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THE AHRAR-UNIONIST CONFLICT AND THE PUNJAB POLITICS DURING THE THIRTIES

A substantial number of Muslims in the Punjab felt that they did not carry the political and economic weight to which their majority in the province entitled them. They were despondent over the way in which the Shahidganj Mosque controversy was handled by those in power, disappointed by the showing of the Muslim League in the first provincial elections and dissatisfied with the leadership of the Unionist Party. Two political parties that gave expression to their feelings were the Ahrars and the Khaksars, who had been in existence since long before the Shahidganj controversy, but were brought into the limelight by it. In the late 1930s, when both these parties enjoyed massive support from certain sections of the Punjabi Muslim community, Sikandar Hayat was involved in a confrontation with them. These parties had never accepted the non-communal stance of the Muslim Unionists and challenged their hegemony in the Punjab.

The Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam (also referred to as the Ahrars) or the Ahrar Party, was established in 1929 with the avowed aim of creating an Islamic State within the Subcontinent that would manage its affairs in accordance with Islamic dictates of life.¹ Its membership included people who had lost hope in both the Congress and the League and were radically opposed to British imperial policies in the Subcontinent. It was a party framed under the impact of the October Revolution in Russia (1917) and the communist ideas that it had disseminated.² In 1931 the Ahrar President, Maulana Habibur Rehman Ludhianwi, addressing the Ahrars in their annual session, declared:

I want to tell all the nations of Hindustan in clear words that the Ahrars do not want to do any injustice to any other nation. But, at the same time, they are not prepared to live as a scheduled caste in India. The Muslims are equally entitled to share in Indian affairs. They will essentially be equal partners in the Indian Government.³

Addressing the same session, Sahibzada Faiz-ul-Hasan observed that socialism was in accordance with Islam's concept of *musawat*:

The unjust distribution of production is the real root-cause of all maladies and social injustice. To control it properly will be the actual cure of a big problem faced by human beings. Such control can be called *musawat* (equality), too. Socialism is an ideology brought out after a thorough research, and to me, is better than capitalism, fascism and other contemporary ideologies. But, it is not totally scientific yet, since its merits have been discussed only in books and in gatherings, and thus it needs to be analysed in the context of the practical realities of life.⁴

According to Afzal Haq, a prominent leader of the Ahrars, who has written a book on the history of the Majlis, it came into existence as a result of dissensions among Khilafatists, exploitation of have-nots by haves and disenchantment with contemporary political parties. He points out that the Punjab Khilafat Committee was divided into two

sections, the easy-going upper classes and the hectic lower classes;⁵ and the Ahrars, wishing to represent the majority, tried to build up a consensus. The first regular session of the *Majlis* took place on December 29, 1929, and was presided over by Afzal Haq. Delivering its keynote address, Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari exhorted the Muslim youth to lead India to her freedom. This inaugural session of the *Majlis* coincided with that year's annual session of the Congress; and later the two joined hands to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Led by self-made idealistic individuals with humble economic backgrounds, the Ahrars reflected Congress policies in their political views, represented Islamic fundamentalism in their religious outlook, and tried to build up a mass movement in the Punjab when the Khilafatists were scattered, the League was still suffering from factionalism and the elite Unionist hegemony over the province kept the masses away from the mainstream of political life. Soon after its inception, the Ahrar Party started emotional agitations on a variety of issues before it had organised itself properly. On some of these, it was able to bring people out on the streets in demonstrations, but with no proper party-apparatus and frequent arrests of its leaders, the Ahrars were not able to mobilize any stable support. Its energies were frittered away in unplanned confrontations with the Unionists, the Ahmedis and the British, who saw to it that the Ahrars were kept involved on a variety of fronts and cleverly exploited differences between leading Ahrars. Azim Husain considers the Ahrars to have been "remnants of the Khilafatists, along with some urban Muslims who resented the predominance of rural influence, and some former Muslim Congressmen, returned to the political field by organising the *Majlis-i-Ahrar*. They had no programme, no organization and no policy, and lived from day to day"⁶

The *Majlis* boasted of a middle-of-the-road and agreeable 'consensus' for the common Muslims, which was yet needed to be handled in a more scientific and pragmatic way so as to make it more lasting and equally enduring. It is not to say that the Ahrars did not refurbish their movement with an intellectual framework, but, still, they mainly addressed and appealed to the down-trodden Muslim classes. The Unionists under Fazl-i-Husain and Sikandar Hayat respectively enjoyed the support of a sophisticated administrative machinery set up by the British and thus were more influential given the politicking of that period and had an access to a more powerful media. They could easily exploit the bickering between the Ahrars and the *Ittehad-i-Millat* to suit to their needs, and the same way the Ahmedis and other non-Muslim pressure groups easily manoeuvred the Ahrars out of gears by letting them go against a formidable British administration. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan was an influential leader and journalist of a longer standing and a more active career. His *Zamindar*, an influential Urdu daily from Lahore, was a very vocal and representative newspaper that carried a major following among the readers inside and outside the Punjab. After the Khilafat Movement, he was a leading spokesman of the Ahrars. But as he developed differences with the other Ahrar leaders, he established his own party, the *Ittehad-i-Millat*, which, despite having aims akin to those of the Ahrars, was antagonistic towards them. It joined the campaign to get back the Shahid-ganj Mosque for the Muslims, but stayed aloof from conflicts between the Ahrars and the Unionists. Each party made damaging insinuations against the other, the *Ittehad* also

using the telling resources of the *Zamindar*, while the Ahrars were restricted to expressing themselves on public platforms.⁷ But they did have flamboyant speakers like Ataullah Shah Bokhari, Mazhar Ali Azhar and Maulvi Gul Sher Khan, whose oratory influenced many a Muslim youth, including Shorish Kashmiri, a firebrand from Lahore.⁸

The Ahrars soon found an issue to increase their popularity among the Muslim masses in the Punjab by spearheading a *jihad* movement in Kashmir. The cities of Rawalpindi and Sialkot became centres of this movement, and Allama Iqbal and many other Muslim intellectuals wholeheartedly supported its efforts to safeguard the interests of Kashmiri Muslims against the aggressive designs of the Hindus. The daily *Inqilab*, under the editorship of Maulana Abdul Majid Salik, was constantly appealing to the sentiments of the Punjab Muslims by making them conscious of the atrocities Dogra rulers were committing against Kashmiri Muslims.⁹ The Ahmedis were also championing the cause of Kashmiri Muslims and were winning favour amongst them. After the bloodshed caused in an encounter between Dogra troops and Kashmiris on July 13, 1931, an All-India Kashmir Committee was established under the chairmanship of Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud, the leader of the Ahmedis. This eventually led to a show-down between the Ahrars and the Ahmedis, and they remained daggers drawn ever thereafter. The Ahrars felt that on the pretext of the Kashmir Committee, the Ahmedis had actually begun to propagate their own creed. Apprehensive of increasing Ahmedi influence in Kashmir, such firebrands as Afzal Haq, Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari, Mazhar Ali, and later on Shorish Kashmiri, started denouncing them in public speeches and aroused considerable mass support for their stand.¹⁰ Then, in 1932, the Ahrars joined the Kapurthala Movement in support of the State's Muslim peasantry.

When, after his return from Delhi in 1935, Fazl-i-Husain was reorganizing the Unionist Party, he avoided the Ahrars and developed closer relations with the Ahmedis.¹¹ This association between Unionists and Ahmedis aroused a staunch wave of animosity from the Ahrars and eventually proved harmful to the leaders of both parties. Even several trustworthy colleagues of Fazl-i-Husain were supporting the Ahrars in their anti-Ahmedi activities, as well as providing them with moral and financial support for their campaign to regain the Shahidganj Mosque. Becoming aware of these covert relations between his lieutenants and the Ahrars, Fazl-i-Husain was much disturbed by them. He thought of the Ahrars as "the dangerous unemployed", out to "create disruption in the Muslim community and thus injure its solidarity",¹² and condemned the Muslim Unionists who were aiding them indirectly.¹³ On the emotion-ridden Shahidganj issue, which had already led to a series of violent riots, Fazl-i-Husain advised the people to stay calm and await a legal settlement of the issue. On January 14, 1936, Fazl-i-Husain made the following observation in his Diary:

Various people came to me about the Shahidganj mosque. I advised them to drop the matter, and then something may transpire to improve matters, but that there was no advance possible at this stage. They protested that this meant defeat. I told them that they have been defeated in this matter at all stages and my advice is to court no more defeats.¹⁴

When the Shahidganj crisis intensified the Ahrar leaders remained as inactive as those

of other parties, the Muslim masses, according to Ikram Ali Malik, "were bitterly disappointed", and the opponents of the Ahrars publicised the notion that "they had held aloof because of the forthcoming elections".¹⁵ The Ahrars retaliated by alleging that the Unionists and their leader, Fazl-i-Husain, were responsible for the unfavourable turn of events.

At this critical juncture, Mohammad Ali Jinnah offered his services to help resolve the Shahidganj issue. Fazl-i-Husain reacted favourably to this on February 2, 1936: Government of India seems to have accepted Jinnah's offer to help, and asked the Governor to co-operate with him. This is all to the good. This trouble stands in the way of communities coming together, and we should all be grateful to Jinnah for making the effort; and if he succeeds, Punjab benefits from it.¹⁶

When Jinnah came to Lahore at the end of February 1936, he set up an arbitration board composed of representatives of all the communities concerned. As mentioned earlier, Fazl-i-Husain was at this time going through a strange state of mind, tending to suspect that people around him were conspiring against him. Thus, only three days later, on March 2, 1936, he commented:

Jinnah is letting himself go against Aga Khan, and against me, and against the Conference. This is unfortunate. He has been like that all his life hence could not get on with anybody in the Congress or the League, or the Conference or the Round Table. Never could form a Party. In Bombay had no influence and even now is not recognised as a leader. I am afraid, I will not now go out of my way to be nice to him.¹⁷

Fazl-i-Husain met Jinnah at Mian Bashir's residence on March 6, 1936, while the latter was still busy having parleys with all the communal leaders involved in the issue. In his diary, Fazl-i-Husain remarked: "Jinnah does not seem to have made any progress, and appears to be in a *cul de sac*. He seems to be thinking of leaving his clients in the *cul de sac* and disappearing himself".¹⁸ In his *Journal*, on March 7, 1936, referring to a telephonic conversation with Jinnah, he observed: "It appears that he was avoiding seeing me. It is probably due to the platform, marble slab, and school on the mosque site, that he is doing this."¹⁹

The Muslim case for the restoration of the Mosque was rejected by the Lahore District Judge; and under the direction of Iqbal, an appeal was filed with the High Court. The issue was discussed at the 24th and 25th Annual Sessions of the Muslim League, at Calcutta and at Lucknow, as by then it had become an issue for Muslims all over the Subcontinent. The efforts of Allama Iqbal, Barkat Ali and Ghazanfar Ali Khan will always be written in golden letters in the history of the Subcontinent for trying to bring back security and peace to the province in the late 1930s when emotionalism was at its highest pitch and could easily be exploited for selfish purposes. When the Muslim League Council met in January 1938 at New Delhi the Shahidganj issue was thoroughly discussed, and it was decided to observe the 18th day of February as Shahidganj Day and to take up the issue again in a Special Session at Calcutta in April. Some Unionists, intent on grinding their own axes, tried to discredit Barkat Ali and to malign the Muslim Leaguers. Barkat Ali vindicated his position on the issue through a statement to the press.²⁰

The appeal lodged with the High Court was rejected on January 10, 1938; and Muslim statesmen like Barkat Ali then wanted to take up the issue in the Punjab Legislative Assembly. Sikandar Hayat, according to Ashiq Husain Batalvi, was not in favour of bringing up the issue in the Assembly, and forwarded his own suggestions to the Governor.²¹ In a speech delivered in the Punjab Assembly on March 16, 1938, Sikandar Hayat criticised Barkat Ali on the plea that if Muslims tried to regain the Mosque by dint of a Bill in the Assembly, it would create an impractical precedent for similar overtures by non-Muslim communities in the Province. He observed that this would also adversely affect the Muslim position in provinces where they were in a minority. He further discouraged the initiative on the ground that the verdict of the highest court in the province could not be outlawed by the Legislature.²² However, Barkat Ali's motion in the Assembly, commonly known as the Punjab Muslim Mosques Protection Bill of 1938, was enough to embarrass Sikandar Hayat, as the Bill created "a grave crisis, probably involving the Premier's resignation".²³ The Calcutta Session of the All-India Muslim League endorsed Sikandar Hayat's efforts to secure an honourable settlement of the Shahidganj issue, offering its co-operation and assistance towards this end, and rejected a proposal to launch a civil disobedience movement over the issue. According to S.M. Ikram, the proposal "seems to have been favoured by Malik Barkat Ali's group".²⁴

Relations between the Punjab Muslim League, led by Allama Iqbal and Barkat Ali, and the All-India Muslim League had been strained since May 1936, when differences between the central body and its provincial counterpart had begun to emerge. This was a critical period for the Provincial League, which also suffered on account of the animosity of the ruling Unionists, whom, to make matters worse, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, the only other Leaguer in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, had also joined. However, despite their differences with him, Allama Iqbal and Barkat Ali never lost their confidence in the Quaid and kept on working for the welfare of the community at large. On the other hand, differences between Sikandar Hayat and Barkat Ali continued to grow and the latter tried his best to dislodge the Unionist Government.

The Ahrars suffered major set-backs because of the organized and concerted actions of the ruling Unionists, including the jailing of their adversaries.²⁵ At the same time, despite the strenuous efforts of Sikandar Hayat and his colleagues, as noted in Linlithgow's correspondence, inter-communal dissensions in the Punjab also worsened.²⁶ In a message, the Secretary of State acknowledged the severity of the Shahidganj conflict, which had increased the difficulties Sikandar Hayat faced.²⁷ Another message sent from London in April 1938 made a similar observation.²⁸ Governor Herbert Emerson also faced problems on account of the Shahidganj situation, and together with the Premier courted further unpopularity by starting a witch-hunt of alleged communists in the province.²⁹

The Ahrars, often joined by other Muslims, regularly staged demonstrations for the restoration of the Shahidganj Mosque, voluntarily courting arrests. In January 1938, writing to the Viceroy, Emerson observed: "As I have previously mentioned, the campaign by the Ahrars is purely political and is the direct outcome of the Lucknow conference, where Sikandar made an agreement with Jinnah and a resolution was passed

by the Muslim League demanding the restoration of the place to Muslims. Sikandar personally does not seem to be embarrassed by the situation in which this resolution placed him, but the renewal of the civil disobedience is of course an inconvenience and a source of expense to Government, and there is always the danger that it may assume serious proportions."³⁰ The Ahrars, however, did not welcome this agreement since they were equally uncomfortable with the League and the Unionists. Yet, the Ahrar agitation for the return of the Shahidganj Mosque was not just a reaction against the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact, for veteran Muslim Leaguers like Allama Iqbal, Barkat Ali and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, who did not agree with the Ahrar creed, were also actively involved in the movement for the restoration of the Mosque.

On January 27, 1938, Emerson reported to Linlithgow that, after the High Court's decision of January 26, 1938, the Shahidganj demonstrations suddenly increased in number to add to the worries of the Punjab Government.³¹ When Pundit Nehru visited Lahore around this time, Sikandar Hayat had a chance to meet him: "They had not previously met. Sikandar found him more moderate than he had expected."³² Nehru wanted to rejuvenate the Congress in the province, where its real support was limited to a few individuals like Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, who was the only Muslim from the Punjab to return to the Legislature on the Congress ticket.³³

In a subsequent letter to the Viceroy, Emerson praised Sikandar Hayat for his handling of the Shahidganj issue in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, though the demonstrations were still continuing.³⁴ A number of Ahrars and other Muslims were in jail, with more and more volunteers offering themselves for arrests. Under Emerson, the Punjab Government showed no leniency in its tough stand despite the fact that as many as 88 political prisoners were on hunger strike in various jails.³⁵ To Sikandar Hayat's hostility towards Barkat Ali, was now added the antagonism of Herbert Emerson, who wrote to the Viceroy about him as follows: "Before the Lucknow sessions, he was, therefore, more or less in the wilderness. When Sikandar and Jinnah came together, Barkat Ali found himself in danger of being side-tracked and shortly after the Lucknow session he issued a statement to the effect that the Muslim members of the Unionist Party had now become absorbed in the Muslim League and that Sikandar had become a disciple of Jinnah. It was this statement, more than anything else, which prevented the agreement being translated into effect, the present position being that, although many Muslim Unionist members have signed the League ticket, they have all attached the proviso that membership is subject to the Sikandar-Jinnah agreement, and I believe that their forms of membership have either not been handed in, or have not been accepted with this condition attached. I do not know what Jinnah's views are on the matter, but it is obviously not in his interest to have an open breach with Sikandar, and I imagine that he does not wish to force the issue. Meanwhile, Barkat Ali is doing his best to create mischief. A few days ago I saw an intercepted letter from him to Jinnah, in which he abused Sikandar and the Unionist Party and claimed that about twenty Muslim Unionists were prepared to join the League without any condition, and invited Jinnah to agree to his proposal to create a cave in the party by a sudden announcement to this effect. I do not expect that Jinnah will be foolish enough to agree. . . . It is, however, clear that Barkat Ali, for his

own ends, is doing his best to embarrass the Punjab Government."³⁶ This long and prejudicial letter presents a one-sided view of the situation.

The Sikandar-Jinnah Pact was not appreciated by the British, though they tried not to express their displeasure openly. To them, it seemed that the Pact might enable Sikandar Hayat to deal with the British on more equal terms by subscribing to the creed of the Muslim League, which was becoming more and more critical of the British Government, particularly at a time when it wanted more communal harmony in the Subcontinent. Barkat Ali and his group did not view the Pact as the Unionists did; but Barkat Ali, a life-long friend and companion of the Quaid, never opposed Sikandar Hayat just for his own ends – though, on occasion, his opposition appeared like a personal battle. In fact, they often exchanged pleasantries and astute remarks in and outside the Assembly and when Sikandar Hayat died, his old opponent, Barkat Ali, cried profusely.³⁷

The Ahrars enjoyed a popular following in the rural areas of the Punjab, where their leaders held frequent meetings denouncing official policies and attitudes towards the Shahidganj controversy. Such orators would carry a hatchet, the symbol of the Ahrars, and ask the Muslim audience to express its solidarity against alien rule. The masses responded generously to their fund-raising drives, and disturbed local administrators would submit exhaustive reports on these activities to their superior district or divisional officers.³⁸ In March 1938, Emerson reported to Linlithgow that he had advised Sikandar Hayat not to commit himself to any pro-Ahrar position under the pressure from the Muslim League.³⁹ Sikandar Hayat followed a cautious policy, and his loyalty was duly acknowledged by the British.⁴⁰

With ominous developments on the international scene, which later led to the Second World War, the British Indian Government became increasingly wary of anything that appeared to threaten the stability of the Subcontinent. It was particularly, allergic to the nationalist and socialist stance of the Ahrars, as likely to foment internal subversion, and stepped up its campaigns against alleged communists and terrorists. This enhanced anti-British sentiments; and the Muslims, in particular, felt betrayed by the Government as well the Congress Ministries, as both ignored and violated Muslim aspirations. They were thus given added incentives to mobilize themselves against both the British and the Congress, with the Shahidganj incident playing a major role in this turn of events.

At the departure of Herbert Emerson, Sir Henry Craik took over as the new Governor of the Punjab on April 7, 1938. The same day, he wrote to Linlithgow, briefing him on his meeting with Sikandar Hayat, in which Jinnah's offer to help Sikandar Hayat in resolving the Shahidganj issue was discussed.⁴¹ Keeping Linlithgow informed of major political developments in the Punjab, Craik also expressed his views on the Calcutta Session of the Muslim League, and its bearing on the Shahidganj controversy.⁴² In May, he reported that the civil disobedience movement launched by the Ahrars was being abandoned, but that Zafar Ali Khan's Ittehad-i-Millat was still persisting.⁴³

Despite the lessening of the Ahrar pressure, Sikandar Hayat was still faced with a troubled situation, since the Shahidganj controversy had shaken the very roots of the Unionist Party, and by mid-1939, it became subject to serious internal discord. The Governor felt that this "might ultimately lead to serious dissensions in the Unionist

Party, which even Sikandar, in spite of his general popularity, might find it difficult to handle".⁴⁴ The Governor was kept well-informed on tensions in the Unionist Party, as he received regular secret reports on the Ministers as well as other leading members of the Party.⁴⁵ Apart from the trouble created by the Shahidganj Mosque issue, the urban Hindus spared no effort to embarrass Sikandar Hayat on account of his Bills against the money-lenders, which they called *Kale Qawanin* (black laws). But, with strong support of the British, he was able to defuse the opposition, and the Shahidganj controversy gradually lost its momentum as an active issue.

However, the Ahrar Party survived and continued to be active in the 1940s, with some Ahrars strongly supporting the Pakistan Movement, while others toed the Congress line. In an article written in 1943, Humayun Kabir observes: "In the Punjab, the Ahrar Party is still powerful. Combining economic grievances with religious passion, its militant policy attracted and still attracts some of the finest figures among Muslim political workers. It accepts the political objective of the Congress and wants to extend still further its economic implications. Deeply suspicious of the League as an organization of reactionaries and the bourgeoisie . . . it is bound to increase its strength at the cost of the League".⁴⁶ The fact is that, soon after the Lahore Resolution, Afzal Haq advised the Ahrars to support the Pakistan Movement, though much of the Ahrar leadership was not in favour of the Muslim League. On account of his own unflinching affiliation with the Congress, Humayun Kabir could not see any Nationalist Muslims supporting the League's struggle for Pakistan.

The Muslim League officially recognized its differences with the Ahrars in the 1940 without being offensive; as a contemporary source recorded: "The essential difference between the Ahrar programme and the Muslim League programme lies in the fact that, whereas the latter aims of the political solidarity and integrity of Indian Muslims and claims for them an independent place in a future India where they will be free to develop according to the best traditions of Islam, the Ahrars still repose their trust in the goodwill of the Hindu community and hope that the latter will remove the economic and social inequalities of the Muslims after they have attained independence. The Ahrars are further under the impression that the social and economic interests of the masses in both the communities being the same, they will be able to lead a united front against a future Government of India by an appeal to the masses, if their programme remains unfulfilled. The Ahrar programme includes equal distribution of wealth, removal of untouchability and complete autonomy to live according to the Shariat; but they fail to understand that without the political emancipation of Muslims as an independent nation, they cannot put this programme into practice. They can solely rest on the political power of the Muslims for success of their programme, and if they continue to delay their independence by joining hands with those who in the past have exploited the Muslim community in the economic and social field, they will have to throw themselves at the mercy of others."

NOTES

1. Afzal Haq, *Tarikh-i-Ahrar*, Lahore, n.d., p. 9. Also see Janbaz Mirza, *Karwan-i-Ahrar*, Vol. I and Vol. II, Lahore, 1975, 1977.
2. Abdullah Malik maintain that the *Majlis-i-Ahrar* was a necessary outcome of plight of the peasantry. See Abdullah Malik, *Punjab Ki Siyasi Tehriken*, Lahore, 1971, pp. 85-102. "All the members of the Majlis-i-Ahrar were the members of the Congress beside being Khilafatists. They were not ordinary Congressites, rather very active workers of the party . . . When the Congress started the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Ahrars equally participated in it. In their economic orientation they were influenced by socialism, and the Ahrar leadership always condemned capitalism." Anonymous, *Uttar Pardesh Ki Saqafat*, n.d., p. 19.
3. English rendering of the Presidential Address delivered in Urdu on July 11, 1931. The original text is in the *Mihr* Collection under No. 129. Also see Abu Saeed Anwar, *Presidential Address*, Lahore, 1936; *Mihr* Collection No. 160.
4. Quoted in Afzal Haq, *op. cit.*, p. vii. Also see the Welcome Address of Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar in *ibid.*, pp. v-vi.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
6. Azim Husain, *op. cit.*, p. 313. Also see Leon B. Poullada, "Contemporary Political Parties in the Punjab," M. A. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1954, p. 162. "Based on the well-to-do peasantry and the lower middle classes, the Ahrars confined their membership to Muslims alone and combined economic grievances and religious passion to formulate their militant political policy". Humayun Kabir, "Muslim Swing to Nationalism", *The Hindustan Standard*, Calcutta, October 17, 1945.
7. Afzal Haq, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-180.
8. Shorish Kashmiri, *Pas-i-Diwar-i-Zindan*, Lahore, 1971.
9. Abdul Majid Salik, *Sarguzasht*, Lahore, 1955, p. 285. Also see Michael Brecher, *The Struggle for Kashmir*, Toronto, 1953, p. 9; Prem Nath Bazaz, *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1954, and *Report of Court of Inquiry Constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to inquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953*, Lahore, 1954, p. 11. Also see, Leonard Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan*, Berkeley, 1963.
10. "The sympathies of Sir Fazl-i-Husain were with the Ahmedis. It was probably because they were the most organized sect in the community." Abdullah Malik, *op. cit.*, p. 209. Also see Afzal Haq, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-186. For a detailed discussion see, Janbaz Mirza, ed., *Aab-i-Rafta* (Speeches of Chaudhary Afzal Haq), Lahore, 1960.
11. Afzal Haq, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178. According to another contemporary source different political leaders were trying to use the Ahrars to gain popularity among the Muslim masses. Nawab Muzaffar Khan bought them loudspeakers, and Firoz Khan Noon and Shahab-ud-Din expressed their sympathy with the Ahrars, much to the annoyance of Fazl-i-Husain, who was very close to Chaudhary Zafrullah Khan, and Ahmedis. The Shahidganj issue worsened relations between Sikhs and Muslims in the province. For the Sikh view point on the issue, see Ganda Singh, *History of Gurdawara Shahidganj*, Lahore, 1935. Also see the *Tribune*, Lahore, May 17, July 17 and July 20, 1935. For an early assessment of the Ahrars' attitude towards the Shahidganj issue, see *ibid.*, July 25, 1935. The Ahrars, later on, joined the agitation, *ibid.*, September 22, 1935 and January 28, 1937.
12. Waheed Ahmad, ed., *Diary and Notes of Fazl-i-Husain*, Lahore, 1977, p. 333.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
15. Ikram Ali Malik, ed., *A Book of Readings on the History of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1970, p. 559.
16. Waheed Ahmad, ed., *op. cit.*, 1977, p. 202.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 201. Also see *Tribune*, February 14, 23, 25, 1936.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

19. *Ibid.*, Also see *Tribune*, May 29, 1936.
20. *Tribune*, February 8, 1938.
21. Ashiq Husain Batalvi, *Iqbal Kay Akhiri Do Saal*, Lahore, 1961, pp. 570–590.
22. Concluding his speech, (Sikandar Hayat), declared that “all the Muslim members of my Party who are present in Lahore have signed their resignation. . . . and we offer to resign forthwith our places in the Cabinet if we are convinced that resignations could restore the Shahidganj Mosque to the Mussalmans.” *The Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, 1938, Vol. III, p. 810. Also see Batalvi, *op. cit.*, pp. 571–592. For a complete version of Malik Barkat Ali’s Bill, see *Inqilab*, February 8, 1938.
23. R. Coupland, *The Constitutional Problem in India*, Part II, Madras, 1944, p. 48.
24. S. M. Ikram, *Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan*, Lahore, 1969, p. 275, “Apparently, Malik Barkat Ali was so much disgusted with the bureaucracy-controlled Unionist ministry that he gave the highest priority to its dislodgment from power. Opinions may differ as to whether his Punjab Muslim Mosques Protection Bill of 1938 was calculated primarily to secure the restoration of the Shahid Ganj Mosque or to embarrass the Unionist ministry”. *Ibid.*
25. Shorish Kashmiri, *Qaid-i-Farang*, Lahore, 1967; Shorish Kashmiri, *Iftikhar-ud-Din*, Lahore, 1967, pp. 16-17, and Afzal Haq, *op. cit.*, pp. 222–228.
26. Secretary of State to Viceroy, Linlithgow, March 8, 1938. The present reference and the following ones have been taken from the microfilms of Linlithgow’s private correspondence as serialized by the India Office Records in the following categories: MSS Eur. F125/3, Vol. I, 1937; MSS Eur. F125/4, Vol. II, 1937; MSS Eur. F125/5, Vol. III, 1938; MSS Eur. F/125/9, Vol. V, 1940.
27. *Ibid.*, March 29, 1938.
28. *Ibid.*, April 5, 1938. Also see Viceroy to the Secretary of State, April 13, 1938.
29. Herbert Emerson to Secretary to Governor-General, 1938, MSS Eur. F/125/86.
30. Emerson to Linlithgow, January 11, 1938.
31. *Ibid.*, January 27, 1938.
32. *Ibid.*
33. For an interesting, though critical, evaluation of the political career of Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din and his embittered relations with the Ahrars, see Shorish Kashmiri, *Iftikhar-ud-Din*, Lahore, 1967.
34. Emerson to Linlithgow, January 30, 1938.
35. Telegram from Emerson to Linlithgow, February 4, 1938.
36. Emerson to Linlithgow, February 12, 1938.
37. Malik Shaukat Ali, interviewed at Lahore, May 12, 1938.
38. C. King, Commissioner of Rawalpindi Division, to Chief Secretary, Government of the Punjab, reporting on anti-Government feeling in his area, February 1, 1938.
39. Emerson to Linlithgow, March 31, 1938.
40. The successful working of Sikandar Hayat’s Ministry, besides the loyalty of Khizr Hayat, were applauded by the Punjab Governor in his private letter to the Viceroy. Emerson to Linlithgow, April 5, 1938.
41. Craik to Linlithgow, April 7, 1938.
42. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1938.
43. *Ibid.*, May 10, 1938.
44. *Ibid.*, June 24, 1938.
45. See P. Moon to Puckle, Secretary to Governor, July 2, 1938.
46. Humayun Kabir, *Muslim Position: 1906–1942*, Calcutta, 1943, p. 7. M. R. T., *Nationalism in Conflict in India*, with a Foreword by Quaid-i-Azam M. A. Jinnah, Bombay, 1943, p. 196. For a contemporary re-evaluation of the *Majlis-i-Ahrar*, see Sahibzada Talah Qadusi, Sanaullah Bhutta and others, *Mazhar Nama*, Lahore. 1977.