILIGHT of a vague socio-political discontent of the 1930's sprang up from among the Indian Muslims a vigorous campaign—the Khaksar Movement—comprising upper class workers and a small section of the bourgeois. The Khaksars were all young Muslims in smart military uniform, armed with spades. The present writer has a vivid recollection of the days of his childhood when the Khaksars paraded on city streets on auspicious occasions. The traffic was held up when they marched and crowds of people assembled to watch them. The Khaksars were a purely mushroom growth, surpassing all that dominated the field before their emergence. Inspired by the Red Shirt Movement which had shot into prominence about a few years earlier it did marvels, winning sympathies of millions of admirers.

Starting with social service, during the heyday of the Indian Nationalist Movement, they entered politics and, though quite unsuccessful, exerted great influence on the contemporary political leaders. While rejecting the Cripps proposals as 'meaningless unreal' Mashriqi corresponded with the leaders of all political parties to come together on a single platform and raise the demand unitedly for complete independence of India. On April 11, 1943, he sent them a telegram saying

'Your rejection of Cripps proposals happiest augury for united peaceful India. Accept my heartiest congratulations. Myself fully undertake responsibility securing by negotiation complete

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independence for India from British Government within six months provided Congress League Mahasabha united demand independence now also non communally organised parties for safety of civil population everywhere Ready offering immediately half million Khaksars for social service irrespective of caste or creed Have wired similarly other Presidents Deliberate profoundly Don't miss critical opportunity ¹

The failure of Cripps brought C Rajagopalachari to come forward with his formula But even before the formula had been given proper shape Mashriqi and Rajaji were in consultation and the former wrote to the latter If you can let me know the details of your proposals I shall be able to let you know exactly what I can do in the matter I am also very keen that the present deadlock be resolved as early as possible ² Rajaji in reply asked him to persuade Jinnah to shed his fear of a National Government in India and at least to say definitely what conditions he can agree to join the Congress in forming the National Government at once ³

While participating in the political affairs of India the Khaksar leader repeatedly said that his declaration to join the Congress the League and the Mahasabha in demanding complete independence for India had nothing to do with the fundamental objectives of the Khaksar Movement The Khaksar Movement he assured them was still non political and non communal And when he agreed for partition of India his attitude was like that of so many other leading Congressmen who approved of the Partition Plan to do away with the British Government ⁴

The Khaksars has been mentioned elsewhere do not have a compact literature Wherever Mashriqi contemplated to deliver any message to the Khaksars they were very ordinarily published

¹ *Khaksars Efforts for the Freedom of India*

Home Department File No 744/41 Vol (I) Pt I Section B

² *Ibid*

³ See Summary of Allama Mashriqi's Pamphlet entitled *Instruction to all Khaksars and Khaksar officers in India and Indian States or Helpers of the Movement*

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on one or two pages. Their sweeping study reveals to a scholar the aggressiveness and communalism in the Khaksar Movement, proves him as a great communal leader who was trying to carve out a kingdom for the Muslims in India. For instance in his *Qaul-i-Fayzel* he said, 'If you have faith then dominate over all. Keep this command of the Almighty in view that we have again to dominate the whole world. We have to become its conqueror and its rulers.'⁶ The widely circulated pamphlet *Islam ki Askari Zindagi* remarked, 'The Quran has proclaimed in unequivocal words to the world that the Prophet was sent with the true religion and definite instruction that he should make all other religions subservient to this religion.'⁷ Similarly in his *Iqtibasat-i-Khaksar*, he wrote regarding Gandhi: 'Your effeminate leader was the leader of a nation which never wielded the sword. did not fight even one battle like heroes and did not conquer even one fort during the last many centuries. What else the poor creature teach them except that you are meant to be beaten, so go on being beaten. You have not harmed any one so you should practise non-violence, curse the enemy from a distance like women. Tell me frankly what else could the naked Mahatma teach you? The poor man not finding his people fit for anything else devised the ridiculous methods of satyagrah, Ahimsa, non-violence and non-cooperation in the name of Hindu philosophy which have staggered the whole world.'⁸

He condemned the Congress people also who endeavoured to create an organisation to counter the Khaksars. He regretted the efforts of Dr Sampurnanand and Pt Govind Ballabh Pant for enlisting six lakh soldiers in UP to oppose the Khaksars and in his *Lashum ki Sej* he concluded 'It is a pity each individual member of the sister community should be anxious to introduce the military training among Hindus and should be at his wits' end

⁶ *Qaul-i-Fayzel*, p. 2, Line 8, Col. 2

⁷ *Islam ki Askari Zindagi*, p. 9

⁸ *Iqtibasat-i-Khaksar Literature*, p. 7

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to see the sprightliness of the Khaksars ⁸

Such utterances were bound to create suspicion in Hindu circles. Charges of communalism and narrow sectarianism were imputed to Mashriqi and his movement. The Congress ministries were not prepared to hoodwink such a revolutionary movement. Their soldierly life conception of sovereignty and political domination of Islam over the whole earth became a much debated subject with Congress people. A group of Congressmen wrote to the Working Committee of the All India Congress apprising them with Mashriqi's intention to establish a most dangerous form of military dictatorship in India. In their Notes on the Khaksar Movement they said that Mashriqi's mission of which he makes no secret is to establish Muslim sovereignty in India if not the whole world. Being a believer in the cult of violence he is after gaining his end by infusing in Muslims the old spirit of militarism which marked the Muslim conquerors of yore as their special trait. The movement is fraught with great danger both for the Government and the country ⁹. The thing that frightened them all the more was according to them that Mashriqi is out to establish a most dangerous form of military dictatorship in the country. What is more the dictatorship is to be the dominance of the Muslims over the Hindus. Today his soldiery is armed with spades and toy cannons. The day is coming according to Allama himself when he would have a real and regular military force at disposal. His condemnation of the Moulavis and the Mohammadan Politicians makes him out all the more fanatic bent on his own glory creating chaos in the country and benefiting thereby. All other considerations apart it is quite clear that the Allama is out to crush the Hindus and start once again the Mohammadan domination of Hindustan ¹⁰.

⁸ *Lashun ki Sej* p 6

⁹ See Note on the Khaksar Movement found in the A ICC Papers¹ File No G 63/1940

¹⁰ A ICC Papers File No F 63/1940 *Vote on the Khaksar Movement* pp 2-4. Sending the above note to Acharya Kripalani, Deshbandhu Gupta

Mr K M Munshi in a confidential note on the situation wrote to Sir Roger Lumby, Governor of Bombay, about the Muslim intention towards war and the Government. He said that under the influence of religion the Muslims might express their collective energy in (a) local disorders, (b) attempts to overawe authority as in the case of Khaksars, (c) refusal to resist any outside Muslim power, or (d) a powerful movement in sympathy with Muslims of the neighbouring countries¹¹. About the Khaksars he specifically drew his attention not to let them 'out of consideration'. Concluding he said 'Armed resistance to authority by an organised Muslim party has entered practical politics. The Government of India which let it embarrass the Congress Government in UP is now seriously alarmed at its strength. They have destroyed the influence of the Government's most important Muslim supporter, Sir Sikandar, in the Punjab itself'¹².

Shripad Keshav Pathak, a responsible man of Jalgaon wrote to the local collector that the Khaksar Movement 'was rapidly spreading in Jalgaon, and the Hindu citizens were becoming restless, as their methods, time and mode of organisation is unnatural'. The complaints of Shripad Pathak made to the District Magistrate were (i) that the Khaksars paraded every night and continued parading till 10 P M and at times till mid-night, (ii) that they took a round of the whole city in uniform with well-

Member Punjab Legislative Assembly wrote (date not mentioned) that 'the entire literature of the Khaksar Movement which is fast becoming a regular menace for the peace and tranquility of the country is in typical Urdu. This is partly responsible for the fact that its real character remains hidden from most of our leaders to this day. To overcome this difficulty an esteemed friend who is also an old Congress worker has prepared an exhaustive note on the movement in English after a careful study of Khaksar literature, at my request'.

He wrote that it was a faithful translation and 'All this labour has been taken with the sole object of making it easier for the leaders of Indian public opinion to form a correct estimate of the danger this movement might constitute for the country in future if allowed to progress unchecked'. See A-ICC Papers, G 63/1940.

¹¹ A K Majumdar, *Advent of Independence*, pp 402-3

¹² *Ibid*

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polished Belchas which could be turned to killing. Afraid of their military tactics he requested the D M to take necessary steps.¹³

Ansar Harvami a Congress leader wrote to the Congress General Secretary Dr Muhammad Ashraf that the movement was gaining great impetus and had attracted some of the best Congress workers. He requested him to get a good leaflet prepared to denounce the movement as even the authorities had started patronising it.¹⁴

To the Hindus of Madras the movement showed an infinite capacity for harm and was even more disturbing than a nuisance.

The official view was also the same. A Government report said while Khaksar propaganda glorifying the military aspect of the Islamic faith contained a ready appeal for the more impressionable section of the Muslim public it produced equally unfortunate effects on other communities the misgivings of which were illustrated by a significant accession of recruitment to the Akali Sena and clear indications that the Hindus regarded the Khaksar movement as a pan Islamic militant organisation bent on establishing Muslim domination.¹⁵ The Government of UP in their letter to the Government of India expressed that the Khaksars must be regarded as a communal organization though they have not taken part in any anti Hindu activities.¹⁶ To the Government of Bihar it was purely sectarian despite its professions it aims at a dictatorial organization of a confessedly militaristic type etc.¹⁷

It was also suggested that the philosophy underlying the movement was a hotch potch of irreconcilable things. Allama

¹³ See A ICC Papers File No 5/1939-40. A copy of the above letter dated January 1 1940 was sent to Dr Rajendra Prasad Congress President by Shripad Pathak.

¹⁴ A ICC Paper File No 11/1939

¹⁵ *The Hindu* September 19 1941

¹⁶ Home Department File No 741/41 Pol (1) Part I

¹⁷ S e R F Mudies letter to Additional Secretary Home Department No 515-CX (Secret) dated March 19 1941

¹⁸ See Y A Godbole's letter to Tottenham No 946c dated March 18 1941 Home Department File No 741/41 Pol (1) Part I

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Mashriqi talked of the Khaksars as 'law-abiding citizens', who were to overwhelm the world by standing 'united and firm' and whose weapons were to be the poison of amiability and the 'machine-gun of humility' ¹⁹

But an objective study of Mashriqi does not vindicate his expressions. The Khaksars happened to be non-communal. They were overwhelmingly Muslim but they had never shown inclination to do wrong to any community. Service to humanity being their motto, they could not think of doing harm to anyone. Primarily an organisation purely based on Islamic doctrines Hindus and Sikhs were also its members and non-Muslims were freely permitted to perform their religious duties in accordance with the dictates of their religions ²⁰. Keeping this in view the Khaksars rendered meritorious services to famine-stricken Bengal in 1943 ²¹. Whenever Mashriqi quoted the pristine splendour of Islam it was not to subjugate Hindus but to inspire the Muslims to come out of their lethargic conditions and whenever he reproached Gandhiji it was not because he was a Hindu. He differed with Mahatma Gandhi on his doctrine of non-cooperation and non-violence as he considered it a weak policy. He had seen ample peaceful discussion with the British and was not prepared to continue them. There was only one weapon left to be used and that was the spade to decide the destiny of India. While exhorting the Khaksars one would note the hyperbolic expression with which he used to inspire them. As has been stated earlier that Hitlerite philosophy had partly influenced the social and political ideas of Mashriqi. He must have gone through Hitler's *Mein Kampf* which speaks high of the mass contact through popular movement. In his book Adolf Hitler points out 'The broad masses of a population are more amenable to the

¹⁹ *The Hindu*, September 19, 1941

²⁰ *Instruction to All Khaksars* (given on June 6, 1942)

²¹ *The Bombay Chronicle*, December 23, 1943. On December 17, 1943 Mashriqi disclosed that the Bengal Premier was determined to stop Khaksars from sending destitutes on the plea that the famine in Bengal was ended. The Khaksars, thereupon, decided to go back to their homes against the order of the Bengal Government. See the *Statesman*, January 8, 1944.

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appeal of rhetoric than to any other force. All great movements are popular movements. They are the volcanic eruptions of human passions and emotions stirred into activity by the ruthless Goddess of Distress or by the torch of the spoken word cast into the midst of the people. In no case have great movements been set afoot by the syrupy effusions of aesthetic literatures and drawing room heroes.

The doom of a nation can be averted only by a storm of glowing passion but only those who are passionate themselves can arouse passion in others. It is only through the capacity for passionate feeling that chosen leaders can wield the power of the word which like hammer blows will open the door to the hearts of the people.

He who is not capable of passionate feeling and speech was never chosen by Providence to be the herald of its will. Therefore a writer should stick to his ink bottle and busy himself with theoretical questions if he has the requisite ability and knowledge.²¹

At times he misquoted the Holy Quran. His allegations in his *Islam ki Askari Zindagi* about the Prophet and the message of God are not correct. Therein he quoted the Quran as saying that the Prophet was sent with the true religion and definite instructions that He should make all other religions subservient to this religion regardless if this domination of world causes affliction to the kafir. This is a wrong interpretation of Quran. It does not say that all other religions are to be subservient to Islam. Islam teaches tolerance, justice and fair play and such things never occur in the Holy Book. It was Mashriqi's egoism that forced him to interpret Quran like this. This may have frightened the people of other communities but in his heart of hearts he was never communal.

The Khaksar organisation from its outset considered Hindus and Musalmans as one nation. The Khaksar organ the *Radiance*

²¹ Hitler *Mein Kampf* pp 100-101

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boldly proclaimed, 'Here is no question of Hindu nation and the Muslim nation. This division cuts across the communal partitions.

If this move of dividing, by their favours and punishments, the Indian population into two camps, succeeds, it will be a very sad day indeed. Let no one think that in this way the Hindu and the Muslims will be separated into two nations—a satisfying notion for many. No, this is not the result which I force. On the other hand, there will be a line of cleavage passing through the Hindus as well as the Muslims. The Hindus will be disunited and disintegrated, the Muslims will also be disunited and disintegrated. And in this universal dissension, some people will prosper but the nation as a whole will go under. It will serve nobody. There will be neither unity between the Hindus and the Muslims, nor solidarity among the Muslims nor the Hindus as such.

The duty of the Khaksars is clear. In plain words, not to allow such a state of things to happen. The future of our country, the future of the Mulla is at stake. Let us not be deluded by the prizes which are being offered. Let us lay aside all petty quarrels and disputes. This is not the time for them. Lift yourself above personal and party considerations and see whither you are drifting, what game you are unconsciously playing? Can you do anything without unity and solidarity? ²³ Thus Hindu-Muslim question never worried him and whenever he exhorted the Muslims, it was not to subjugate the Hindus but to drive the British with the swords of their ancestors. The Khaksars came in clash with the Unionist ministry of the Punjab and the Congress ministry of United Provinces not because they were violent but because the former did not treat them humanly and the latter misunderstood their motives. Sayyid Murtaza rightly said that their position was 'Tang amad ba jang amad' (when one is driven to the necessity of resorting to violence he will take to it), otherwise they were non-violent. ²⁴

²³ *The Radiance*, August 27, 1943

²⁴ See *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Sixteenth Century, September 14 to September 24, 1942, Vol III, 1942

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Politics they had taken to as a temporary expedient but their motto was social service. During the most confused period of their history (1941) when Mashriqi was detained in Jail Congress people begged the Khaksars to lend their support to them in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Similarly the Muslim League also desired their cooperation. But their Leader Abdul Baqi the Madar-un-Nizam strongly opposed the proposal and asserted that the Khaksars should not join any party.²⁵ On the contrary he asked Jinnah to become a member of the Khaksar Advisory Board to guide them but Jinnah declined. This shows their spirit to keep away from politics. The choice of Jinnah could be questioned as sectarian but there was no commanding personality among the Muslims except that of Jinnah or Mashriqi that could have given the Khaksar a perfect guide. Their approach to the political deadlock referred to in Chapter IX easily leads one to conclude that they stood for independence of India and if they accepted Partition it was only to get freedom for India.²⁶ Their organisation cannot be compared with Hindu Mahasabha or Jan Sangh which preach open hatred, violence and distrust against the Muslims. Certainly they come very near to Akali Dal and Mahabir Dal which have as their aims social service, brotherhood and love. Whatever Mashriqi said was in the context of British imperialism. His Pan Islamism was never against Hindus or Hinduism. It was only a movement directed against British imperialism. Mashriqi was never anti Hindu.

Whenever the Khaksar said that clashes are the test of obedience or that they flatly reject the constitutional means²⁷ it was only to embarrass the Government for in all their movements one finds nothing but constitutionalism. Too much talk or agitation they would not like. To them A silent nation is a powerful

Home Department File No 74/1/41 Lol (I) Pt II p 97

A Khaksar leader of eminence wrote to Professor W C Smith Hindus and Sikhs must know that we are not against them. If we get power we will work for them too. See *Modern Islam in India* p 272 and footnote No 1

Home Department File No 74/6/41 Pol Pt I p 445

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nation, the power of the English nation lies in its silence²⁸ This they strictly followed Yet it cannot be denied that their movement raised a suspicion of violence and that many found it fraught with danger, though it was above suspicion

Khaksars were charged with having Nazi connections and therefore dubbed as fifth columnist²⁹ This also is not correct There are two criteria on which the bona fides of the Khaksar organisation can be judged First, whether the Khaksars helped or obstructed the war effort, and secondly, was their organisation likely to create communal riots and widen the differences between the Hindus and Muslims As regards the first Allama Mashriqi offered 50,000 volunteers³⁰ for British Army to fight the Axis powers With regard to the second, enough has been said earlier There is not a single case on record to prove that the Khaksars were communal or deviated from their exclusive concern of social service They were neither Nazi agents nor fifth columnists Moreover there were a number of people who gave themselves out as Khaksars but were really in the service of the CID of the Punjab Government and the Government did not take any action against them Had the movement been anti-government eminent men like Sir Ziya-ud-Din, Sir Raza Ali, Nawab Yargunj Bahadur, Miryan Ahmad Shah would not have become its members or openly sympathised with it

The origin of the movement is traced to the publication of the *Isharat* in 1924 In 1925 Mashriqi wrote to Dr Sir Ziya-ud-Din, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, expressing his intention to establish a society and seek his cooperation The P V C replied to Mashriqi that his proposal entailed 'sacrifice of time and money' and it was impossible for him to join him It was in the later stages, being convinced of its sincerity, that Sir Ziya-ud-Din though not officially joining it, sympathised with

²⁸ *Ibid*, p 546

²⁹ See Dr Sir Ziya-ud-Din's statement in the Legislative Assembly, (September 14-24, 1942), Vol III, 1942

³⁰ *Ibid*

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the movement and did his best for Mashriq's release and removal of the ban ³¹

Mashriq founded his organisation much before the emergence of Hitler in Nazi Germany. The similarity in some of his methods with those of the Nazis was a coincidence. The writings of Hitler had undoubtedly influenced the thinking of Mashriq; the glimpses of which we find in the hand bills of Mashriq but to say that the Khaksar leader had German connection is to talk of philosophy not fact. Communism and Nazism both were against the teachings of Islam. Both being anti religion could not have found any place with the Khaksars who rigidly followed Quranic injunctions and the Shariat.

So far as the supply of funds from Germany to the organisation was concerned there was a considerable rumour about it. He could have got all financial support he wished in India. Nur Husayn of Tanda Bago had donated about a million rupees to the organisation ³². In fact the Khaksar Headquarters spent nothing on the organisation. Moavin Khaksar and Pakbaz had given all their property to the Headquarters. The equipment of band horses tents were contributed by the public and the new Khaksars provided their kits themselves ³³. There is no concrete evidence to support the allegation of German gold being supplied to Khaksars. Even the Government denied the Khaksars having any connection with the Nazis ³⁴.

The propaganda of a Nazi Cell at Aligarh was also of the same

Dr Sir Ziya ud Din in his *Note on the Khaksar Movement* pointed out that the Congress Movement also started the propaganda at that time that the Khaksars were the agents of the Nazis. I first wrote to the Foreign Secretary and to the Director of Intelligence Bureau from the Irwin Hospital Simla to find whether they had any information in their possession about the alleged connection of the Khaksar Movement with the Nazis. On receiving the reply from the Director of Intelligence Bureau on 26.1.36. See Home Department File No 111/40 Pol (I) p 237.

³¹ W. C. Smith *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (1943) p 273

³² See the letter of W. S. Asghar from Rawalpindi to Viceroy dated June 5 1940 Home Department File No 15/3/36 Pol p 43

³⁴ Home Department File No 13/5/43 Pol (I) p 16

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nature and had no foundation. Between 1940-47 the Aligarh Muslim University was a hot-bed of politics. Students and staff members comprised of Congressites, Leaguers, Communists, Khaksars and every faction claimed to have a considerable following in the University. The British Government took advantage of this situation and charged the Professors with responsibility for the creation of a German Cell which was not proved by any secret inquiry. The Professors had to undergo great hardship during the World War II. The correspondence of Khairi and his family makes painful reading. Mere marrying of German women or doctorates from German Universities did not justify their connection with the Nazis. The arrest of Mrs Khairi on the pretext of her having connection with the Nazis was all the more painful. To avoid police interference Khairi named his wife as the editor of the *Spirit of the Time*, otherwise she had nothing to do with the paper. Clarifying her position Professor Khairi wrote to Jinnah

'But a Government, part of a mighty empire with glorious traditions, is expected to know that my wife Mrs Fatimah Khairi was 100 p.c. harmless. They ought to have known that her name as the Editor of the *Spirit of the Time*, a harmless monthly, was merely for the reason of technicalities and used in spite of her continuous protests.

The paper the *Spirit of the Time*, was stopped two months before the war began. After the war began my wife often said that if no other German at Aligarh was interned and only she was interned, she could never forgive me for using her name as Editor.²⁵

Regarding the technicalities referred to above, Khairi explained that his paper was purely Islamic and its object was solely the propagation of the ideals of the Muslim League. He, being a member of the teaching staff, could not undertake its editorship and

²⁵ Letter of Professor A. S. Khairi to M. A. Jinnah, dated October 12, 1940, Dehra Dun, District Jail, Home Department, File No 111/40, Pol (I), pp 126-27.

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therefore made his wife its nominal editor

A study of Khairi's correspondence with Jinnah and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan reveals that he was more a Leaguer than a German in creed. In that very letter he wrote to Jinnah expressing his profound debt of gratitude for the resolution passed in sympathy with his aggrieved family requesting the Government for immediate release. For this generous act he wrote to Liaquat Ali Khan

As I do not know the whereabouts of Mr Jinnah I am enclosing a letter of thanks to him for the kind resolution in the League's Council. Its contents are also for you. Please do read them. It is not necessary to write the same thing over to you also. But please be assured of my most sincere feelings towards you.

I do not know whether my letter from Jhansi Jail in the last week of September reached you.

Congress people constantly keep on coming into Jail to look after their humblest workers. League people seem to be afraid even to acknowledge the receipt of letters from their former colleagues. Perhaps I ought not to write letters to them in order not to contaminate them. I would not do it in future if I could get the slightest hint to this effect. Perhaps not acknowledging the receipt of a former letter is meant to be a hint.²

The helpless and disillusioned Khairi died in September 1945 in poverty and desperation, a reward that every patriot has received for raising his voice against the tyranny of foreign rule²⁷ and as to what happened to Mrs Khairi and her children the records of the Home Department are silent.

The assault on Jinnah by a Khaksar named Rafiq Sabir made the movement suspicious and placed Mashriqi in a very tight corner. Prior to this incident Jinnah was constantly in receipt of

² Letter of Professor A. S. Khairi to Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary A. I. M. League dated October 10, 1940 from Dehra Dun District Jail Home Department File No. 111/40 Pol. (I)

G. Allama *op cit* p. 298

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threatening letters by anonymous Khaksars. On June 27, 1943 one of the leading Khaksars wrote to him 'If your ultimate goal is Pakistan, then in order to bring the stage of its attainment nearer, for God's sake arrive at a compromise with Gandhiji. We request you to see Gandhiji in jail immediately, otherwise (some) of us, risking our lives, shall make you the target of our bullets'³⁸ The whole episode narrated by Hector Bolitho convinces the reader of an organised conspiracy against Jinnah by the Khaksars and Mashriqi. But this conclusion appears to be one-sided. Greater enemy of the Khaksar than Jinnah was Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, who mobilised his forces against them causing the death of many Khaksars. But Khaksars did not take any action against him and actually shed tears while accompanying his funeral. How could then they go against the Qaid-i-Azam? Rafiq Sabir was undoubtedly a Khaksar and there is no denying the fact that Jinnah might have received anonymous letters from Khaksars as well, but to say that the assailant was selected for a murderous attack by the organisation does not appear to be true. May be Rafiq Sabir would have done it of on his own accord.

Mashriqi and Jinnah differed only on the question of communal settlement. As stated in the foregoing pages it was Mashriqi's earnest desire to bring about a settlement between Gandhiji and Jinnah, and for that he asked the Khaksars to send letters, telegrams and messages to Jinnah latest by July 26, 1943. Mashriqi regarded it a great sin that Indian independence should be delayed on account of the obstacle of Pakistan³⁹ and more than two lakh letters, telegrams and resolutions were sent to Jinnah and Viceroy. Had he thought otherwise, he would not have waited for such a long time. But Mashriqi loved conciliation and throughout the whole course of the movement he stuck to it even at the time of much critical moments in the history of the movement. He even asked the Qaid-i-Azam that he 'must discard his trousers and coat

³⁸ Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah Creator of Pakistan* (London, 1954), p. 144

³⁹ Home Department, File No. 28/5/43, Pol. (I), p. 148

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(English costumes) and become a servant of Islam and a general like Caliph Omar ⁴⁰

The entire movement was based on religion—Islam—emphasizing religious discipline within and without the organization. His *Ta Kirah* presented a reinterpretation of Islamic values from the point of view of the twentieth century liberalism. He was convinced that the Muslim community in India could not come out of its out-dated ideas unless a reorientation of Islam was seriously taken up. In search of this he had gone too far and invited the wrath of the conservative section of Muslim society. The Moulavi dislikes to quote him the Khaksar Movement because when the military and soldierly ability has been acquired when the strength for conquering forts has been developed and when they have learnt to be ready at one clarion call who then would give him bread to eat ⁴¹. He goes on to say: It is not written in the Quran that you should collect round the Moulavi to give an impetus to his trade and livelihood ⁴². His message was therefore a departure from the current interpretation of Islam.

About fifty years ahead of him Sir Sayyid in the nineteenth century also gave a liberal interpretation of Islam. But this reorientation of Islamic scripture was to meet the challenge of Christianity as he was convinced that western liberal ideas and scientific approach would make the English educated Muslims heretic. But Mashriqi had no such consideration nor did he approach Islam through the touch stone of science. As a confused and discontented Muslim his interpretation lacked the basic qualities of a reformer. Morality and spiritualism find no place in his philosophy and the thing that mattered to him was materialism. Such an interpretation was not likely to do good to Islam.

⁴⁰ Allama Mashriqi's irrefutable statement in connection with the cowardly assault on the Qaid-i-Azam (Mr. M. A. Jinnah). The leaflet purports to have been printed at the Ansari Press, Delhi by Pir Muhammad Khan (found in File No. 28/543 Pol. (I) Home Department).

⁴¹ Mashriqi *Qaul-i-Fayseel* p. 11 line 7-8.

⁴² Mashriqi *Moulavi Ka Ghalat Ma'ala* No. 1 p. 6.

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Naturally it could not win favour either from the Muslims or from the Hindus. The Muslims called him a heretic⁴³ and the Hindus called his movement a most dangerous form of military dictatorship.⁴⁴ Truly speaking, his writings are replete with exhortations to the Muslims to be again the conqueror of the world and condemnation of their degeneration coming in the wake of the abandonment of military life which Islam insistently imposed on its followers. But whatever he said is to be judged in the socio-political background of thirties when the British bayonet without discrimination was used in India. He never aimed at subjugating the Hindus and whatever he said should be judged in the context of the British in India.

The Khaksar Movement suited the dis-spirited and disorganised Muslims of the thirties. The frustration caused by World War I had very much to do with the inception of movement and its ideology. Unemployment of University graduates who were ready to sell their talents for Rs 35 a month or to go in for menial services even on lower emoluments was a common feature. During this period of gloom and despondency the Khaksar Movement 'cast a powerful spell on the more ardent Muslim youths' to whom the Khaksar's banner provided a message inscribed on it 'Action and Glory'.⁴⁵ Its discipline, self-sacrifice, simplicity and social service and its teaching that every Muslim was a soldier in the service of Allah and the community attracted the attention of the frustrated Muslim. It shook up the slumbering masses to their responsibilities and inspired them with the glorious past that had won laurels. Simultaneously with the growth of the Khaksarism other voluntary organisations also cropped up with the ostensible purpose of social service. They all awakened the masses and stepped up the struggle for independence.

Towards the end of 1945-46 their strength considerably increased. The movement got impetus in the Punjab, United

⁴³ See Foreword of Professor M. Al-Fazl, *op cit*, p. 13.

⁴⁴ A-ICC Papers, *Notes on the Khaksars Movement*, File No. G63/1940.

⁴⁵ Philip Talbot, quoted by the *Hindu*, September 19, 1941.

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Provinces Sindh and North West Frontier Province. In other provinces the movement was coming up brick by brick. The leadership of the movement was retained by upper class men mostly idealistic and intellectual—but the organisation functioned mostly in cities. Small towns were not touched. Since the movement failed to present any economic programme it did not appeal either to the proletariat or the people of the lower strata of society. The spade their symbol no doubt presented an idea of the dignity of honest labour but the poor did not understand its philosophical basis. It could be used as a pillow to sleep a pot to cook a plate to eat a glass to take water from and a weapon for safety.

For a pretty long time the movement was rankling in the bosom of the Government which planned its extinction. Confidential consultations of the provincial Governments assured the Home Department that the Khaksars had their own way of working and the immediate extinction of the Khaksars was out of question. It was this fear that pressed the Government to deal with the Khaksars with great high handedness.

The decade before Independence was full of turmoil and chaos. Split between Hindus and Muslims was more apparent than ever before. Communalism dominated every walk of life. The fear of British withdrawal from India without independence influenced the policy of every political party. The answer to this fear was frequently given in the foreboding of the declaration of civil war among the major political parties. It was also feared that there would be region wise wars. The Sikhs would not tolerate Muslim domination. The orthodox religious minded Pathans would organise themselves and make the best use of such a rare opportunity. Communists and Socialists would carve out their own places. The big feudal states which had lost their territory to the British would seize it again with the help of their armies. Utter confusion as that prevailing during the reign of the last Mughals would reign supreme and out of it it was rumoured the militant Khaksars would emerge victorious. W. C. Smith opines that Mashurqi foresaw a period of chaos in India and called together under him an armed

force to seize power"⁴⁶ But it is too far-fetched a conclusion Mashriqi, as stated already, was not violent and had he ever desired to seize power he could have done it with the help of such a powerful organisation But he had no such ideas Of course Hindus were afraid of it and this is the reason why Hindu and Sikh private military organisations were formed But a sudden drift changed the political shape of the country The Muslim League accepted the June 3 Plan and the Khaksars came in clash with the League

After Partition their leadership in India waned, bringing the whole organisation to an abrupt end and shattering the whole body of Khaksars who marched to action for God and His Prophet, for nation, for sovereignty, for peace, for the sacrifice of life and property in the way of God, and for the humanity at large The last days of Mashriqi were not devoid of social service and politics At Ichhra, the old headquarters of his socio-political activities, he founded the Islam League in 1948 and continued to serve his country in spite of his old age⁴⁷ Perseverance, austerity and above all the fatal disease of cancer had exhausted all his energies and he fell to the onslaught of death after a protracted illness at Lahore on August 27, 1963 at the age of 75 The obsequies was performed in Adara-i-Ahyah, the headquarters of the Khaksar Movement at Ichhra, Lahore, the cherished place from where Mashriqi rose to eminence and which ultimately took him into its bosom for ever

⁴⁶ W C Smith, *op cit*, p 276

⁴⁷ Dr Y B Mathur in his article 'Khaksar Movement' (published in *Studies in Islam*, Vol VI, No 1, 1969, p 61 footnote) says about the post-partition activities of Mashriqi as follows

•He founded Islam League in 1948 and vehemently opposed the principle of parity between East and West Pakistan till all units in West Pakistan emerged into one single unit on the basis of solidarity of West Pakistan He wanted East and West Pakistan to be one unit and pleaded for one common language—Urdu—and one common culture—Islamic—for the whole of Pakistan He also denounced western democracy and communism and demanded establishment of Islamic democracy in the country On April 2, 1957 he was expelled from Islam League by a decision of the Council of Islam League on the plea that he miserably failed to liberate Kashmir due to the loss of mental equilibrium

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Thus ended a movement which entered Indian politics like a flooded river but vanished like a summer storm leaving behind only its memories to enable historians to recount its bygone vanity



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