A Nineteenth Century Prehistory of Pakistan
Communal representation were not a brainchild of the British or the Muslim League. The Congress, in preemptively concede it to the Muslims long before the Muslim League existed and demanded commun the British.

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Indology(http://indiafacts.org/category/indology/) | 14-06-2018

Hostile Attitude of the Mahommedans...Pronounced

In the year 1885, certain politically minded upper middle class urban professionals, led by an Irish cir Hume (1829-1912), formed an organization they rather grandiosely called the Indian National Cong Mumbai), the capital of Bombay Presidency.[ii][# edn1] The maiden session of the INC was presided o (1844-1906), a barrister from Bengal. The Congress made it a practice to meet annually during the C December, in a Presidency capital or important provincial city of British India. It had been founded during This must have been to the convenience of the Congressmen, since a lot of them were in the legal professi and they mostly lived in the big cities. Thus, the second annual session of the Congress was in Calcutta (n Presidency.[iii][# edn2] Its President was Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917), later to become famous as the ‘gran movement. The next year, in 1887, the Congress met in Madras city (now Chennai), the capital of Madras f first time since its founding, a Muslim President. His name was Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906), a lawyer fro delivering his Presidential address, assured the Congress that it can count on the support of the Muslims of “...so far as general political questions affecting the whole of India – such as those which alone are discus concerned, I, for one, am utterly at a loss to understand why Musalmans should not work shoulder to shou of other races and creeds...”[iv][# edn4]

However, it appears that once Mr. Tyabji went back to his regular life, he discovered misgivings among Ind This is indicated by a letter he wrote to the Pioneer newspaper. “In the course of conversations with many “in regard of the late Congress over which I had the honour of Presiding, I found that there were not few, n principle...yet felt some anxiety lest at future Congresses resolutions that could not commend themselves in virtue of the greater numerical strength of the Hindus be passed...”[v][# edn5]

In plain language, Tyabji was hinting at the Muslim fear that the Congress might become an instrument o members, after all, were western educated Hindu professionals.

We find Tyabji in a far more candid mood when privately corresponding with Hume. In a letter he wrote to Congress on 27 October 1888, he frankly said that it is inspiring the “hostile attitude of the Mahommedan pronounced and apparent...” Tyabji, as a result, concluded that “an overwhelming majority of Mahommed (# edn6) that the Congress represents. Tyabji had his ear to the ground. A year ago, Syed Amhed Khan (181 Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (later to become the Aligarh Muslim University), mocked and berat legislative bodies and voting rights for Indians – it had done so by passing a resolution in its very first sess gathering at Kaisarbagh, Lucknow, on 28 December 1887, he took the Congress to task for wanting to copy an the House of Commons” in India. Since Hindus outnumber Muslims four to one, he told his audience, principle in India “would be like a game of dice, in which one man has four dice and the other only one.”[v
The Congress also drew flak from the Kolkata based Central National Mohammedan Association (founded annual report for the year 1888 chided the Congress for demanding representative bodies, since in a count by nationalities and creeds.”[ix][# edn9] Hence, the CNMA, said the report, did not “believe that the introduce in this country in their entirety will be of advantage to the Mahomedans.”[x][# edn10]

What was the Congress’ response? It was one of an abject surrender to the Muslim communitarian anxiety proved ruinous for Indian unity. To mollify its Muslim opposition and demonstrate that its intentions are became a votary of proportional representation for religious communities in legislative bodies. Yes, dear r were not a brainchild of the British or the Muslim League. The Congress, in its eagerness to appease, soug Muslims long before the Muslim League existed (it was established in 1906) and demanded communal rep British. The Congress, in its 1889 annual session, adopted a “skeleton scheme” for the reform of the Imper Councils – they had been established in 1861 and all their members then were nominated by the British C Now the Congress demanded that at least half their members be elected. But this was to be done “in such Christians, Muhammedans or Hindus” are sent to these bodies, their numbers will not “bear a less proportion Christians, Hindus or Muhammedans, as the case might be, in such electoral jurisdiction”[xi][# edn11] that envisaged constituencies of ten lakh people for the Imperial Legislative Council and fifty lakhs for the Prov

The Congress, thus, legitimated the Muslim communitarian anxiety at a stroke, as also the idea that it could representation. By doing this, I suggest, it provided Muslim politics its raison d’être – reason of existence. of the type Syed Ahmed Khan and the CNMA expressed – later turned to be a basic psychology around why politics organized, as an enclave secluded from the broader field of Indian nationalism. The Shimla Deput that called on the Viceroy, Lord Minto, in 1906 was motivated by this very anxiety. So was the formation of (AIML) later that year. They sought and won separate electorates for Muslims from the British colonial go Morley-Minto reforms in 1909). But the Muslim communitarian anxiety was not put paid to. It persisted in 1940, addressing the Lahore session of the AIML, Muhammad Ali Jinnah almost verbatim echoed Syed A his audience that (being a Hindu) his “brother Gandhi has three votes and...[he] only one vote.”[xii][# edn1] AIML passed a resolution demanding the creation of “autonomous and sovereign” Muslim states in the “N India.”[xiii][# edn13] It is today known as the ‘Pakistan resolution’.

The Past Glories of an Ancient Race

We find that notable Indian Muslims in the nineteenth century were not animated by communitarian anxi them, had more on their minds. This was manifested by the behavior of a group of Muslims during the 188 it was, by any measure, an eventful one.

After it was read out to the Congressmen present, a discussion commenced on the “skeleton scheme” for a transcript, available at the National Archives of India, makes one feel that it took a somewhat acerbic turn Muslim supremacist mindset. Impassioned words were spoken by a number of Muslim delegates underne They were not satisfied with what the resolution offered the Muslims in the legislative bodies. Indian Mus They were too special a people to be worth representation merely commensurate to their share in the pop

Munshi Hidayat Rasul, a delegate from U.P. (then known as the North Western Provinces and Oudh), rose: the goodwill and support of the Muslims, the Congress accept the principle of parity of representation bet That is, Mr. Rasul wanted half the seats in the legislative bodies to be reserved for Muslims and the other l Hindus and other religious communities of India. Mr. Rasul promised the Congress sanguine prospects and concession. “I assure that,” he said,
“if you accept the principle of equality you will have on your side ninety percent of Mussulmans from to percent from the day after tomorrow.”[xiv](#edn14)

A far more radical proposal came from Syed Wahid Ali Rizvi, another delegate from U.P. He demanded tha

“...if India is to be represented by her best and not by her inferior races...in accordance with...the past glo
upon the Congress to rule, not that there shall be as many Mahomedans as Hindus in the councils but that
many Musalman as Hindu members.”[xv](#edn15)

After Mr. Rizvi finished his oration, Mr. Ali Mohamed Bhimjee from Bombay rose to speak. On behalf of M
the resolution on proportional representation. We have no means to be sure, but it is possible that Mr. Riz
with Mr. Rasul. This amendment sought to ratify the principle of parity of representation between Muslim
Congress declare that “...the number of Mahomedan members shall always be equal to that of the Hindus,
Councils.”[xvi](#edn16) Bhimjee assured the Congress that the “demand has not been proposed with any d
but that it relies on its “spirit of tolerance.”[xvii](#edn17)

There were, of course, Muslim delegates who provided saner counsel. Mr. Hamid Ali Khan from Oudh (the
coreligionists that

“...If you disregard the population standard...why, by a parity of reason or unreason, should not the Parsee
claim to have as many members in the Councils as you or the Hindus? Gentlemen, the thing is absurd.”[xv

Mr. Mir-uddin Ahmed Balkhi from Bihar reminded his fellow Muslim Congressmen that they have assemb
that object is a secular and not religious one.”[xix](#edn19)

Nevertheless, despite the pleadings of Mr. Khan and Mr. Balkhi, there were still Muslim delegates who tho
representation is not a wholly absurd idea. Munshi Nasiruddin Ahmed, a delegate from Banaras, rose in th:
make the same demand as Mr. Rasul, but in a significantly more moderate language:

“...we Mussalmans[xx](#edn20) shall rejoice if, as a mark of your confidence in and love for us, you were to
representatives in the Councils. But none of us, at least none who are sane and in the possession of our fu
we have any right to this.”[xxi](#edn21)

The amendment on parity of representation between Muslims and non-Muslims was now put to vote, first
Interestingly, an overwhelmingly large number of them abstained from voting. This was because, the anoR
Report of the Proceedings of the Fifth Indian National Congress (which contains the above transcript) tells us
felt to be unreasonable, neither did they like to oppose what was so vehemently urged by several of their c
could be conceded, so manifestly complementary to their community.”[xxii](#edn22) Eventually only thirty
two hundred and forty odd present voted and the amendment was defeated twenty-three votes to sixteen.
defeated by the non-Muslim delegates.

This instance of high drama in the Congress is of vital import since the themes that constituted it – Musli
with Hindus – were very much inherent in the Pakistan idea. As Venkat Dhulipala has demonstrated in his
proposed Muslim state of Pakistan was intensely discussed and developed as an idea by the Muslim press,
the 1940s. This phenomenon generated a large body of literature in the form of pamphlets, treatises, book
infrequently, come across as Muslim supremacists. For example, Anis al Din Ahmad Rizvi, author of the tr
Bareilly in 1940), argued that it was binding upon Muslims to create an Islamic state since “it was a central
from other religions and indeed made it superior to them.”[xxiii](#edn23) One pamphlet, produced at some
Muslim Students' Federation, was the Khilafat-i-Pakistan Scheme. It spoke a crudely supremacist language
Ayesha Jalal informs us that this tract "declared that the Muslim alone was a true human being" and non-Muslims had to be converted to Islam." [xxiv] The ideological basis of Pakistan, Jinnah's 'two-nation theory' attempt at revising the Muslims' minority status in India. Once it was conceded that the Muslims are not equal to Hindus, the idea that they are "entitled to equal treatment with the Hindu 'nation'" was to be a "non-negotiable form of their own state (as it turned out to be) or a privileged constitutional status in a united India with equals of Hindus. The 'two-nation theory' was a shy at the parity that the likes of Mr. Bhimjee and Mr. Rizvi had so earnestly sought in the year 1889.

Why the Anxiety and Supremacism?

We see that the bases of a Muslim exclusivist politics – whose ultimate manifestation was the Islamic state in place in the late nineteenth century, sixty years before the partition of India. Prominent Muslims were against political agitation to be weighed upon by the religious majority of the country. Some of them also believed that one of these two psychologies would have been sufficient to generate Muslim political exclusivism and fine job of it to eventually destroy the unity of India. However, one can legitimately ask, how could several life bear two seemingly contradictory states of mind? How could they be both anxious of the majority and and provide an answer.

In an earlier article, Islam and 'Syncretism' in Indian History, I had dwelt on the political and cultural history of points. Firstly, I sought to argue that the Mughal imperial system that had preceded the establishment of an 'Islamicate' character. It had enforced a broad political and cultural hegemony of Islam room for cultural self-assertion. [xxviii] If by 'syncretism' we mean a conscious liberalisation towards a difference, then the Mughal state was not 'syncretic'. Shahjahan banned the construction of new temples, temples in Varanasi. Even Akbar, according to the late Cambridge historian C.A. Bayly, had sought to build a medieval Bengal, that even a population of converted Muslims which expressed its piety in an Indian lang religious individuality – its attitude, like that of the Mughal state, was not 'syncretic'. Textual evidence suggests a population of converts (ironically) held the Bengali language in contempt as a Hindu tongue. They also had

In my opinion, the supremacism that the political psychology of certain Muslims exhibited in the nineteenth memories of the 'Islamicate' hegemony that once prevailed in the Mughal imperial system. This is since, the 'ashraf', and stood at the apex of Indo-Muslim society. The 'sharif', literally the 'exalted' ones, honorable, generally foreign, ancestry. Those who prefixed 'Syed' to their names claimed descent from the you can count three Syeds among the Muslim protagonists I mentioned above. A prefix such as Munshi (lit indicate sharif status. The 'sharif', being the literate elite, were closely connected with the functioning of the administrative system rested on an ability to move such people around from place to place. 'transferrable bureaucracy of the Mughal domains. Thus, it sounds plausible when Richard Kurin says that one with a history of the "conquest of and rule over South Asia and its native born locals." [xxvii] The likelihood that individuals such as Syed Ahmed Khan, Syed Amir Ali, Munshi Hidayat Rasul, Syed Wahid Ahmed regarded themselves a cut above the great 'polytheist' population that surrounded them.

As about the broad Muslim masses, there is evidence that they too could act in an unabashedly supremacist hegemonic authority of Islam upon the cultural ambience of a place. They could do this by actively hinder be surprised at this since we have seen how certain Muslims in medieval Bengal, though they were indigeneous things they identified with the Hindu 'cultural enclosure' – it could be the deities or a language related by Gyanendra Pandey in his book, The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India, about 1 in U.P. sought to keep a moneylender from constructing a temple. In 1877, the Muslims of Mubarakpur dis
shivalaya in the compound of his house. They were much angry at this and reported the matter to the police magistrate, poor Manohardas argued that

"...the Muslims of Mubarakpur built mosques and other places of worship wherever they lived, without objection. More than five or seven months ago, Faqir Kunjra had erected a masjid close to a place that was sacred to the Muslims wished to destroy the small shivalaya that he had built inside his own house: this was nothing. To this, Muslim leaders replied that Faqir Kunjra had built his masjid with the permission of 'us zamindar: we were Muslims, none Hindu – so 'what right had the Hindus to object or allow'?"[xxxiii]'[edn33]

Why did the Mubarakpur Muslims behave in such fashion? We see that they naturally assumed that Islam was their town since Muslims were temporally dominant in it – all the zamindars of Mubarakpur were Muslim. 'Islamicate' hegemony it had enforced, a part of the cultural memories of these Muslims too? This is defin writes, "the reality of British power" in "the Gangetic plain, only dropped the Mughal disguise after 1857." identified with Mughal rule with many of them believing that "being Muslim entailed a special relationship. Since the above incident occurred just two decades after the formal extinction of Mughal authority, it is involved in it nurtured a vivid memory of looking up to a Muslim sovereign and cherishing the 'special relation' among Muslims.

Now, having taken note of the historical logic of Muslim supremacism, we are ready to understand the attitude of Muslims in Indian public life. If the British devolved any authority to the Indians through the medium of culture was the possibility of an aggressive cultural reassertion by the majority. About two years before Syed Ahmed Kaisarbagh speech, his institution's publication, the Aligarh Institute Gazette, had expressed this fear quite published in it on 23 November 1886 had warned that if representative institutions are introduced in India, majority will forbid the killing of cows and employ public money in building temples..."[xxxvi]'[edn35] As hegemony that had for long determined the public culture of north India was already under attack. Advocates for an elite status of Urdu – that 'Islamicate' cultural artifact par excellence – in both U.P. and the Punjab. Unsurprisingly, Muslim elite adopted an exclusivist politics that drew its cultural logic from a hegemonic supremacy that its visible erosion was causing them. It eventually resulted in them creating, with the enthusiastic asst. Indian Muslim masses, a sovereign political enclosure wherein the supremacy of a once imperial Indian Is state of Pakistan.

References

[i] It then included the present day states of Maharashtra and Gujarat and the Sind province of Pakistan.

[ii][ednref2] It then included all of West Bengal, Bangladesh, Bihar and Odisha.

[iii][ednref3] It comprised of entire Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and included portions of Kerala and Karnataka.


[v][ednref5] Badruddin Tyabji Papers, National Archives of India, Microfilm Roll No. 1333. No date was met the letter was written in early 1888, soon after the 1887 Congress session over which Tyabji presided.

[vii][ednref6] Badruddin Tyabji Papers, National Archives of India, Microfilm Roll No. 1354.

[viii][ednref7] The following is the text of that resolution:
That this Congress considers the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing Local Legislative Councils a considerable number of elected members and the creation of similar Councils for the North Western Provinces of Punjab essential; and holds that all Budgets should be referred to these Councils for consideration, their recommendations submitted to the Executive in regard to all branches of the administration; and that a standing Committee should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protests that may be recorded by majorities of the Council. (Detailed Report of the Proceedings of the Fourth Indian National Congress held at Allahabad on the 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th of December, 1888, 'Appendix', p.203. National Archives of India, Indian National Congress, No. 1433.)


[x] Ibid.


[xiii] Ibid., p.185.


[xv] Ibid., p.29.

[xvi] Ibid.

[xvii] Ibid.

[xviii] Ibid.

[xix] Ibid.

[xx] 'Mahommedan', 'Muhammadan', 'Muhammedan', 'Mahomedan', 'Mussalman', 'Musulman' in the nineteenth century. I have reproduced them as and when they appear in the primary texts that I have quoted. Detailed Report of the Proceedings of the Fifth Indian National Congress, p.29.

[xxi] Ibid., p.32.

[xxii] Creating a New Medina. State Power, Islam and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial North India.


[xxiv] Ibid., p.399.
I have borrowed this expression from Marshall G. S. Hodgson. He is the author of a three vols of Islam called *The Venture of Islam*.

This idea is better and more elaborately developed by historians Shashi Joshi and Bhagwan Joshi in *Hegemony in India. Culture, Community and Power. Volume III. 1941-47*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1994


David Lelyveld, *Aligarh’s First Generation. Muslim Solidarity in British India*, OUP, New Delhi

Ibid., p.30.


I owe this phrase to Shashi Joshi and Bhagwan Joshi.


*Aligarh’s First Generation*, p.33.

See Shan Mohammad (ed.), *The Aligarh Movement: Basic Documents. 1864-1898*, Meenaks

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