

Wolfram W. Karnowski

**The
EFU
SAGGA**

**THE MAKING OF
AN INSTITUTION
WITHIN
THE CONTEXT OF
THE CREATION OF
PAKISTAN**

Copyright © 2001 by Wolfram W. Karnowski
First Published in 2001

All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced
or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
without permission of the author.

Printed and published by M. Yunus, D&Y Printers, 1, Yusuf Manzil
Gul Raj-Mall Road, Arambagh, Karachi Pakistan
Phone: 2212172, 2620611

Contents

List of Contents	i-vi
Foreword	vii-x
Preface	1-5
Acknowledgements	6-7
Introduction	8-11
Chapter I	
A Pilgrimage to Freedom – The Muslim's part of it	12-74
The Hindu Renaissance	16-18
Sir Syed Ahmed Khan the Great Awakener Father of Aligarh The second part of the nineteenth century	19-32
The turn of the century Foundation of the All-India Muslim League	33-40
Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal	41-52
Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah – Architect of Pakistan	53-68
A new nation State emerged Still a draw or a win!?	69-74

Chapter II

EFU and the emergence of Pakistan's
indigenous Insurance Industry

75-124

The creation of EFU

85-95

Pioneers of Pakistan's Insurance Industry

N.A. Qazi

96-99

Mohammad Chowdhury

100-102

M.A. Chishti

103-105

S.C. Subjally

106-111

A.U. Siddiqui

112-115

Rusi Dubash

116-120

Moin Fudda

121-124

Chapter III

Life sketches, profiles and biographies of people not forgotten

Introductory remarks

125-126

The Patrons:

127

H.H. The Nawab of Bhopal

King of the court at Camelot

128-142

His Highness the Aga Khan

Royal flush between Queens - or:
circumnavigating dinner and tea

143-156

The Founders:

157

Abdur Rahman Siddiqui

The fearless, outspoken visionary

158-178

Khondkar Fazle Haider Our man from Bhopal	179-193
The Guardians:	194
Abbas Khaleeli The man from Madras	195-212
The Ispahanis Part of the Saga	213-227
Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad Aristocrat and Dervish	228-241
The ARAG Family Friends in need	242-248
SM Yusuf A bureaucrat par excellence	249-253
Said Ahmed A fortress of reliability	254-264
Jehangir Siddiqui Financial wizard	265-276
Muhammad Ali Sayeed Legal Advisor and member of the family	277-283
Justice Mohammad Mahboob Protector and Reformer	284-291
Ashraf W.Tabani Our Governor of Sindh	292-296

Great Contributors:	297
EC Iven They called him Störtebecker	298-307
Khuda Buksh Life insurance was his mission	308-315
SM Moinuddin A true friend to have	316-324
HW Schwarz The lighthouse man	325-333
Mian Saeed Ahmed The Lahori connection	334-342
Syed Sibte Hasan Great writer and as great a man	343-355
SF Alam Impaccable reliability	356-358
Sharafat Walajahi Always a step ahead	359-372
Sajid Zahid An independent mind	373-381
Nawab Hasan The white knight	382-390
Azim Rahim 'Noblesse oblige' - the Bengali way	391-396
Sultan Ahmed Solid as a rock	397-403

Dr. Sayeed Khan The pioneering medicos	404-406
Abul Mahmood Success is around the corner	407-411
SA Rashid Yours very truly	412-416
Mahmood Jafri Unfrozen hidden reserves	417-421
Mirza Faiz Ahmed From the ground floor to the top	422-427
Mohammad Hussain Alvi The shooting star	428-436
Abba Ali Yusuf The caretaker	437-442
M Fasihuddin The technical conscience	443-450
Dr. Tajuddin Manji Always around	451-458
Hasanali Abdulla Not to be bought, but neither for sale	459-463
Taher Sachak Blessing in disguise	464-476
Saifuddin Zoomkawala Independent and yet so attached	477-493

Publications cited and consulted	494-500
Index	501-510

Foreword:

The lives of Mr. Wolfram W. Karnowski, the author, and Mr. Roshen Ali Bhimjee alongwith the institution of EFU (Eastern Federal Union Insurance Co.) have been so inextricably linked, that one could not have possibly chosen a better person to write the two books which are herewith presented to the general public, the biography on his friend and the EFU SAGA.

It was not just a common profession, but in fact a meeting of minds and shared philosophies of life that brought Karnowski and Bhimjee so close together. In his own words „Roshen was like an elder brother to me. There was nothing he did, that I was not in a way aware of, - whether it concerned EFU or any of his other projects“.

On one of the many evenings shared together the two friends agreed that there was certainly something very special and outstanding about EFU, - in that the founding fathers of the company, like the Court of Camelot around the Nawab of Bhopal were also directly or indirectly involved in the freedom movement, making EFU a part of the process of the creation of Pakistan. Which is why, the two men decided that the history of EFU be documented, preceded by a brief history of the foundation of Pakistan.

„It was never my idea that I should write the book“, claims Karnowski. „I thought I would head a committee of young and enthusiastic officers from within the EFU organisation plus a few experienced researchers, but soon learnt that for a variety of reasons such a ‘task force’ would not really be a workable proposition.“ Of course, there was a writer lurking in Wolfram Karnowski, who had been an active author of short stories, poems and features in German, right from his early youth.

He was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1930 and acquired Higher education in Fine Arts, Music and Insurance. When on the threshold of a career, he debated between music and writing, both of which he pursued actively, while studying at the College of Art and Music in Hamburg. So, though this writing assignment thrust upon him, came as a bit of a shock, he was in a way poised for it.

The exercise that began in August '97, has been a labour of love, but not without hurdles. Procuring all the elements required to write a book, he set

about interviewing seventy people, starting out with his dear friend, R.A. Bhimjee. The second shock came when he failed to find anyone to transcribe the seventy audio tapes of information, and he had to do it himself. This Herculean task that filled fourteen hundred pages and took almost a year to complete, was complemented by other research on Pakistan history and leaders. The writing finally commenced on holiday in Bali in late 1998 and ensued in early 1999 in Florida, where the Karnowskis hide when snow and ice cover their lovely garden in Tutzing, at the Lake Starnberg, in Germany, not far away from the Bavarian Alps.

After studying Art and Music, Wolfram Karnowski, on his father's insistence, joined an Insurance firm as a trainee officer in 1953, while simultaneously appearing for Insurance exams at the Insurance Institute in Hamburg and passing with honours. He was probably the last vintage who didn't become a soldier in World War II. The dearth of young professional blood, was reflected in handsome career opportunities offered to young and willing Germans. A few more responsible Insurance jobs down the line and he got his major break when he joined the world renowned Munich Reinsurance Company as an officer in 1959, giving him an opportunity to take flight and fuel his passion to travel and explore the world.

He was delegated to EFU in Karachi in January 1960 as Manager Head Office in the General Department. „I even joined EFU before R.A. Bhimjee,” he reminisces. When Bhimjee, primarily a life insurance man, took over as General Manager in 1961, Karnowski became his technical pillar on general insurance. That was the basis of their understanding and they soon became close allies and friends. The relationship was fostered by mutual trust and admiration. While Bhimjee helped Karnowski perceive Asia and Asian mentality, Karnowski in turn accompanied or assisted Bhimjee on his extensive travels and other explorations, be it in the field of insurance or even otherwise. It is therefore hardly surprising that he was also actively involved with his friend, Roshen Ali Bhimjee, in the formation of the three insurance companies of the Credit & Commerce Group after the latter had decided to leave Pakistan in 1972.

„Our life in Pakistan was fascinating and we considered it more than a second Home.“ Wife Ursula, a businesswoman in her own right, followed her husband to Karachi soon, where she took up a job in the Cultural Wing of the German Embassy, a position that earned them several privileges. The nature of Karnowski's job brought him in close contact with Pakistanis. „Most of our

friends were Pakistani and Roshen went out of his way to integrate us into his varied social circle.“

Immensely interested in Art, Literature, History, Politics, Culture and People, the Karnowskis never lost an opportunity to learn about Pakistan, adding priceless books and artefacts to their prized collection. They felt completely at home here, during the ‘golden days’, and secure enough to travel extensively in the interiors of Sindh and Punjab, mingling freely with the local population, - Karnowski occasionally sharing tea, a smoke and a discussion with the villagers that mobbed them. Every month the Karnowskis would throw open the doors of their home, to friends to join them for live Sindhi Music and Mushairas.

The most cherished moment of their stay, however, was the birth of their first child, Claudia, at the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital in Karachi in 1963. The Karnowskis returned to Munich in 1966 where he rejoined Munich Reinsurance Company as a member of the management team, responsible for the Middle East, South-East-Asia, Far East and Australia, New Zealand. Andrea, their second daughter was born in Munich in the same year.

Wife Ursula has been through thick and thin with Wolfram Karnowski assisting him in his profession whether it be in Munich, Pakistan, Japan or wherever in the world his work would take him. We have witnessed Ursula standing steadfastly by his side at all times with an ever smiling face. A great lady in every respect,- a perfect blend between the best of what Eastern and Western cultures and traditions are able to produce.

At the end of his six years, Wolfram Karnowski feels he was able to read Asian minds and it was his Pakistan experience that was largely responsible for his successful five year tenure in Japan. There too, the Karnowskis made the most of their stay, imbibing Japanese culture and history, their special interest lying in the ancient Kabuki and Noh theatre. Karnowski’s only regret was that unlike Japan, where he was forced to acquire at least some basic knowledge of Japanese, in Pakistan he was actually discouraged. Every attempt to practice Urdu was thwarted by the opponent who immediately switched over to English, feeling offended that maybe his English wasn’t good enough in Karnowski’s eyes.

After a series of promotions, he retired as a senior member of the Executive Management of the Munich Reinsurance Company in December 1995 after serving the company for 35 years, of which he spent a considerable time

travelling extensively in Asia and Australasia. In 1996 he rejoined EFU as Director of EFU General and Advisor to EFU Life, on his friend, Bhimjee's behest.

The Karnowskis have two beautiful daughters and three grandchildren, on whom they dote. Claudia, a former International banker, with her husband and two sons, lives in the same suburb of Munich as her parents do. Andrea, a management consultant and writer, presently lives near Oxford with her husband and daughter and designs and delivers development management programs, amongst others, on behalf of the Henley Management College for various international clients.

The couple share a 'joie de vivre' and live by the dictum, 'life is beautiful if you are mentally and physically active. Wolfram Karnowski believes in opening a new chapter and looks forward to his next venture, - a book in German on his Asian experience. He also plans to pursue his piano more seriously again. A keen sportsman, he jogs everyday and even manages to play golf and swim with his wife, whenever possible, helping them relax and keep fit.

Karachi, November 2000
Rafique Bhimjee

Munir Bhimjee

Saifuddin Zoomkawala

Preface

Many times have I been asked why I, a German, should have embarked on the adventurous task of writing down the history of a Pakistani insurance company? A company which is now sixty eight years old, which, by world-wide standards, is not all that an exciting age for a big commercial organisation.

The answer is very simple. The history of this company is, I think, not of an ordinary nature. Its roots date back to the days when great men in India were dreaming of a country which would be theirs and not just „The pearl of the British Empire“. And the people behind the creation of this company were part of that growing group of farsighted personalities, be they politicians, businessmen, students or scholars, be they Hindus or Muslims, who thought that the time had come to end the British Raj.

Most of the people I am going to write about are Muslims. They thus belonged to a community in India which comprised the minority of its population and yet once ruled the country for many centuries. They were at the helm of their community's struggle for increased participation in Indian politics and who, at the end of the day, thought that the only way to get what they were fighting for was to take destiny into their own hands and create a State of their own, Pakistan.

I have therefore tried to embrace the history of a commercial organisation within the greater aspects of India's fight and struggle for freedom and the role the Muslims played in it. By doing so I hope that people presently working for this great Pakistani company will become aware of their past and the eminent role their predecessors not only played as founders and guardians of the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company but in a broader context also as active participants and contributors to the actual creation and then further development of their country.

Although I am an eye witness to what politically, sociologically and economically has actually happened over a period of forty years in this country, I did not even consider to make an attempt to rewrite what others, much more competent and called for, have written, analysed or criticised about what has or has not been achieved ever since this nation came into being. I, however, admit that the temptation was great and always imminent because forty years of own experience is by no means a short time frame

considering that Pakistan just celebrated her fiftieth birthday. I, however, have never forgotten that little story which my professor of history had told us in order to demonstrate how difficult it is for historians to always convey historical events in such a way that they come closest to the absolute truth.

This was his story: „When Walter Raleigh was awaiting what would turn out to be his execution in the Tower of London, he tried to put his imprisonment to use by writing a history of the world. One day, looking out of the window of his cell, Raleigh saw a friend of his approaching the Tower. Just then a scuffle broke out in the street below. Minutes later, Raleigh’s visitor arrived and the two spoke of the incident that had just taken place. To their surprise, the two discovered that each had a totally different interpretation of the incident. The visitor left in a huff and Raleigh consigned his manuscript to the flames. He felt that if two people who knew and respected each other’s views could not agree on a simple episode to which they had both been witness minutes ago, how could any historian presume to assess authoritatively the significance of events that had taken place at a far remove from him in time and space.“

I do, of course, not know whether this story is a true one or not. But it is nicely told, I think, and yet would not convince me in the sense that, if everyone had followed the example of Sir Walter Raleigh, there would be no written history books at all. And are not all these self-appointed wardens of our world’s history at least an evil necessity or, on a more positive note, an indispensable part of the historical process!? I would think so and do rather prefer to reflect on an old African saying, „When the lions are gone, who will be left to tell the story of the hunters?“

I am in none of these categories. I only want to preserve something of what I have either experienced myself or learnt from my many friends in Pakistan and other countries in the region,- details, facts and stories of and on people who have made their great contribution towards India’s independence and at the same time even more specifically to the creation of Pakistan. And when finally on the 14th. of August 1947 their dream became reality, many of them were then again at the forefront of the political and economical development of this newly created nation . Their visions were the source of inspiration which generated that kind of enthusiasm which in the early days of Pakistan enabled people to build those fundamentals on which this nation should have found its solid grounds.

I am not a historian and I do not pretend to be one in the sense that I should have even tried to make an academic approach towards my subject. I also could not fall back or depend on official documents, books or publications published by some of the many people I have interviewed or spoken to in the course of my fact finding mission. Owing to various unfortunate circumstances, out of which migration from Calcutta to Karachi and nationalisation of Life Insurance in 1972 were only two, I could not even go through old files, personal records or other interesting documents, because, except from a complete set of balance sheets right down from the very first year of operation, there was nothing else to find in the archives. I therefore had to start from scratch. Like a boy scout I, step by step, tried to find my way in the wilderness. But I was fortunate. One interview partner after the other gave me a torch to continue my search. Sometimes it was like competing in a relay race handing over whatever I had been able to gather from the preceding runner to the next one just with one thing in mind, to successfully reach the finishing line.

My discussion partners, of course, were after all just normal human beings, as outstanding and dignified their social positions may have been. They have told me their version of stories, facts or guess-works and my only yardstick was to compare them with my own thoughts and experience and the stories of the many other people I have spoken to. Needless to mention therefore that I can not guarantee that each and every detail written in this book always complies with the actual truth. I can promise, however, that I have to the best of my knowledge and ability tried to convey a fair transcription of what I have been told by those who were prepared to not only open their minds and hearts before me but who at the same time were also doing a lot of soul searching, and I do only hope that now, in retrospect, they do not have regrets for having been so outspoken even at the risk of going again through some cruel and painful exercise. This was particularly so when talking to people about their personal experience at the time of partition, when talking about their childhood, their parents and other members of their families who were either forced to leave their place of birth or living or who had voluntarily migrated from India. Some had lost not only all their earthly possessions but even their dearest relatives and closest friends. Therefore the question whether or not the division of India was an unavoidable political necessity, whether all the human tragedies suffered and the loss of unbelievable numbers of lives of innocent people were a justifiable price for what then could be achieved, turned out to be a major topic in most of the discussions I had and it was not surprising that the views expressed were as different and controversial as one would expect them to be. However, they still were of great benefit to me.

Their views and their versions of events enabled me to compare what I had read about these most unfortunate events with the personal experiences made by people who had actually been affected by those terrible incidents, or worse, had even been targets in it.

I would like this publication also to be regarded as the observations of somebody whose personal and professional life has been greatly influenced by his long stay in this part of the world. Living and working in Pakistan for an indigenous organisation was an unique and thrilling experience and has made my life, and that of my wife too, much richer and more colourful.

My very close association with the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company dates back to the year 1959, covering now a span of forty years. The company is presently in its 68th year and still going from strength to strength. It was when Pakistan and India celebrated their 50th birthday that I started my interviews for this book. I have accompanied both the Country as well as the Company a long distance on their way to where they presently are. I have witnessed their ups and downs, their ever continuing struggle for success and survival. On this road to completion, which, of course, is an ongoing process and can never be a final one, I have seen hopes, dreams, illusions and failures, just as they would occur in the life of an ordinary human being. By writing about these dreams, achievements and failures I tried to be governed by an objective mind, love and care. I tried to be fair in my judgements, as far as this is possible, and I did not fear criticism because I was determined to freely express also my personal opinion on facts, episodes, events and great men and women to all of whom I give credit for having tried very hard to make their country a better place to live in, a country to work in with respect and pride.

I have dedicated this book to two people who for different reasons are very close to my heart. To my wife, without whose patience and unstinting support I could have never finished this fascinating journey into past and present history. And to Mr. Roshen Ali Bhimjee. He was the saviour and driving force of the Eastern Federal Union for almost four decades. He personified this company during all this time and by doing so has left behind his own epitaph. He died when I had just completed most of my research work and was about ready to start writing the first page of this book. We were colleagues, friends and finally became as brothers. I had so very much wished that I could have been able to complete this publication when he would still be around. Because I wanted him to be the final judge before handing it over to the public at large. He was the inspiring force behind the project and was closely associated with it right from the moment the idea was born. I am, however, confident that he

would have approved most of what I have said on the following pages. Even if he might not have agreed with each and every word of it, he would have endorsed my views on the manifold aspects and facets of the subject tackled by me. In our very first session on this project my friend had promised to discuss controversial and critical questions with me, to try to ensure that the facts were accurate, and to share with me his convictions and beliefs. But it was at the same time self understood that I would be free to make my own judgements and criticisms, as I have always done, particularly when working together as colleagues in EFU, a company which in his own words will always belong to the people of Pakistan and had yet become so much part of his whole life. With him at my side this whole exercise appeared less lonely and much more enjoyable. I am very grateful to him.

Finally I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to those many kind and open minded people who without restraint and reluctance, sometimes rather enthusiastically and generously, have contributed interviews and conversations with myself, thereby given me their helping hand when trying to find my way. They came from all walks of life. Former and present staff members of the company whose history I wanted to dig out and discover for them and others. Sons and daughters of senior executives of EFU who already have left this world but are still very much remembered not only by their own children but by many others too. Former Government officials, industrialists, high ranking dignitaries, politicians, private secretaries and just old, lifetime long personal friends. Without them I would not have been able to decipher the manifold facets and roots of a great Pakistani financial organisation, a company, which I firmly believe, has become one of Pakistan's outstanding and truly national institutions.

Special acknowledgements

Although I have already in very general terms expressed my deep and heartfelt appreciation to those many kind women and men in Pakistan, India, London and Dubai who have most generously and willingly helped me to collect all the material without which I could have never completed my two publications, I still very much feel an obligation towards those who have gone out of their way to be of assistance.

During the three years I have spent in writing these books, I have called at all these places, and, of course, have been a very frequent visitor to Pakistan. I have spoken to dozens of people who have been able to provide me with first hand information on those personalities about I have written.

My particular thanks go to those people who very kindly arranged interviews for me with those persons whom I either did not know already personally or whose whereabouts could not be traced by me. I am much obliged in this regard to Mr. Mustafa Haider, son of late KF Haider, who has been of tremendous assistance to me. I am likewise grateful to some officers of EFU who obtained much wanted information on my behalf and always found the fastest way to make it available to me,- Messrs. Syed Mehdi Imam, DH Sidhwa, Khatri Hussain and SA Rashid. I also owe gratitude to Mr. Syed Ahmed Haq, chief of EFU's EDP Department and his very able and understanding assistant, Mr. Abdul Qadir who helped me immensely during the final and adventurous process of reformatting the two manuscripts before they could be sent to the printing press.

During my fact finding mission in India there were particularly two persons who were of great help. Mr. AC Mukherji, ex Chairman-cum Managing Director of the New India Insurance Company, a long time business friend of mine, and Mr. BR Mehta, Munichre's consultant for India.

My special gratitude also has to go to Mr. Shamsul Alam, presently Managing Director of one of the leading insurance companies in Bangladesh, who was a well known executive in PIC prior to December 1971. He has been of great assistance in refreshing my memory about various aspects of the history of Pakistan's insurance industry.

I am grateful to two former co-directors and good old friends of Roshen Ali Bhimjee and me in England, Mr. David Dowlen and Mr. John Paul, who tried their level best to dig out reminiscences of days long foregone,- and succeeded.

Special gratitude goes to my friend and former colleague, Mr. Alan C. Drake, former Managing Director of the Munichre of Australia, who kindly undertook to not only read through almost onethousandfivehundred pages of typed interviews but also through both the manuscripts and thus helped me to clear grammatical and other language hurdles.

Mr. Shaharyar Jalees, Vice President of the Public Relations and Travels Department of EFU General, needs to be especially mentioned and applauded to. But for his enthusiasm and unstint support I could have never surmounted the manifold hurdles and obstacles which seemed to increase and multiply with each day passing since I wrote the last sentence of my two manuscripts and now I hold the printed books in my hands.

My thanks go also to my old friend, Mr. Hamid Subjally, for having assisted me so actively in the final phase of this project thus converting technical hick-ups into acceptable solutions.

Last, but not least, I sincerely thank Mr. Mohammad Mian, the well known journalist, and Mr. Saifuddin Zoomkawala for not only having gone through both the manuscripts in a most meticulous manner, but also for their encouragement and valuable advice given to me most graciously. It was particularly Mr. Zoomkawala who, after the unfortunate and untimely demise of my dear friend, Mr. Roshen Ali Bhimjee, has given me his unstinting support throughout.

And I have to finally express my appreciation to quite a number of those fine and astute journalists with which Pakistan has been gifted ever since this nation came into existence. I was very fortunate that the start of my research work for my books coincided with the 50th anniversary of this nation. Most of the leading newspapers and journals had come out with special supplements on this auspicious occasion providing me amongst others with a goldmine full of unexplored venues and information. I could not acknowledge all their names individually and therefore hope for their understanding and forgiveness.



Roshen Ali Bhimjee

Introduction

When discussing this project with my closest colleagues in EFU it was primarily Mr. Roshen Ali Bhimjee who again and again emphasised how important it would be to explain to our readers the political, commercial and psychological environment confronting Muslims in British India during the first half of this century. We both felt, that it would not be enough to write down the history of EFU by just quoting some facts and figures and by telling the life stories of a dozen or two of those people who in one way or the other had made their contribution towards its development, be it in a positive or even in a negative way. We thought that, whoever the reader of this publication may be, either present staff members of the EFU Group of Companies, their families, interested friends and colleagues from within or outside Pakistan's insurance industry, chances are that their knowledge of the earlier part of Indo/Pakistan history would not be as comprehensive as one would wish it could be. And this, of course, regardless of age and profession, educational background or otherwise,- the odd exception granted.

We therefore decided that I should make an attempt to briefly outline those political and historical events which according to the majority of historians, be they from India, Pakistan or some other parts of the world, have ultimately been responsible for the division of British India and the creation of Pakistan. By doing so, I hope, that those of my readers who, either because of their professional background or because of their personal inclinations have already taken a deeper interest in the history of this subcontinent, may bear with me. They may either decide to just ignore this chapter or still read it, if only to agree or disagree with the views expressed by a German, who, because of his own experience in the events following the destruction of his country in 1945, has formed his own views on the challenges a new beginning may or may not provide.

Making an attempt to review political and historical perspectives prevailing at the time when the Eastern Federal Union was formed appears to be even a logical and indispensable necessity, considering that those who created this organisation or were the driving forces behind it were at the same time also leading politicians or were at least actively supporting those who were at the forefront of the political arm of the Indian Muslims in those days, the Muslim League. Men like Ghulam Mohammad, Abdur Rahman Siddiqui, the Ispahani family, the Raja Saheb of Mahmudabad, the Nawab of Bhopal, the Aga Khan

and the Nizam of Hyderabad are just a few names who come immediately to one's mind in this regard.

Why should such well known and outstanding personalities have come to the conclusion that it would not only be beneficial but rather essential for Muslims in India to increase their commercial activities and also engage themselves in the fields of banking and insurance!?

For a man like Roshen Ali Bhimjee a book on EFU would not have been complete without a serious effort to throw some light on this and examine closely as to how the political landscape looked in the years preceding the foundation of this company in 1932. Throughout his life Bhimjee was not only keenly interested in politics but took an active part in it. As a young man he was a highly committed freedom fighter, working for the All India Congress. And later in his life, he was the man who quietly arranged things behind the scene, kind of a king-maker, as he was called.

My own personal and keen interest in Indo/Pakistan history and present politics was greatly influenced by him, in fact he was its initiator. As I have said before, I am neither a scholar nor a specific student of history, but the subject has always fascinated me. When I came to Pakistan it was only but natural that I took great interest in its historical background. And this even more so after meeting a man like Mr. Bhimjee with the kind of political background he obviously had. He made me understand the people of this part of the world and taught me their language; not the one we use when we speak to each other, no, I mean the language we can't hear nor read, the invisible alphabet of peoples' minds and hearts.

When discussing these particular aspects of the book to be written, my friend and I were very much aware that quite a number of its readers would regard history as something rather useless. Why look back decades or even centuries and more when at the same time we tend to think that this might not necessarily assist our efforts to find solutions and answers to today's and tomorrow's problems. Some even dislike being confronted with historical events, facts and figures. What they remembered from schooldays was that history was mainly about wars, truce and wars again. Wars of which people got tired, even scared because they were the sufferers, always the losers, whereas those responsible for it, those in power usually sat in safe shelters and were ultimately mostly on the winning side.

Let us face it: history as taught in school does mostly hide more of what actually happened in the past than bring the past closer to us, which is very sad indeed. Though we will never know exactly how our forefathers really lived and what they actually thought, we have nevertheless inherited our very existence from them and are to a very large extent still using their tools. Someone has described history, as „the lengthened shadow of great persons“, and this implies that all major transformations and achievements have been caused by individuals gifted with outstanding qualities of heart and mind. Yes, when we think of history as the description of endless series of wars, victories and defeats, we sometimes ignore that those events are mainly the results of human doings, the outcome of thoughts, conspiracies, plans, dreams and visions of „great“ historical figures. Behind these so called historical events are at the same time also the life stories of famous monarchs, generals, spiritual leaders, be their names Caesar, Alexander, Akbar, Mohammad, Moses, Gandhi or Jinnah. It was their deeds and convictions which decided the fate of countries, nations and people.

This is why we should take also some interest in the history of this subcontinent; why we should have a close look at some of those great personalities who were instrumental in the actual making of what now, fifty, hundred or even more years later, we today call ‘history’. We should make an attempt to have at least a glance behind the curtain which divides today’s present from yesterday’s past.

It is said that those who do dislike history have just been unlucky by picking the wrong teacher. I mean, just picking up one of the really bad ones, one of those who sell history to their pupils as if it was an accidental series of events, an arsenal of pompous, useless or even glorious ideas, a lexicon and picture book containing the names of a few hundred or even thousands of so called „great men“ who destiny had in store to either lead their respective tribe, country or nation to larger horizons, greener pastures or just to defeat and chaos. How unfortunate to pick just one of those teachers who does not have the gift to narrate and convey historical events and personalities in such a way as if these events and the destiny of such historical persons would be of utmost and real personal importance to you.

Although history taught and lectured in another fifty years hence will not necessarily focus just on specific states,- I am convinced it will have to deal with larger, global areas, regions or even continents,- I still feel it is worthwhile to look back at some detailed aspects of what has happened during the last hundred and fifty years in this part of the world, in South Asia, India

and Pakistan in particular. How do these nations present themselves to us in today's framework? We want to have a closer look on how independence from the British Raj came about on the Indian Subcontinent and how and why the foundation of Pakistan became reality. This process and the final result of it was unique and exemplary. Here comes a nation brought into existence which until it was born on the 14th of August 1947 had never been shown on any map whatsoever; a nation whose borders you would not find until a man who his friends at Oxford had called 'The Squit', and who, much later, in history books is referred to as Sir Cyril Radcliffe, under the instruction of the then British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, created Pakistan with the help of an old census, some random maps and a crate of wine. He created Pakistan by drawing a map which soon should become the source of heated and controversial discussions between the fighting and struggling parties. Borders were created which finally decided the fate of millions of people living on both sides of these artificial lines.

A day before the stroke of midnight on 15th August 1947, when the British Union flag would finally and forever be lowered on the subcontinent, the same man, Radcliffe, found time to write to his stepson: „I thought you would like to get a letter from India with a crown on the envelope. After tomorrow evening nobody will ever again be allowed to use such stationary and after 150 years British rule will be over in India- down comes the Union Jack on Friday morning and up goes - for the moment I rather forget what, but it has a spinning wheel or a spider's web in the middle. Nobody in India will love me for the award about the Punjab and Bengal and there will be roughly 80 million people with a grievance who will begin looking for me. I do not want them to find me“.

How cruel, unjust and far-reaching manmade decisions can be. Yet, when we have a closer look into that great book of history we do have to realise that such human doings have been so very often the keys to the making or destruction of nations. This makes the comparatively short history of Pakistan so exciting and interesting.

Chapter One

A Pilgrimage to Freedom – The Muslim's Part of it.

Was partition of British India unavoidable? Had communal agony gone so far that finally this question had become a matter of physical survival for the Muslim minority of India, had it become a question of life and death, of to be or not to be for nearly one third of India's population?

And this at a time when every living soul on this great Subcontinent should have been jubilant and full of joy because their long fight for freedom was soon coming to an end, their long awaited independence almost to be achieved!?

This, many people think, is even to-day one of the most widely topics discussed amongst politically and historically interested persons in Pakistan, and, of course, also on the other side of the border, in India.

I had a chance to be involved in innumerable discussions between various persons and groups of all walks of life on this fascinating and yet extremely tricky subject ever since I first set foot on the soil of the Subcontinent in 1959. Most of these discussions were heated, controversial, but were never conclusive. However, at least on this side of the border, in Pakistan, there was always consensus of opinion regarding one aspect of this topic: the influence of Hindu nationalism after independence would have been one-sided and overwhelming. Assuming their best of intentions, even people like Nehru or Gandhi could not have prevented Hindu communalism or, even worse, Hindu nationalism or chauvinism becoming mainstream in Indian politics.

This would have finally led to a scenario where Muslims in an undivided India would have been second class citizens at best, and targets for instigated Hindu mobs at worst. Muslims would not have got a fair chance in such a Hindu dominated nation and a look at to-day's India and the role Muslims play, or rather do not play, in leading Government positions or in other related institutions, gives a clear answer to that question, given the one or other odd exception of course.

It so happened that when I started writing this chapter I was in the United States and on the 19th of March 1999 The New York Times carried an article under the heading: „157 Christian Homes Burned in New Religious Clash in India.“ It said that the violence is part of a growing number of attacks on Christians in India in the last year and that the problem has worsened since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party became the head of a national coalition Government a year ago. Now, I am not suggesting that the majority of the Indian people or of its political leaders do subscribe to the harassment or even killing of religious minorities in their country. I would not even think that all leaders of the Janata Party are in agreement with such actions. All I want to say is that even now, fifty years after partition, it seems very likely that Muslims had every reason to believe that their future under Hindu Raj was insecure and unsafe. What happens to-day to the Christian community in India has in preceding years on more than one occasion happened to Muslims still living in India. Setting fire to mosques and killing Muslim men, women and children have not been isolated cases ever since independence was achieved.

And I am not digging into these most unfortunate events in order to add fuel to still burning fires. Definitely not. On the contrary, I have met countless citizens of the Indian Union during the last forty years who decry these terrible actions of ill-guided fanatics with the same degree of shame and disgust as their critics on the other side of the border.

I do, however, think that we have to bear this in mind when at the end of the day each of us has to find his own answer as to whether partition of India was the sole possible solution under prevailing circumstances. I, as an detached and hopefully neutral outsider, have arrived at my own conclusion which at the end of the following deliberations I shall gladly share with my readers. Before doing so it may, however, be a worthwhile exercise to go back to the early days of the Indian Freedom Movement and to jointly recall how all this began.

In the early days of this Movement both The All India Congress Party and the All India Muslim League had started their pilgrimage towards independence together. This is at least how it looked, if only for a relatively short period of time. They then increasingly marched on different paths, slowly building up hostile feelings and sentiments towards each other.

It has often been said that partitioning India was the ultimate goal the British Raj achieved as reciprocity for their losing the crown of their empire,- the successful result of the British policy of 'divide and rule'.

Leading historians, be they of Indian, Pakistani or foreign origin, have reached consensus that it would be difficult to maintain such a position historically because the conflict between Hindus and Muslims dates back much before the time when, well back in the 18th century, India was conquered by Britain. And surprisingly, this conquest did not happen as a result of orders given by the then British King but by a Trading Company of English origin, which, of course, was trading on privileges bestowed on them by their King. In other words: at the cost of Indian tax payers a nation with just 5 million inhabitants took possession of a huge Subcontinent with about 150 million people living there.

Was history repeating itself? Had not just exactly the same thing happened when invaders from the north established their Mogul Rule in India and made Persian the language of the ruling class for almost seven hundred years!? Were not the lower casts of Hindus converted and made faithful followers of Islam!? And was not perhaps Emperor Aurangzeb, whose stars were shining in the second half of the 17th century, largely responsible for increasing Hindu-Muslim tension by trying to Islamicise the Mogul government!? Quite a number of Muslim historians have praised Aurangzeb for his determined efforts to make his Muslim subjects aware of their separate religious and ideological identity. As bad luck would have it soon after his death, Muslims lost their hold on key positions previously occupied by them and their influence started to vanish with an alarming speed. So much so that an eminent Muslim Sufi scholar deemed it fit to write a letter to the Afghan King, Ahmad Shah Abdali requesting him to protect Muslims in India. In his letter he said inter alia:

„In short, the Muslim community is in a pitiable condition. All control of the machinery of government is in the hands of Hindus, because they are the only people who are capable and industrious. Wealth and prosperity are concentrated in their hands, while the share of Muslims is nothing but poverty and misery.“

What really surprises is the speed with which the downfall of Mogul power took place. After all for at least seven hundred years was Islam a decisive cultural and social force in most parts of India. Persian was the language of the Court in Delhi. „Muselmans“, wrote Sir William Hunter in 1871,

monopolised all the important offices of state. The Hindus accepted with thanks such crumbs as their former conquerors dropped from the table.“ But then after Aurangzeb’s death, Muslim power started vanishing. Persian ceased to be the official language and consequently Muslims also lost their hold on the administration of the country.

The final blow to the role of Muslims in India came directly as a result of the Mutiny in 1857. Muslims were made the scapegoat for this first sign of Indian nationalism, which the British then wrongly termed as „mutiny“ and for which they mainly blamed the Muselmans. For their rulers this bloodshedding event was a well sent opportunity to weaken the Muslims, who they had always thought had been extremely hostile to their rule in Delhi and Oudh, and to weaken them even to such an extent that they would not be able to rise again. Apart from killing thousands of people in and around Delhi, including quite a number of Mogul princes, they, through fiscal measures, managed to disown many Muslim landowners of their estates. They also barred all Muslims from military service which next to land had been another important source of income to them. In the course of less than one hundred years the change of events had thus completely turned the table. The Hindus had become loyal and faithful servants to their British masters, richly rewarded by them through influence, responsible government jobs and even land previously owned by Muslims, who now had to play the role of the underdog. And, most important in this context, the British had punished the Muslim „mutineers“ by taking away or closing down their educational facilities thus widening the educational gap existing between these two major communities of the country.

The Hindu Renaissance

Another factor played a most detrimental role in this connection. Long before the unfortunate events in 1857 had the Mogul princes abdicated their political leadership to religious leaders, who in all their preaching proved to be very orthodox. They vehemently opposed the adoption of Western culture and the learning of Western languages and sciences. Exactly the opposite from what their Hindu counterparts had so successfully done ever since the British had ousted the Moguls from actual control of the country. What the Muslims had not realised was, in the words of Jawahar Nehru in his famous book 'Discovery of India', that „the establishment of British rule in India was an entirely novel phenomenon for her, not comparable with any other invasion or political or economic change. India had been conquered before but by invaders who settled within her frontiers and made themselves part of her life. She had never lost her independence, never been enslaved. That is to say, she had never been drawn into a political and economic system whose centre of gravity lay outside her soil, never been subjected to a ruling class which was, and which remained, permanently alien in origin and character.

Every previous ruling class, whether it had originally come from outside or was indigenous, had accepted the structural unity of India's social and economic life and tried to fit into it. It had become Indianised and had struck roots in the soil of the country. The new rulers were entirely different, with their base elsewhere, and between them and the average Indian there was a vast and unbridgeable gulf, - a difference in tradition, in outlook, in income, and ways in living.“

The first reaction to the impact of the West in India had been the growth of an influential class of liberals who looked to Europe as an intellectual home. They were critical of many elements in their own culture pattern, and their ideal became the rationalisation and modernisation of Indian life, to be best achieved by a harmonious blend between East and West. This sometimes uncritical admiration and imitation of things European came to be challenged by a new movement that emerged in the 1870's and reached full tide in the closing years of that century. Often referred to as the Hindu Renaissance or Recovery, this movement regarded Western culture as soulless and materialistic. Above all, the Hindu Renaissance, as a new manifestation of nationalism, was suffused with religion. As a European contemporary pointed out in the early 1900's, „this movement really replaces true Indian patriotism by a Hindu nationalism in which Muselmans and Buddhists could not join

without very considerable reserves!“ Swami Dayanand Sarasawati is usually regarded as the founder of the new nationalism and the Hindu Recovery.

Another preacher and apostle of the superiority of Hindu culture was the Swami Vivekananda who became very famous, not only in the United States, but all over the world, and for three years he remained in America and Europe lecturing and founding his missions. I have always found him to be one of the most illustrious characters amongst those Hindu missionaries who had very effectively influenced this new wave of Hindu recovery. Though rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present. „ I am thoroughly convinced“, he once wrote, „that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others, and wherever such an attempt has been made under false ideas of greatness, policy or holiness, the result has always been disastrous to the secluding one“.

And in another connection he once said: „I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread. The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried, if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing.“

And let me finally mention Mrs. Annie Besant, daughter of a London doctor, who was another well known figure in the context of Hindu revival, almost at the same time when Vivekananda was just delivering his sermons in Europe and the United States. She became the spokesman of the Theosophical Society and in 1898 founded the Central Hindu College, which ultimately became the Hindu University at Benares. From the beginning of her sojourn in India, Mrs. Besant had allied herself with the Hindu Renaissance. In her autobiography she wrote:

„The Indian work is, first of all, the revival, strengthening and uplifting of the ancient religions. This act brought with it a new self-respect, a pride in the past, a belief in the future, and, as an inevitable result, a great wave of patriotic life, the beginning of the rebuilding of a nation.“

In contrast to the stirrings that activated the Hindu community after what the British called 'the mutiny', the Muslims lacked any animation. The British conquest of the Mogul Empire had removed the upper-class Muslims from the status of the elite governing class. After the Mutiny the Muslim community passed under a dark cloud, as it was saddled with most of the responsibility for

the outbreak of disorder in 1857. And it was at this point in time that many Hindus had taken advantage of the commercial opportunities that came about with the growth of trade in India, whilst their Muslims brothers lagged behind economically, showing little, if any aptitude for business. And while the new schools were filled to capacity with Hindu youths eager for the new Western learning, the leaders of the Muslim community urged their people to have nothing to do with it. In consequence, the professions of law, medicine, teaching, and journalism were closed to the Muslims, and, most important, they could not compete with the Hindu candidates for positions in the government service.

While Bengali Hindus, Madrasis, and Maratha inspired by the arts and sciences of Europe were experiencing an intellectual and moral renaissance, the Muslims all over India were falling into a state of material indigence and intellectual decay.



Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817 - 1898)



Sir Syed's associates who dedicated their lives to his mission
Standing L to R: Maulana Shibli, Professor Arnold
Sitting L to R: Viqarul Mulk, Mohsinul Mulk, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad,
Maulana Hali



Sir Syed Ahmad Khan - Visionary - Awakener - Father of Aligarh

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

Great Awakener -Father of Aligarh

The second part of the nineteenth century

It was in these deplorable circumstances that a great man emerged, coming to the rescue of the Muslims as their guide and leader: Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. To me, he is one of the greatest sons Indian soil has ever produced and he turned out to become really the saviour of the fate of Muslims without whom, next to Jinnah and Iqbal and a few more others, the history of the Indian Freedom Movement would have certainly taken a different course.

We have already seen that in the years followed the Mutiny, or as the Indians would prefer calling it, the 'War of Independence', the fortunes of the Muslims of the sub-continent were at their lowest ebb. They had been the chief fighters in the War of Independence and had, therefore, to bear the brunt of the British revenges. Delhi at that time was not only the residence of the last Mogul Emperor; it was also the social, spiritual, literary and intellectual centre of the Muslims of the sub-continent. And it was here that the heaviest blow fell. As a result of indiscriminate massacre, arson and loot which accompanied the British occupation of Delhi and the large scale arrests, confiscations and executions which followed it, the Muslim aristocracy was almost wiped out of existence.

The misfortunes of Muslims were, however, not only a result of these terrible actions and due to Government's biased and one-sided attitude. The Muslims themselves, I think, were to no small extent themselves contributing towards them. They had come to dislike and detest everything connected with the British, including their educational system. Thus was created a vicious circle for the Muslims who sank lower and lower in political, economic and social spheres.

Syed Ahmed Khan was the man destined to guide and lead Muslim's out of their self-imposed life in intellectual darkness and seclusion. He faced and mastered this almost tragic situation very successfully. He was born in 1817 in a respectable Muslim family of Delhi. His father was a religious recluse and therefore he spent his childhood mostly at the house of his maternal grandfather who was the *wazir* of the Mogul Emperor, Shah Alam II. Thus he inherited from his father and maternal grandfather the gifts of religious devotion and political farsightedness. When he grew up, he joined the judicial department of the East India Company and spent his leisure in writing or

editing books, mainly on religious themes or subjects connected with the glorious past of the Muslims of the sub-continent. During the nine years of his service in Delhi, he thus edited a newspaper called Sayyid-ul-Akhbar, wrote a number of pamphlets on theology, as well as his monumental work, Asar-us-Sanadid, and prepared a collated edition of Ain-i-Akbari, the history of the reign of the Emperor Akbar.

Right up to the „Revolt“ in 1857, Syed Ahmed Khan's interests were mainly cultural. He looked to the past and showed no anxiety about the future. That changed drastically with the outbreak of the „Revolt“. He kept a detailed day-to-day diary of the course of the uprising in his district, an event which completely captured his mind. He must have felt that its consequences would dramatically change the future of his country, - and that of the Muslim community very particularly.

1857 had been a fatal year because, as Mr. Mehdi Ali Siddiqui writes in one of DAWN's cover stories, 'it not only had witnessed the downfall of the Mogul Empire but also the end of a socio-political system. The so-called Mutiny was the last struggle of a dying milieu. Henceforth, knowledge and more knowledge and not merely faith would be the guiding principle of life and progress. The Muslims were taken to be the culprits behind the armed struggle and mercilessly persecuted. The victimisation included the soldiers, the Royal family, the nobility and the lower middle-class citizenry.'

It is very obvious that the „Revolt“ had a vital impact on Syed Ahmed Khan's views and ideas and had widened his visions. He sensed that public knowledge in Great Britain about India must be either superficial or distorted. This was also the opinion of William Makepeace Thackeray, the British novelist, who had been born in India in 1811 and whose family bonds with the country had remained very strong. In 1841 he had outlined the three commonplace images of India then current in Britain. The romantically inclined continued to regard it as 'the region of fable and marvel, the gorgeous East', a fairy-tale land where sultans sat on ivory thrones, 'fanned by peacock's wings in palaces paved with jasper and onyx'. Prosaic minds imagined India as full of 'feeble and unwarlike people', who were backward and in thrall to cunning priestcraft. For the middle and upper classes, India was still 'a country where younger brothers are sent to make their fortune'.

Syed Ahmed Khan rightly anticipated trouble ahead for India's Muslims who, as I said before, were blamed for the uprising and mercilessly persecuted after it had collapsed. Because of the ignorance of the public at large speculation

flourished when the first news of the 'Mutiny' at Meerut and the seizure of Delhi reached Britain on 27th of June 1857 and the mood was pessimistic. The *Saturday Review* even suspected that the causes of the disturbances were deep-rooted and the massacres of Europeans indicated that India might be on the verge of a bloody racial conflict like that between the slaves and their masters in Haiti sixty years before.

And as one would expect to happen in a traumatic event like this, there was, of course, a British as well as an Indian mythology of the 'Mutiny', - or 'The war of independence'. And both these phrases make their difference in substance and interpretation abundantly clear. Even before it had ended it had become fixed in the national psyche of Britain as an epic struggle between good and evil, with the good, often surrounded and outnumbered, sustained by courage and Christian Faith. This must have led to a sinister side to the British memory of this tragic event, and one which would have repercussions in India and in other parts of the empire. Racial arrogance had been on the increase in India for at least a decade before the 'Mutiny', its spread being reflected in the everyday use of the word 'nigger' for Indian, a term which, during the 'Mutiny', regularly appeared in print. From what the British public had read in the newspapers, supplemented by the more-or-less instantaneous memoirs and histories of the 'Mutiny', they were presented with a story in which a people, hitherto believed capable of improvement, turned against their helpers in the most vicious manner imaginable. It was not just the Raj which been attacked; the revolt was an onslaught against everything the mid-Victorians cherished. To an ordinary Englishman this 'war' was nothing but an unhappy episode caused by a 'mutiny' of the sepoys. To a student of history, however, these same events examined in their true perspective yield a different meaning. For the Muslims there is irrefutable evidence to prove that this was not a mere 'sepoys mutiny', but a full-fledged War of Independence sought with the object of ousting the foreigners and restoring the authority of the lawful ruler. And in all fairness, I think, the Muslims had every reason to believe in this version particularly in view of the barbarous retaliation against their community after the collapse of the movement. There is historical proof that countless Muslims were hanged and their property confiscated on mere suspicion. Perhaps even more harmful than these executions, barbarous as they were, was the policy of suppressing the Muslims in the different walks of life which was followed by the British Government consistently for a period of almost fifty years.

But what to do with these people!/? Most of the public opinion makers of those days in England thought of two alternatives, as 'the work of the civilising had to go forward'.

„One was to ‘rule our Asiatic subjects with strict and generous justice, wisely and beneficently, as their natural indefeasible superiors, by virtue of our purer religion, our sterner energies, our subtler intellect, our more creative faculties, our more commanding and indomitable will’.

The other was to shed the mantle of omniscience and accept Indians as what they had now become, subjects of the Queen, ‘fellow citizens’ who could be tutored in the arts of government in preparation of ruling themselves. In this they were in many respects, like the British working class, who were slowly moving towards enfranchisement.“

This is how the *National Review* summarised its ideology and it must have been known to men like Syed Ahmed Khan who was now convinced that the people of his country, and here again particularly his Muslim brothers, should accept the good things of European civilisation. And it was with this in view that he wrote the Urdu pamphlet *Ashab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind*, ‘Causes of the Indian Revolt’, which he sent to the British government. On the basis of his analysis of the „Revolt“, Syed Ahmad recommended the participation of the indigenous population in political affairs, and the adoption of ways and means to know the pulse of the people. It goes to the credit of his British masters, I think, that this memorandum was seriously studied by the India Office in London, and the British government’s policies and constitutional reforms, introduced from time to time after 1857, reflected his influence.

He now started devoting more and more of his leisure time to the popularisation of western education and established schools at Moradabad and Ghazipur. He also set up a Translation Society, later called the Scientific Society, which arranged for Urdu translations of important English books on science, literature and history.

Syed Ahmed’s efforts in the educational field had from the beginning been directed towards the advancement of all his countrymen,- i.e. regardless of which community they belonged to. But in 1867 the anti-Urdu movement, started at Benares where he was posted at that time, completely changed the course of his policy. It convinced him that if the Hindus and Muslims could not agree even on the choice of a national language, there was no possibility of a common nationhood in the sub-continent. Henceforth he devoted himself entirely to the cause of Muslim education and after a visit to England, where he studied the working of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, he organised a „Society for Educational Progress of Indian Muslims“, which decided to establish the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh.

In 1875, a preparatory school was established and in 1876 Syed Ahmad retired from Government service to devote himself wholly to the work of educational reform at Aligarh. On the 8th of January 1877 the foundation was laid of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College which Syed Ahmed wanted to be „a nursery of leaders“.

After the College was well established, Syed Ahmed founded, in 1886, the Muhammadan Education Conference which held meetings at various places and carried the message of Aligarh to all parts of the sub-continent. It was an attempt to enable Muslims all over India, who were in a state of backwardness, to adjust themselves to the requirements of the modern world in the educational, economic, social, political and literary spheres.

The message of Sir Syed, as he was called after having been knighted by Her Majesty the Queen of England, to his fellow Muslims was to lay aside their old superstitions and bigotry. He argued that the Muslim way of life must be regenerated, and that this could only be achieved through Western education. And he argued that such a course was not even contrary to the teachings of Islam, and he reminded people of the Prophet's words, „Go even to the walls of China for the sake of learning“. And in the opening prospectus of the Aligarh College which later became a university it was stated that its object was to „establish a College in which Muselmans may acquire an English education without prejudice to their religion“.

„I am not thinking“, he once wrote, „about those things in which, owing to the specialities of our respective countries, we and the English differ. I only remark on politeness, knowledge, good faith, cleanliness, skilled workmanship, accomplishments, and thoroughness, which are the results of education and civilisation. All good things, spiritual and worldly, which should be found in man, have been bestowed by the Almighty on Europe, and especially on England“.

I have very intentionally selected this particular quotation being fully aware that not all of us may be in full agreement with all the words of praise used by Sir Syed. However, one has, I think, to give him credit, as his somewhat over-enthusiastic summary of Western and particularly British values have to be judged against the prevailing spirit of the time. Many of the things he saw when visiting England were not only so very different but, appeared at first glance also so very much more advanced and progressive than anything he knew from back home in India. And was, therefore, his overreaction not very understandable? Did this not happen to most of those very keen, ambitious

and genuinely interested students from the sub-continent who during the last 150 years or so have received major food for thought and decisive pointers for their intellectual, political and social development which they then tried to put to use after returning home !? We only have to think of people like Gandhi, the Nehrus, and Jinnah.

It is, of course right and proper that particularly these three great men should be revered as national heroes, but it should not be forgotten that each in his own way was a product of political and intellectual traditions which had been imparted into their country by their British Rulers. They, and scores of others, have, each in his own way and according to his aptitude, gone through the same process of adaptation, hyper-admiration, irritation, and sometimes also humiliation, as Sir Syed Ahmed Khan necessarily had to do. And let us also be aware of the fact that a man with the looks and the intellectual potential of Sir Syed would have been treated everywhere in Europe with the greatest possible amount of courtesy and respect, if only for being an interesting example of a specie of man one would not meet everyday, not even in London, Oxford or Cambridge. So why should he not have been pleased and impressed by the kind of polite and genuine attention he was shown!? I would, therefore, absolve him from having been carried away by a kind of naive romanticism, as so many of his contemporaries did. I am prepared to go along with his observations and the conclusions he did draw for the benefit of his fellow Muslims in India. And I also find his following remarks very convincing:

„For social-political purposes the whole of the population of England forms but one community. It is obvious that the same cannot be said about India. The system of representation by election means the representation of the views and interests of the majority of the population, and in countries where the population is composed of one race and one creed, it is, no doubt, the best system that can be adopted. But in a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourish, where there is no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education in its modern sense has not made an equal or proportionate progress among all sections of the population the system of election, pure and simple, cannot safely be adopted. The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community.....”

“Now, suppose that the English community and the army were to leave India, taking with them all their cannons and their splendid weapons and all else, who then would be the rulers of India? Is it possible that under these circumstances two nations- the Mohammedans and the Hindus- could sit on

the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. It is necessary that one of them should conquer the other. To hope that both could remain equal is to desire the impossible and the inconceivable.....”

“At the same time you must remember that although the number of Mohammedans is less than that of the Hindus, and although they contain far fewer people who have received a higher English education, yet they must not be considered insignificant or weak

“This thing,- who after the departure of the English would be conquerors,- would rest on God’s will. But until one nation has conquered the other and made it obedient, peace cannot reign in the land.”

The fear expressed in this quotation has often been interpreted as a starting signal, or even the ‘hour of birth’ of a message which a few years later was taken up, modified and superbly played in different variations by another great Muslim, Mohammad Iqbal. A message, which was then officially recognised and acknowledged by the Muslim League as its ‘lead theme’, better known as the ‘Two Nation Theory’, then became its credo and ultimately lead to partition.

Many historians hold this opinion although the Quaid-e-Azam himself may have advocated a different view, at least for a long time to come; I will come to this a little later. And perhaps it was not just exactly these very words which I have quoted above, which triggered off that crucial issue. Nor is this, I think, a matter of vital concern, because the fact is that Sir Syed on many occasions made similar statements which without doubt prove how great his concern was that the Hindu majority would not only always dominate the affairs of his country, but would also subjugate the Muslim minority community for ever.

This quotation does, however, prove that the general belief that Iqbal was the first Muslim leader of consequence to propound the „Two Nation Theory“ in his presidential address at the Muslim League session at Allahabad in 1930 is not quite correct. In one of his many and famous speeches delivered by Sir Syed on 16th of March 1888 at Meerut, he clearly talks of „our Mohammedan nation“ and divides the country into ‘Muslim nation’ and ‘Hindu nation’.

Although many writers and historians have felt that the ‘Two Nation Theory’ is reflected in Sir Syed Ahmed Khan’s speeches and publications,- quite a few historians and writers still have their reservations about the actual meaning of the word „nation“ by him. As one English historian pointed out, „there were no two nations, there was not one nation, there was no nation at all.“ In the

strict meaning of the words this is, of course, correct. However, I personally do not believe that Sir Syed really meant it the way his contemporary Europeans would have defined the terms 'nation state' and 'nationalism'. Perhaps one should therefore rather go along with one of Pakistan's present and leading historians who considers Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to be a Muslim separatist, who, "in presenting Muslims as a separate political group in Indian politics, was laying the foundation of a Muslim separatist political movement in India, a foundation on which Allama Mohammad Iqbal, and Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah would subsequently build the edifice of Muslim Nationalism and the demand for a separate sovereign state of Pakistan." And having laid the foundation stone, I think, is what matters alone. This is the main and decisive thing after all, and one of the major reasons why most of the historians unanimously agree that Sir Syed has been of such a vital importance for the Muslim's cause as such,- without whom history would have probably taken a different turn altogether,- without whom, perhaps, Pakistan would have never been created.

Having now looked at Sir Syed's teachings and creeds a bit closer, it certainly does not come as a surprise, that he had his own views on the emergence of the Indian National Congress which had its first official session at Bombay in 1885. From the very inception of it he perceived in it a potential danger to the Muslims. He was bitterly opposed to the extension of the representative principle because he saw in it the device which would relegate the Muslims into the status of a permanent minority. It is therefore not surprising that he warned his Muslim brothers against joining the All India Congress.

„I think it expedient“, he said in one of his many speeches, „that I should first of all tell you the reason why I am about to address you on the subject of tonight's discourse. You know, gentlemen, that from a long time our friends, the Bengalis, have shown very war-like feelings on political matters. Three years ago they founded a very big assembly which holds its sittings in various places and they have given it the name National Congress. We and our nation gave no thought to the matter. But my friends, the Bengalis, have made a most unfair and unwarrantable interference in my nation. It is, therefore, my duty to show clearly what this unwarrantable interference has been, and to protect my nation from the evils that may arise from it“.

Sir Syed has never been indifferent to the presence of the Hindu community in India. Nor has he ever tried to deny them the number one position in terms of communal influence, he very well recognised the fact that Hindus represented the largest community in India and he therefore was always advocating understanding and friendship with them. He likened India to „a beautiful bride

whose two eyes are the Hindus and the Mohamedans.“ But what is often forgotten is the fact that to this picturesque description he added the proviso that the beauty of India depended upon the fact that the two eyes shone with equal lustre.

He, however, never took understanding and friendship between these two communities for granted. He once warned his Hindu friends that if ever they would pursue „a course of action which will bring us loss and heap disgrace on our nation, then indeed we can no longer remain friends, we will do everything possible to protect our people from attack.“ And such a situation, unfortunately, had arisen already in 1867, when Hindus in the United Provinces (UP) demanded that the Persian Script of Urdu be replaced with Hindi as the official language of the province. And this was a very important matter, far beyond a scholarly dispute between ivory-towered academics; it was a factor of unity among Hindus and Muslims of the whole province, if not of India, and thus became a symbol of the widening rift between the two communities. Sir Syed was increasingly disappointed and disillusioned with the prospects of Muslim-Hindu amity and understanding. This controversy convinced him that Hindus and Muslims would finally not be able to see eye to eye on the political future of India.

Until about the early 1860s the Hindus had participated in the cultural heritage evolved during the Muslim rule. Urdu was jointly considered as Indian, never a Muslim language. As Maulana Muhammad Ali once said, the Muslims opting for Urdu instead of Persian was in itself already a concession to Indian patriotism.

But apart from this cause of controversy there had been another one which from the late 1850s onward had slowly come up and become food for heated arguments between the two communities: cow -slaughter. The Muslims ‘right’ to it had never been disputed till then.

Professor Sharif al Mujahid, the Founder-Director of the Quaid-e-Azam Academy, has summarised these two ‘causes of controversy’ plus a third one most appropriately as follows:

„Under the impact of revivalist and ethnocentric movements, it were the Hindus that had withdrawn from participation in this cultural heritage, from the informal arrangement on the issue of cow-slaughter, and from the age-old participation in Muslim festival, and had sought to set up parallel, and rival, Hindu festivals, - to name only three areas of the controversy and conflict.

These Hindu moves were all divisiveThus the Hindus were the ones to disturb the extant Indian cosmos in late nineteenth century India. The most important consequence of this disturbance was that instead of developing a common nationality on the basis of active participation in a common cultural heritage, the Hindus and Muslims developed along separate lines, and the Muslims finally proclaimed their separate nationhood from a thousand platforms in 1940.“

Syed Ahmed Khan was always conscious of the fact that, as compared with the Hindus, the Muslims were numerically much smaller, educationally backward, and economically weak. He was also convinced that the British mind was still fresh with the memories of 1857. He felt that the political activities of the Congress would surely lead to a confrontation between the Government and the people. He recalled how „the Mahomedans and their noble families were ruined. This is the result which will befall Mahomedans for taking part in political agitation.“

Sir Syed was one of the first to quickly grasp that the Hindu revivalist movement of the outgoing nineteenth century was more anti-Muslim than anti-British in character. An outstanding example was the publication of *Anandamath* by the perhaps most famous and popular of the novelists of Bengal, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, in 1882. „The whole tenor of the novel was bluntly anti-Muslim“, writes Khalid Bin Sayeed. „In the novel one comes across the community of children (children of Kali) who believed in no caste distinctions and whose sole purpose was to destroy every vestige of Muslim rule in India..... The community of children in the novel went about burning Muslim villages, plundering Muslim property and killing Muslims in a wholesale fashion. What was interesting to note was that Hindu leaders in this novel made it quite clear that they were not fighting against the British, who had come to India to free the country from Muslim clutches. Towards the end, when the children had won against the Muslims, the holy man who was guiding and inspiring the movement appeared and instructed the leader of the children to abandon fighting and co-operate with the British. The British in God’s good time would purify the country and hand it over to the Hindus to rule it. It was in this novel that the famous song, *Bande Mataram* (Hail Mother), appeared. One can understand why the Muslims later (during 1937-1939) objected vehemently to the Congress Governments adopting it as a national song.“

As I have mentioned earlier the first official session of the Congress movement was held in Poona, in 1885. In the wake of growing nationalistic

feelings and the formation of Hindu revivalist groupings towards the end of the nineteenth century it was only but natural that some leaders of such nationalist movements were calling for a common national platform and already in 1883 an Indian National Conference was organised in Calcutta with representatives from all parts of India. The following year the growing national spirit was reflected in a meeting held at Madras under the aegis of the Theosophical Society.

Meanwhile one Allan Octavian Hume, a retired civil servant, - obviously encouraged by the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, - initiated similar activities. After thirty years in the Indian government, he occupied himself in studying the country's problems. He was convinced that British rule had given the country peace and political stability, but that much more had still to be done to raise the standard of living of the people. He also believed that the British bureaucracy was out of touch with the people and maintained it was of 'paramount importance to find an overt and constitutional channel for discharge of the increasing ferment which had resulted from western ideas and education'.

Acting upon this belief, Hume sent out in 1883 a letter to graduates of Calcutta University urging them to form an association for the mental, moral, and political regeneration of India. Following the aforementioned meetings in Calcutta and Madras a meeting was held in December 1885 in Poona which came to be known as the first one of the All India National Congress. There were seventy delegates, mostly Hindu lawyers, educators, and journalists, with only two Muslims among them. Each year thereafter the 'Congress' then met in December in a different city of India. In 1894, at Madras, the ranks of the annual Congress meeting swelled to fifteen hundred delegates and three thousand visitors. Their first leaders, men like GK Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjea, Pherozesha Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji, championed a Western and a liberal view. They admired Great Britain and were apostles of co-operation.

Another leading member of Congress was Romesh Chandra Dutt. He wrote in 1898 about the Congress movement: „The English-educated Indians represented the brains and conscience of the country, and were the legitimate spokesmen of the illiterate masses, the natural custodians of their interests, and those who think must govern them“.

„At heart“, writes Lawrence James, „Congress was fundamentally loyal. At its annual meetings the Queen Empress was referred to as 'Mother' and her name

cheered. Such displays were genuine and represented a widespread anglophilia among the organisation's founding fathers. It was rather touchingly expressed during the 1900 session by Achut Sitaran Sathé: „The educated Indian is loyal by instinct and contended through interest. The English flag is his physical shelter, the English philosopher has become his spiritual consolation. The English renaissance has so far permeated the educated Indian that it is no longer possible for him to be otherwise than loyal and affectionate towards the rulers of his choice. He is the vanguard of a new civilisation whose banner is love, charity and equality“.

History has taught us that this kind of a romantic honeymoon between 'tradition and progress' did not last long. Demands for social and political reforms were soon forthcoming and nationalistic tunes replaced the 'touching expressions' just quoted. And very soon also the after effects of the already mentioned 'Hindu Renaissance' reached the Congress movement, describing Western culture as soulless and materialistic. Above all the Hindu Renaissance, as a new manifestation of nationalism, was suffused with religion and to many contemporaries the 'Congress' soon became a platform for Hinduism.

No wonder that Sir Syed's outlook on the relationship between India's two largest communities had completely changed after the Congress's establishment. He was opposed to many of the Congress demands,- their demand, for instance, for holding competitive examinations for civil services in India . Competitive examinations, he feared, would result in the rule of one community, - the Bengali Hindus. He also objected to their demands for expanded scope of representative institutions in India and for a greatly enhanced role in the administration of the country. And he, of course, vehemently contradicted their claim to have the right to speak on behalf of the 'Indian nation'. All this was completely unacceptable to him. „The aims and objects of the Indian National Congress“, he wrote, „are based upon ignorance of history and present-day realities; they do not take into consideration that India is inhabited by different nationalities.....“

As a result of Sir Syed's influence, and as I have already indicated, the Muslims had little to do with the National Congress. In 1885 only two Muslim delegates attended the first meeting of the Congress; the next year there were 33 out of a total attendance of 440 ; in 1890 there were 156 Muslims out of 702 and after that there was a rapid decline with the result that in 1905 only 17 Muslim delegates attended out of a Congress membership of 756. These figures, I think, speak for themselves. And if Sir Syed was already concerned

about the ultimate results of the program outlined by the liberals who initiated the Congress movement, he was, together with his followers, more and more alarmed over the Hindu bias of the new wave of nationalism which swept the country and was highlighted by the emergence of people like BG Tilak, a militant nationalist. He referred to Muslims as foreigners and glorified the famous Hindu patriot, Sivaji, for his exploits in the seventeenth century against Muslim oppressors.

„To sum up, then,“, writes Dr. Sikander Hayat, „Syed Ahmad Khan launched his political career to save Muslims from the difficult situation in which they had fallen in the wake of the Uprising of 1857. He was, in particular, distressed over the fact that the Muslims had not only lost political power to the British, but they were also unable to cope with the realities of the new situation in India. He wanted to reconcile them to the British rule. He had no malice or ill-will towards the Hindus. It was only after the religious-political experience of the resurgent Hinduism, exacerbated by the realities of British system of representative government imposed upon a land of India's diversities and differences, that he moved to challenge the so-called 'nationalist' creed of the Congress.“

And the explicit denial of the Congress of a 'Two Nation Theory' then prepared the political ground for a Muslim separatist movement in India. Sir Syed had made Muslims become aware that their political interests were not the same as those of the Hindus, that Muslims and Hindus were separate political groups

Sir Syed's contribution to the 're-awaking' of Muslims in India, their resurrection as a political power on the subcontinent is so huge and important that it is almost impossible to do justice to all his achievements within the context of this brief outline of his life. I had to concentrate on Sir Syed as the great 'educationalist', the founder and spiritus rector of the Aligarh movement, which eventually paved the way for the foundation of the Muslim League and consequently led to the creation of Pakistan. But apart from having initiated all this, - and much more, - his activities in the field of religion were equally breathtaking. Although his commentary on the Holy Koran could not be completed, even so it comprised seven bulky volumes. And he wrote many other books, pamphlets and articles on religious subjects, and tried to prove that in every respect the teachings of Islam were in harmony with the modern scientific theories. It is perhaps not surprising that his views on quite a number of religious questions have not been accepted by the orthodox, but his religious writings and his advocacy of social reforms have

had a great impact on the intellectual upbringing of a new generation of Muslims in India.

Looking back on what he was able to accomplish one cannot help wondering how in a brief span of life this could have been done just by one man only. It is said that this was due not only to his greatness but because he was a born leader of men.

„Syed Ahmed filled the big void created in the life of India's Muslims by the disappearance of the Muslim rule“, summarises 'The Pakistan Historical Society' in its short history of 'Hind-Pakistan'. „He showed them how to discharge that responsibility for their progress and welfare, which was being formerly shouldered by the Muslim Government. But Syed Ahmed did more than that. His long life, spanning almost a century, bridged the gulf between the medieval and the modern Islam in the subcontinent. Himself a relic of the palmy days of the Great Mughuls, he ushered in a new era. He gave the Muslims a new cohesion, a new political policy, new educational ideas, a new approach to their individual and national problems, a new prose, and built up an organisation which could carry on his work. Writing about Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Dr. Spear observes very rightly in his book, 'India, Pakistan and the West', 'In his whole attitude was implicit the concept of Pakistan'“.

The turn of the century

Foundation of the All-India Muslim League

„The twentieth century began much as the nineteenth had ended“, writes Lawrence Ziring in his thorough analysis on both the vision and the reality of a South Asian polity. „With Great Britain the acknowledged world leader, ruling a vast realm encompassing one-fifth of the globe, a colossal empire of twelve million square miles of colonies, dependencies, and protectorates, wherein lived a quarter of the earth’s inhabitants. And the centrepiece in this expansive imperial system was the Indian subcontinent where, in 1903, King Edward VII, acceding to the British throne following the death of Queen Victoria, was declared Emperor of India in a Grand Durbar presided over by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India.Global developments following the Mutiny of 1857 had transformed the administration of India from that of a commercial enterprise to one of geopolitical and strategic importance. Prompted by the European scramble for empire, Britain moved to assure its sustained control over the Indian Ocean region by designing and implementing policies geared to enhancing its Indian administration“.

One of the measures taken in this context was the promulgation of the ‘Indian Councils Act of 1892’. It increased the number of additional members in the Councils and gave them also increased importance in administrative matters. This coincided with a basic change within the heretofore liberal and constitutional Indian nationalist movement which was increasingly challenged by a militant wing of nationalists who sought their inspiration in the ancient Vedas rather than in European thought and who condoned and even supported the use of violence in attaining their ends. This transformation to militant nationalism was mainly the work of Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), who is referred to by British historians as the ‘father of Indian unrest’. In addition famine and plague in the 1890’s caused much suffering and funnelled the general sense of grievance in India.

Also outside of India the trend of events also worked to strengthen the cause of nationalism. Heretofore, European supremacy had been unchallenged. At the turn of the century, however, a number of happenings seemed to indicate that this uncontested leadership was waning. Above all, the rise of Japan and their victory over the Russian Empire in 1905 electrified the Indian nationalists and the slogan of ‘Asia for the Asiatics’ now became the rallying cry of young nationalists in China, Burma, the Dutch East Indies as well as in India.

What was planned and implemented as a pure administrative measure, to lighten the burden of administration in western Bengal, to help rectifying the previous neglect of eastern Bengal, and to give Assam a much needed seaport, the partition of Bengal in 1905, soon turned out to become the beginning of political turmoil and violence. Bengal had become the centre of a militant movement elements of which were quite ready to use violence to achieve their ends, - which, to the great disappointment of the Muslim majority in eastern Bengal, they did when in 1912 King George V and Mary were crowned in a Grand Durbar at Delhi and the partition of Bengal was annulled. A great gesture to Hindu sentiment which could not be offset by a concession to Muslim feeling, i.e. the transfer of the capital of India from Calcutta to the ancient seat of Mogul power at Delhi.

The agitation on the partition of Bengal and its subsequent annulment plus some other political factors deeply affected Muslim political opinion. 'Separate electorates' the institutional device that would safeguard the interests of the minority population became the major objective of the newly born Muslim movement. It was with the demand for separate electorates that Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk and the Nawab of Dacca convened a meeting of the All India Muslim Educational Conference at Dacca, 1906, an institution which Sir Syed had founded in 1886. As a consequence of such deliberations the leaders of the Aligarh Movement therefore and, from their viewpoint, very logically, laid the foundation of the All India Muslim League. It was officially launched in 1906 mainly through the activities of the Aga Khan and the two brothers, Mohammed and Shaukat Ali, who had assumed the direction of the Muslim movement after the death of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The first meeting of the 'League' was held at Dacca; in 1907 it met in Karachi and in 1908 at Aligarh.

The majority of those who participated in the inaugural meeting in Dacca in 1906 had been in the practical field of politics for a long time and had learnt by experience that the Congress could no longer safeguard the rights of the Muslims and that in the national interest they needed an organisation of their own. Many Muslim leaders who had been in the Congress had realised the futility of retaining the membership of a body which had become unconcealed communal in outlook and practice. Thus the setting up of the Muslim League proved to be one of the most vital steps in the history of the regeneration of the Muslims of the subcontinent.

„In a nutshell, it may be said“, writes Professor Ziauddin Ahmed, „that Syed Ahmed Khan's dynamic leadership, foresight and vision laid the foundations of the Aligarh Movement. It was fundamentally a cultural movement aiming at the regeneration of liberal values in literature, social life, religion and

education“ out of which then the Muslim League originated, the carrier of the Muslim community’s aspiration for freedom and equal rights.

Much has been written to the effect that it was the British authorities who originated this artificial Muslim-Hindu dichotomy in Indian politics. Of course, when its existence was presented to them, the British understandably welcomed the Muslim League as a counterweight against the Congress. But in this stage of Muslim-Hindu relations the dominant factor was not the policy of the British Government but rather the Hindu bias of the Congress movement. Or, as one leading Indian historian once said: ‘It were the militant Indian national leaders who sought to build on a basis of Hindu religion for their agitation and to identify the national awakening with a revival of Hinduism. By this act they cut off the Muslim masses from the national movement and opened the way to the formation of the Muslim League in 1906.’

While Indian nationalism was still in its formative period it was the Indians themselves who held the initiative in determining the nature of the movement. While recourse to religion, that is, Hinduism, is understandable, it is apparent that the Hindu leaders did not appreciate the implications of transforming the nationalist movement from a purely secular to a politico-religious one. And, when there was the inevitable Muslim reaction, most members of the Congress made a serious error in refusing to admit the existence and validity of Muslim nationalism.“

The increasing and alarming growth of terrorist activities of the extremist wing of the Indian national movement in the early part of the 20th century and the rising dissatisfaction of even the moderate majority in the National Congress convinced the British Government that some advance would have to be made to satisfy Indian national aspirations. The time was propitious, because at the end of 1905 in Britain the Conservative party had fallen from power and had been succeeded by a Liberal cabinet much more inclined to be sympathetic to the cause of Indian reform. Indian nationalists expected much, particularly from the new secretary of state for India, Lord Morley. Famous as a historian and the biographer of William Gladstone, a lifelong liberal and champion of freedom, he was looked to by India with hope and expectancy as a British official who would be likely to concede a generous advance in the direction of self-government.

Between the years 1907 and 1909, therefore, Morley and the governor-general in India, Lord Minto, sought to satisfy the growing demands of Indian nationalism by liberalising what had been up to this time an almost completely

bureaucratic system of government. On the fiftieth anniversary of the assumption of direct responsibility for the government of India by the British crown, a message from the king-emperor to the people of India announced the extension of representative government. What was commonly known as the Morley-Minto Reforms became law in 1909.

One of the most controversial features of the reforms was that communal electorates were provided for the Muslim community. By this feature the Muslims were guaranteed a certain number of seats of the new councils, and these representatives could be elected only by voters on the Muslim communal roll. Furthermore, Muslim representation was weighted, that is, their numbers were in excess of those that would be computed if only the exact proportion of Muslims to the entire Indian population were taken into consideration. Muslim leaders were, of course, very relieved and happy about these developments for they had feared that the introduction of the representative principle would have surely led to their community's relegation to the position of a permanent and impotent minority. And it is very noteworthy to add here that the Congress accepted the separate electorate arrangements that had been enshrined in the Indian Councils Act in 1909. It is said that one of the most eminent Hindu nationalists, Gokhale, had even supported the Muslims' claims. Mohammad Ali Jinnah once maintained that Gokhale already in 1907 had publicly declared:

„Confronted by an overwhelming Hindu majority, Muslims are naturally afraid that release from the British yoke might in their case mean enslavement to the Hindus. Were the Hindus similarly situated as are the Muslims in regard to numbers.....we would undoubtedly have felt the same fear and adopted the identical policy which the Muslims are adopting today.“

It would be far beyond the scope of this publication if I would now make an attempt to give a brief synopsis of the series of events which in the course of the following four decades finally led to India's independence and its 'great divide'. As I have said at the very outset of this book, my friend Roshen Ali Bhimjee and I merely wanted to reproduce some basic facts and events which, in hindsight, plausibly explains why the division of India and the creation of Pakistan became the logical product of a series of events which none of the acting political figures could have either stopped or given an entirely new direction,- even if the one or other might have wanted to just try that.

Achieving 'independence' from British rule and founding ultimately two separate and independent nations was the result of a variety of developments,- a result, of course, primarily of the actions directly initiated and committed by

the Indian Freedom movement and its most cherished leaders, Hindus and Muslims alike. Another very important aspect was the 'trend of events' outside India. As already briefly mentioned, Europe's supremacy in Asia and elsewhere in the world started to vanish and crumble which considerably contributed to the advancement of the Indian cause and had even its impact on the minds of some enlightened politicians in Whitehall and other hubs of the imperial power house in Great Britain. All this did not happen over night though. The history of constitutional struggle in the sub-continent and the subsequent parliamentary measures taken by the British government which finally led to the passing of the 'Government of India Act, 1935' are vivid proof of this long, antagonising and yet evolutionary process. Above all, however, it was the inspiration, dedication, vision and determination of a handful of charismatic leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohammad Ali Jinnah who, together with many more outstanding men and women, have made it possible that their former masters in London slowly came to realise that time had come to at least change the character of their relationship with the jewel of their Imperial crown, as bitter and painful it may have looked to those who finally had to bear the brunt and accept the responsibility for all those decisions which in the eyes of the majority of British citizens should prove to be fateful for the future of their empire.

Much has been written about the deeds and contributions made by these and other great personalities which stand representative for scores of dedicated people who pledged their lives to bring India's 'pilgrimage to freedom' to a happy and successful end. The biographies of the aforementioned stalwarts of this movement are well known to even those of my readers who may otherwise not be too keen observers of modern history, even when it concerns their own country. The lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru as well as that of the Quaid-e-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, have been narrated and eulogised, - and very rightly so, in dozens of biographies, historical and political commentaries and can be found in even the most basic of schoolbooks in any primary school in India as well as Pakistan. And although this publication is restricting itself to the Muslim's part of India's 'pilgrimage to freedom' only, it would, of course, have been very tempting and fascinating to at least throw a glance at Mahatma Gandhi's advent on India's political stage on January 9, 1915, at the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, where a hero's welcome was extended to him. Gokhale, his great mentor, had already in 1912, after a tour of South Africa prophesied and told his countrymen that Gandhi „is without doubt made of the stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made. Nay, more, he has in him the marvellous spiritual power to turn ordinary men around him into heroes and martyrs“.

It would have been equally exciting to at least briefly visit the two great Nehrus, father and son, to recollect, - and acknowledge, - their great contribution and personal sacrifices during their lifelong struggle for India's independence. Even their greatest critics would find it difficult to deny them respect and appreciation for their historical roles. The one played by the Mahatma as well as by his staunch supporters, Motilal and Jawaharlal. And I am sure, that the Quaid-e-Azam, would have been the first one to even openly say so, though at the tail end of their long march towards independence history could not spare them their fate to become 'arch' adversaries, - each side accusing the other to be solely responsible for the division of their motherland.

I will restrict myself, as I have said, to the Muslims part in this great struggle for national independence which, to them should turn out to become a 'war at two frontiers'. The one being the frontier on which they fought shoulder to shoulder together with their Hindu countrymen against the British Raj, for regaining their national freedom. The other one, and increasingly so, was their fight to prevent the British Raj simply being replaced by another one, by 'Hindu Raj'.

The role which Sir Syed Ahmad Khan has played in this connection has already been dealt with in greater detail at the very outset of this chapter. With him started the 'reincarnation' of India's Muslims as a political force which found its structural expression in the foundation of the All India Muslim League in 1906, which consequently should become the ultimate mouthpiece of Muslim unity and its vehicle to be used on the road towards gaining their independence from both their British masters and their likely successors, the Hindu nationalism. Hindu critics therefore considered the League's foundation the first step towards 'Muslim separatism'. They argued that it was not a mere coincidence that among its founders were people like the Aga Khan and some other leading 'lights of the deputation' which had waited on the Viceroy, Lord Minto, on 1 October 1906 at Simla, presenting him with an address signed by 'nobles, ministers of various states, great landowners, lawyers, merchants, and of many other of His Majesty's Mahomedan subjects', asking for separate representation of Muslims in all levels of government. To them separate electorates, which were finally granted to India's Muslims, were 'thus to contribute further to the isolation of the Muslim community from the main stream of Indian national life.'

Historians do still have varying and different opinions as to whether the foundation of the All India Muslim League was primarily meant to be 'anti Congress' and the beginning of what should ultimately result in the break-up

of an independent India into two different sovereign states, - or whether it was merely to be seen as the logical consequence, the natural reaction of India's Muslims, their 'reply' to the earlier formation of the All India Congress!? It has often been suggested that the support which the British Government or some of their officials had given, directly or indirectly, in the process of founding both the Congress as well as the League, was just another example of perfidious British politics which could best be summed up in what became commonly known as a policy of 'divida et impera'. Divide and rule! When the Muslim-Hindu feud began to mount to serious proportions in the late 1920's, most Hindu publicists took the view that the gulf between the two communities was a result of such British politics, and on this issue one of the 'Ali Brothers', Mohammad Ali, a very prominent Muslim leader and spiritual initiator of the Khilafat Movement in one of the 'Round Table Conferences' in London, 1930, made his famous remark: „It is the old maxim of 'divide and rule', but there is a division of labour here. We divide and you rule“.

Contemporary historians hold different views as to the tactical role played by the British versus these two political parties which in fact both, the Congress as well as the League, for all practical purposes had meanwhile become. Professor Khalid bin Sayeed, one of Pakistan's most outstanding historian and political writer, once had this to suggest: 'When Lord Dufferin was encouraging the formation of the Indian National Congress, he knew that the Congress would largely be a Hindu organisation for after all Muslims were nowhere in the political picture at that time. Thus, if the British could encourage the formation of a predominantly Hindu organisation, why could they not help the Muslims to embark on a similar political career?the British Government probably felt guilty about the fact that they had been unduly hostile to Muslims and that the time had come to bring about some kind of a balance in the growth of the two communities - Hindu and Muslim'.

In hindsight and from a neutral, western observer's point of view, I could not see much value in the historian's dispute over this antagonising issue. And even some most prominent political leaders of that time, like Mohammad Ali Jinnah himself, obviously did not waste their time by lengthy discussions on such theoretical and 'artificial' considerations. When Jinnah finally decided to enter 'national politics' and almost immediately became one of its flag-bearers, he, like many others, found it possible to associate with both these organisations. He was an Indian first, thus enabling him to become what is historically known as the 'champion of Hindu-Muslim unity'. He was the architect of the so called 'Lucknow Pact' of 1916 and was hailed as its principal ambassador. Jinnah was in the chair when both, the Congress and the

League, had their annual sessions in Lucknow in December of that year. And it was here where he said: 'Towards the Hindus our attitude should be of good-will and brotherly feelings. Co-operation in the cause of our motherland should be our guiding principle. India's real progress can only be achieved by a true understanding and harmonious relations between the two great sister communities. With regard to our own affairs, (however) we can depend upon nobody but ourselves'.

'The Hindu-Muslim concordat of Lucknow', writes Professor Khalid Bin Sayeed, 'was the high-water mark of Hindu-Muslim unity.All this was to be swept away by tides which followed in the wake of the Amritsar tragedy and particularly the Khilafat agitation'.

Jinnah had joined the Congress in 1897, and from the beginning of his political career he was primarily concerned with Hindu-Muslim unity. It was only in 1913, when he was already acknowledged and esteemed as an effective and cherished leader of the Indian freedom movement, very well known as somebody who got on well with Hindus as well as with Muslims, that he officially joined the Muslim League. And there are quite a number of most outstanding personalities whom I have come to know a little closer, like my dear friend, the late Roshen Ali Bhimjee, who underwent similar developments, i.e. being keen and staunch supporters of the Congress in its fight against the British, becoming only late admirers of the Quaid-e-Azam, accepting, like their great leader, only reluctantly and as 'ultimate ratio', the necessity for a division of their country.

When Sir Syed first had expressed his thoughts on 'two different nations' in India, one may still question whether he had really meant it in strictly political terms as defined by international law. He might as well have primarily used it to describe and possibly find a definition of Muslim's identity in a country dominated by a vast Hindu majority.

An equally important role was played by another great Muslim whose works and thoughts had a thundering impact on the revival of Muslim's unity in India and their increasing efforts to rediscover and redefine their community's identity as a prerequisite for their successful participation in India's sovereignty once it was finally won. In line with Sir Sayed and the Quaid-e-Azam he is one of the principal and unquestioned architects of what history ultimately should have in store for India's Muslims, their own, sovereign nation, Pakistan. His name stands out very high and is written in golden letters in the history books of 'the land of the pure': Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the great poet of Islam.



Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal
Poet of the East

Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal

Poet of the East

„Iqbal’s death has left a void in world’s literature which like a mortal wound will need a long time to heal and finally get closed“. This is what another giant of poetry, his Indian contemporary and ‘compeer’, Nobel Price winner, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, said about Sir Muhammad Iqbal after he had died in 1938. Great words about a man who already during his life time had gained fame and acknowledgement for being one of the great stars of the Asiatic and in particular the Islamic-Indian-Persian spiritual firmament. „A philosopher and poet of transcendental importance“ as a famous German orientalist and personal friend of Iqbal, once had called him . And yet, the man whom people all over the world even today refer to as the ‘Poet of the East’ and whom most Pakistanis would consider as being the ‘spiritual founder’ of their country, ‘lived a life outwardly of which there is little to be said, and inwardly of which little is known’.

He was most probably born on the 22nd February, 1873, a date questioned and fervently debated by later scholars, of a pious middle-class family, at the ancient city of Sialkot in the Punjab, a city which is well known for its famous sports goods, - and, of course, for Iqbal. His family came from Kashmir. They were high caste Brahmins and one of his ancestors embraced Islam while the family still lived in Kashmir. Following some bitter and most unfortunate political developments which resemble some well known patterns even presently employed in this trouble torn part of the subcontinent, many Kashmiri families left their country after the ‘Treaty of Amritsar’ was signed in 1846. One of them was Iqbal’s grandfather Shaikh Rafiq who left his ancestral village in 1857 and settled in Sialkot, Punjab, along with his three brothers.

„Among the distinguished sons of the Punjab who have shed lustre on the land of their birth and have left it richer in thought and culture, the name of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal has an unrivalled place.....His father (Sh. Nur Muhammad), though not himself a man with any modern education, believed in giving education to his children. He had two sons, Ata Muhammad and Muhammad Iqbal. The elder son, after completing his education, qualified as an engineer...,the younger one, who was exceptionally promising, received high education on the Arts side. There was a college at Sialkot known as the Murray College which was conducted by a Christian mission. ...Muhammad

Iqbal was sent to that college after his matriculation. The teaching of Persian and Arabic in that college at that time was entrusted to a great scholar named Maulvi Sayyid Mir Hasan. The Maulvi had a special aptitude for creating in his pupils a great love for learning and for creating in them a taste for the literature which they studied with him. This contact with a great teacher shaped the career of Muhammad Iqbal and gave him that grounding in Persian and Arabic which stood him in good stead throughout his life“.

This is how late Manzur Qadir, Ex-Foreign Minister of Pakistan and Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court once started an unpublished article on Iqbal's life. It was made available to the editor of a biography on Iqbal which is based on the writings of his father, Sheikh Abdul Qadir, later Sir Abdul Qadir, a life-long friend of the great poet, lawyer, judge of the High Court in Punjab, Minister for Education, Member of the Council for the Secretary of State for India and editor of the 'Observer'.

Iqbal was educated in both Indian and Western culture, and in 1899 graduated from the Government College at Lahore. After his M.A. in philosophy he taught for a time at the Oriental College and The Government College at this capital city of Punjab.

Whilst still studying at the Murray College Iqbal found that he had developed an art to express his feelings and thoughts in verses, written in Urdu. And he started to participate in '*mushairas*', symposia in which poets recite or chant their verses and which in Lahore, a city to be one of the cultural centres of then British India, were of a particularly high standard. It is recorded that on one such occasion Iqbal was prevented from being personally present and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, herself a poetess of great repute, was asked to fill his place, which she did. She recited some of her own poems but in addition gave a translation of one of Iqbal's latest works which elicited much applause. It is said that Mrs. Naidu, who later on played an eminent role in India's freedom movement, was very much impressed by his writings and greatly encouraged Iqbal to follow this path.

Also Sh Abdul Qadir, whom I referred to a little earlier, had seen the dawn of his friend as a great writer and he knew him since their student days. In 1901 he had started a literary journal 'Makhzan' to serve the cause of Urdu literature in which Iqbal's early urdu poems used to be published. It was really him who first introduced Iqbal to the literary world. And Iqbal's early poems were regularly published in the 'Makhzan'.

One of his teachers at the Lahore college was one Mr. T.W. Arnold, later Sir Thomas Arnold as the Professor of Philosophy. This distinguished teacher soon discovered that in Iqbal he had an exceptionally brilliant student, who had a taste for philosophic studies. He began to take special interest in the academic progress of his pupil and this relationship laid the foundation of a lifelong friendship between the master and his pupil. Sir Thomas was an accomplished scholar of Islam and modern philosophy. He taught for ten years at Aligarh and, in 1898, at the age of thirty-four, had joined the college in Lahore. Being a well read author on Islam and Muslim art, he was a great influence on his pupil's further intellectual development.

As mentioned earlier, Iqbal's poetic career already began in his school days and his vivid enthusiasm for Islamic theology and Turkish-Persian mysticism never really lost him again. After having successfully concluded his studies for his MA in Arabic, he taught for a time at the Oriental College and the Government College, at Lahore, - something he obviously found increasingly boring, for he spent a lot of his time at '*mushairas*' and other meetings of some literary societies. In the former he recited some *ghazals* which were very much appreciated and in the latter he wrote longer poems on selected subjects. '*Ghazals*' are traditionally light love-poems, but Iqbal, more than perhaps any other poet, used it as a vehicle for serious ideas. In the words of Professor Kiernan, famous historian and author of various books on Indian, Asian and European history, who has rendered many poems from Iqbal in English verse, 'its peculiarity is that its couplets, strung together by the rhyme like beads on a string, may have no real connection of thought; or the connection may derive from some unity of feeling not apparent on the surface.'

Iqbal's „recitations used to attract large crowds, move the audiences to great enthusiasm, and secure great moral and financial support for the educational association sponsoring such events. His melodious and impressive voice lent an additional charm to the beauty of his language and thought“, said Sir Abdul Qadir, in a talk broadcast by BBC a few days after Sir Muhammad Iqbal had passed away in April 1938.

Largely due to the advice and encouragement of his teacher and great mentor, Sir Thomas Arnold, who had already returned to England, Iqbal eventually decided to leave Lahore and to proceed abroad for higher studies. This was in 1905, one year after his friend, Abdul Qadir, had already left for England.

„The poet's first visit to Europe lasted from 1905 to 1908“, writes Sir Abdul Qadir, „when he qualified for the Bar, in addition to widening his sphere of

knowledge at Cambridge where he had the opportunity of contacts with some of the best intellects of that famous seat of learning. We had co-operated with one another in India, when I was a journalist and he was a lecturer in the oriental College..... We used to be so much together till 1904 that when I told him I had made up my mind to proceed to England, he said he would soon follow after writing to his elder brother and asking him to arrange for the expenses of his studies abroad. This took a little time and that was the reason why he could go only a year later. He had a big attraction in the person of Professor Arnold in England, who had been his guide and friend, in his studies of philosophy at Lahore and who continued to guide him in his further studies in England (and other European countries) in the same sympathetic spirit.“

It was actually Sir Thomas Arnold who was at that time working as a librarian of the India Office Library who had advised Iqbal to join the Cambridge University as an advanced student, and to get a degree by writing a thesis, which he did. He also joined the Lincoln's Inn to qualify for the Bar. After three years in England and intensive studies he got his degree at Cambridge and was also called to the Bar. Professor Arnold was so pleased with his thesis on Persian mysticism that he advised him to submit a German translation of it to a university in Germany, which he did. His and Iqbal's expectations became true and the thesis was approved by the Munich University, but the author was asked to be in residence in the university for at least three months and to show that he had a fair working knowledge of the German language. Iqbal, therefore, went to Germany and his short residence in the country not only improved his knowledge of the German language, but also gave him an insight into the German way of life and thinking and further broadened his outlook. And the University of Munich finally honoured their commitment by conferring on him the Doctor's degree (Ph.D.).

There is, of course, no room in this brief profile on the life of one of India's greatest sons, 'the Poet of the East', to really do justice to his literary works, nor would I even make an attempt to offer some own comments on his poetry or philosophical writings. I am simply putting a few pieces together in which others, highly competent and renowned scholars of international repute, express their opinion and findings on this giant of a man. My sole qualification for doing this is my love and affection as one of his keen and ardent readers, a love which dates back as far as 1959, when I prepared myself for my 'journey into the unknown', to Pakistan, a country newly born and hardly known in Germany, in Munich, where Iqbal had proudly accepted his doctorate. It was only then that I first came to know about Dr. Mohammad Iqbal and started to notice the little monument which the citizens of Munich

had erected in honour of this 'prophet of the East' in a small park, right in the centre of Schwabing, the student's quarters in this south German, Bavarian city. And as luck wanted it, I soon came to know a great and very knowledgeable admirer of Iqbal and his works and visions: Mr. Mumtaz Hasan, one of Pakistan's early, brilliant and most dedicated civil servants. When we first met in Karachi he was chief executive of the National Bank of Pakistan, - but he was also the President of 'The Pakistan-German Forum', a highly active cultural organisation sponsored by the German government to foster Pakistan-German friendship. I had inherited the Forum's treasuryship from my German predecessor in the Eastern Federal and had the good piece of fortune to be surrounded not only by such dedicated and learned men as Mumtaz Hasan, but also by such eminent personalities as Mr. Rangoonwala, Mr. Uqailee, Professor Siddiqui and other outstanding and leading men of Pakistan's intellectual and business elite of the 'roaring 50s and 60s'. Iqbal's admiration for the German poet-giant, Johann Wolfgang Goethe and the great influence which other German thinkers like Hegel, Nietzsche and Karl Marx had on his own works were the common bond between all of us and enriched my own life in those years tremendously. Men like Mumtaz Hasan and his friends stood for those visions and ideals which the spiritual leaders of the Muslim's reawakening in India, like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Iqbal and others had first expressed and formulated. And I have always considered it my personal good piece of fortune to have met people of the standing of Mumtaz Hasan in my very early Pakistani days because it was through him and his 'crew' that my first glimpses on Pakistan's spiritual and historical background were heavily influenced and guided by such learned and sophisticated men. Their professional composition made sure that the newcomer's 'personal shopping basket' was gradually filled with a nice mixture of economic data and entrepreneurial experience as well as with high-levelled intellectual and cultural ingredients.

I thus realised that Iqbal was not only the world famous poet and philosopher, the spiritual leader of what became known as the Pakistan movement, but also a down to earth politician after his return to Lahore from abroad. I now understood that prior to his sojourn in Europe „Iqbal had been an ardent nationalist. But during his stay there he had an opportunity of studying modern nationalism at close quarters in its various manifestations and came to realise the fundamental antithesis between the narrow creed of racial and geographical loyalty and the broad humanistic outlook of Islam. This revolutionised his attitude towards life. He was no longer the poet of an individual group; he had become the poet of humanity.“ He was also, in the words of Mumtaz Hasan, „the chief symbol of the emotional and ideological

developments which led to the revival of Islamic culture in the sub-continent and eventually to the establishment of Pakistan as an independent state. He is the first man in the East to have studied Islam in the light of modern philosophical concepts and to have brought out the world significant and lasting character of the basic Islamic values. He is also, for us in Pakistan, the gateway to world culture. He is, in particular, the cultural bridge between Pakistan and Germany. There is no other Indian or Pakistani Muslim who has brought us so close to German thought and German culture as Mohammad Iqbal“.

It is now generally accepted that after the death of Syed Ahmed Khan in 1898, the most important leader of Indo-Muslim modernism was Iqbal. When he came to Europe, at the beginning of the 20th century it was a time of great changes in Western modes of thought. In the field of philosophy the works of the famous French philosopher, Henri Bergson were having a profound effect on contemporary thinkers with his conception of *elan vital*. In psychology Sigmund Freud claimed to have exposed hidden forces in the subconscious and unconscious mind which had previously escaped rational analysis. And in 1905 a revolution in physical science was initiated by Albert Einstein when he announced his special theory of relativity according to which space and time are relative to a given frame of reference.

All these theories and deliberations were carefully studied by Iqbal and had a great impact on his own way of thinking. The results of his reflections were systematically summarised in six lectures which he delivered in Madras, Hyderabad and Aligarh and were subsequently published under the title *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. In these lectures he outlined his belief that with World War I a 500 years long period of political weakness and spiritual lethargy in the Islamic world had come to an end. He is of the opinion that the superiority of the West had been chiefly due to the fact that the European nations had made better use of the scientific knowledge transmitted to them by the Muslims than the Muslim themselves. In the spiritual restlessness, which had been observable throughout the Islamic world since the beginning of the 20th century, he saw a promising sign of a Muslim renaissance. His ideal was an Islamic Confederation formed by a voluntary alliance of the individual Muslim nations and he tried to remodel Islamic thoughts in the light of Western philosophy. He was also convinced that a reform of Islamic Law was necessary and that the mediaeval system of the orthodox schools of law had to be replaced for it must be made possible for ‘elect men’ to form their own, independent opinions.