SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH
www.sagepublications.com
DOI: 10.1177/026272800702700301
Vol. 27(3): 249–269

RE-CONSIDERING CHRONOLOGIES OF NATIONALISM AND COMMUNALISM: THE KHILAFAT MOVEMENT IN SIND AND ITS AFTERMATH, 1919–1927

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ABSTRACT In 1920, M.K. Gandhi launched the Non-cooperation campaign, his first attempt at mass anti-colonial mobilisation. It quickly became aligned with the Khilafat movement—a mobilisation among Indian Muslims to protect the position of the Khalifa after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. Scholars have seen this moment as the high point of cooperation between India's Hindus and Muslims, with a real possibility for unity in the nationalist movement. However, the campaigns ended within two years and, after 1922, differences among the leadership intersected with violent conflicts between Hindu and Muslim communities in a number of different regions; the promise of the preceding years appeared shattered, some argue for ever. Scholarship on the Khilafat movement has been teleological, tending to read it either as part of the story of 'Muslim separatism' or subsuming it into the forward march of Indian nationalism.

Arguing that the picture drawn by the existing scholarship is misleading, this article asks if the Khilafat movement can really have a story of its own. Through examining the campaign in Sind, it shows that at the grassroots it was made up of a complex set of alliances, often little related with religious difference or Indian nationalism, made and broken right from its inception. Rather, it argues that political developments in the post-Khilafat period proved crucial to the way that nationalism and communalism would come to be defined.

KEYWORDS: *communalism, M.K. Gandhi, Khilafat, nationalism, Non-cooperation, shuddhi, Sind*

Introduction

The Khilafat movement was a popular campaign among Indian Muslims in response to the threat to the Khalifa and the Muslim holy places after the defeat of the Ottoman

Empire at the end of the First World War. In 1919, Muslims of north India mobilised a broad-based popular campaign, the likes of which had not been seen before in colonial India. Rumours had begun to circulate, as the war ended, that a harsh peace treaty was to be imposed on the defeated Ottoman Empire. If true, such a treaty would endanger the position of the Sultan as Khalifa of Islam and the safety of Mecca and other holy places. The Khilafat movement aimed to pressure the victorious Allies to retain intact the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire as they had existed in 1914 and to preserve the position of the Khalifa as the temporal head of the Islamic world. It was largely Indian Muslims who campaigned to save the Khilafat; their co-religionists elsewhere were comparatively unmoved. The movement became quickly associated with Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's first experiment in anti-colonial mass mobilisation, non-violent Non-cooperation, and, at least in towns and cities, the organisational structure of the two movements closely overlapped. The Khilafat movement was, however, relatively short-lived. It was almost completely over by 1922, the same year that marked the end of Non-cooperation.

Scholars have seen the Khilafat movement as a flash in the pan and have tended to subsume it into a progressive narrative of Indian nationalism. The years 1919–22 are widely understood as the high point of Hindu-Muslim unity in the anti-colonial movement (Bamford, 1974[1925]; Brown, 1972; Hardy, 1972; Hasan, 1979, 1981b; Minault, 1982; Nanda, 1989; Shakir, 1983; Qureshi, 1999). As strikes, demonstrations and *satyagrahas* took place around the country, cries of 'Long Live Hindu-Muslim Unity!' ('*Hindu-Musalman ki jai!*') echoed from India's different corners. Hindus and Muslims walked shoulder to shoulder against the Raj; they 'were one in their desire for swaraj through non-cooperation' (Minault, 1982: 115–6). The cross-cultural popularity of the Turkish *fez* in this period seemed testament to a new possibility of friendship and solidarity (Amin, 2005: 8). However, in February 1922, in Chauri Chaura, a small town in the then United Provinces, peasant non-cooperators trapped 22 policemen in their station and burned them alive. Gandhi, horrified at this transgression of non-violence, called off the *satyagraha* that was to take place at Bardoli in Gujarat the following month and brought Non-cooperation to a standstill.

After 1922, a series of differences in the Khilafat/Non-cooperation leadership intersected with increasing conflict between Hindu and Muslim communities across north India. The unity that had prevailed earlier was shattered, giving way to a period of 'communalism'. Anti-colonial activists were disillusioned with what many saw as Gandhi's whimsical decision to call off civil disobedience just as it was gaining momentum. They were divided over whether to continue with the campaign of boycott or return to their posts in the government bureaucracy and participate in local elections. The momentum for the movements quickly dissipated and people were left without direction.

Scholars have depicted 1922 as a turning point in Indian nationalism. For many, the events after this period fold easily into a story of communal separation, reflecting the impossibility of a reconciliation of Hindu-Muslim differences. For Hardy (1972: 204),

Hindu-Muslim cooperation at an all-India level against the British represented a 'post-dated cheque upon a bank that, after 1922, had failed'. Nanda (1989: 362) sees the unravelling of the Khilafat/Congress alliance as 'the end of a dream', and for Dixit (1981: 62), it signified a signpost on the path to partition as 'the pan-Islamic ideology and the methods of mass mobilisation evolved during the Khilafat agitation paved the way for the emergence of Pakistan in 1947'. The Khilafat leadership and ideology, Nanda (1989: 390) argues, 'reinforced the flight from secular nationalism which took Muslim separatism to a point of no return'.

Even those who take a more nuanced position, resisting the teleological drive, identify a qualitative shift in this period. Gail Minault (1982: 149, 192), for instance, whose study of the Khilafat movement remains peerless, argues that the conflicts 'irrevocably violated' the Hindu-Muslim understanding and represented 'the reappearance of communalism'. Qureshi's exhaustive study gives short shrift to the fraternity that this moment is supposed to have engendered, seeing in it little more than a motley group held together by a coalition of vested interests. When the reasons for this alliance receded with the suspension of civil disobedience on the one hand and the hope of an early resolution to the Khilafat question on the other, it fractured, almost inevitably, along religious lines (Qureshi, 1999: 345).

This article asks specifically if the Khilafat movement can have a story of its own. It argues that the trajectory of possibility to impossibility in Hindu-Muslim relations that the scholarship charts is somewhat misleading. A closer examination of the Khilafat movement in Sind shows that it was made up of a complex set of alliances, often little related with religious difference or Indian nationalism, which were being made and broken right from its inception. Rather, political developments in the post-Khilafat period in an all-India arena proved crucial to the way that nationalism and communalism would come to be defined. It was during the latter half of the 1920s that the years 1919–22 came to represent a moment of both possibility and closure for nationalism (Tejani, 2007).

The Regional Context

Sind had been part of the British Empire since 1843 when it was famously taken by Charles Napier from the Baluch Talpur dynasty. It was incorporated as part of the Bombay Presidency but separated from the rest of British India by a series of native states along its eastern border. Geographically isolated from the rest of the Presidency, Sind was also demographically in stark contrast to it. In 1911, Muslims accounted for 75 per cent of the total population of 3.5 million (Cheesman, 1997: 35). Urban Muslims in Sind's towns were mostly artisans or labourers. The vast majority, however, lived in the countryside. Rural Sind was organised around the institution of the *wadero*, landholders who owned some of the largest estates in British India. Their cultivators were landless *haris*, 'tenants-at-will', who could be removed at any point (Cheesman, 1997: 60–71).

In addition, the Sufi religious elite were central to the exercise of power in Sind (Ansari, 1992: 38–45). These were the *Sayyids* and the *pirs* (spiritual guides). Following the early advent of Islam in Sind, Muslim conversions had mostly been performed by Sufis. As a result, religious authority tended to be held by their descendants, the *pirs*, rather than by the *ulema*. *Sayyids*, who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad, generally resided in towns and were teachers and scholars. Many were also *wadero*s, the combination affording them tremendous influence. In contrast, rural areas were the social base of the *pirs* (Ansari, 1992: chapters 1–2). Venerated in Sindhi society and central to its social and economic life, *pirs* had acted as mediators between the rulers and the population since the seventeenth century, a relationship for which they were rewarded with honours and grants of land, something that continued under the British. *Pirs* belonging to important shrines, generally the tombs of revered Sufis, wielded great moral and spiritual influence over local populations, rich and poor. They often acted as adjudicators in local conflicts: a *wadero* would consult his *pir* before taking any decision in complex cases, while a cultivator who wanted to approach his *wadero* would do so through his *pir* (Cheesman, 1997: 38).

The majority of Sind's Hindus descended from the Lohana tribe and were recent immigrants from the Punjab. Popular Islam in Sind had a strongly syncretic character, with Muslims and Hindus sharing many practices particular to the region. Many Hindus worshipped at Sufi shrines and followed a blend of Hinduism and the teachings of the Sikh Guru Nanak. There were few Brahmans, most ate meat other than beef, and there were few taboos about mixing with other castes or non-Hindu communities. Hindus tended to be concentrated in urban centres and to belong to the professional (Amil) and merchant (Bania) classes. Lohana Amils had held the highest administrative offices under Muslim rulers since the eighteenth century. They spoke Persian, grew beards, wore Muslim dress and were usually educated under Muslim teachers. After British conquest, Amils took to English-language education and continued in government service. Banias, in contrast, were less integrated with Muslims, professionally as well as culturally. Sind had long been important in trade with Central Asia and Banias had been dominant in these commercial networks (Markovits, 2000). The port of Karachi, the capital of British Sind, grew rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century, in large part because of powerful Hindu trading firms, which dominated trade and money lending throughout the province (Cheesman, 1997: 46–9).

Pan-Islamism

In the early twentieth century, a young generation of Indian Muslims had begun to protest against British imperialism at home and abroad. A series of policies such as the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911, the opposition to a Muslim university in 1912, as well as the Italian invasion of Libya, an Ottoman province, in 1911, all

contributed to a growth of anti-British sentiment amongst Muslims (Ansari, 1992: 78; Hasan, 1991: 60). In 1913, the Anjuman-i Khuddam-i Kaaba was founded in Lucknow. One of a set of organisations concerned with the future of Turkey and the Holy Places, it was led by Maulana Abdul Bari, a respected scholar at Lucknow's theological seminary, Firangi Mahal. He was joined by Shaukat Ali and his younger brother Maulana Mahomed Ali, graduates of the Mahommedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, who would have a huge influence on the intellectual life of its later students (Hasan, 1981a; Iqbal, 1966; Lelyveld, 1978). In addition, M.A. Ansari, an Edinburgh-trained surgeon who led a medical mission to Constantinople in 1912, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a religious scholar who had turned to a career in journalism, also influenced the radical thought of this younger generation (Douglas, 1988; Ray, 1981). Azad would go on to become one of the most prominent leaders of the nationalist movement, serving as president of the Indian National Congress from 1940–45. All were at the centre of pan-Islamist and anti-imperialist activity during these years and would become central figures in the Khilafat movement.

The *pirs* of Sind were drawn into the wider framework of Muslim intellectual and political life in north India during the pan-Islamic activities of the early twentieth century. Many had developed close ties with pan-Islamist leaders elsewhere in India. Prominent *pirs* such as Ghulam Mujaddid Sirhindi of Matiari, Turab Ali Shah Rashdi and Ali Anwar Shah Rashdi of Larkana, for instance, were followers of Maulana Abdul Bari. They supported the Sind branch of the Anjuman-i Khuddam-i Kaaba and raised money for the Holy Places. Several others had developed close ties with the *ulama* of the Dar al-Ulum at Deoband, an influential theological seminary in the United Provinces. By the 1900s, there was a network of Deobandi influence in Sind from Barchundi at the Punjab-Sind border to Sukkur and Hyderabad (Ansari, 1992: 77–83). However, those *pirs* who engaged with pan-Islamism tended to be from the Qadiri and Naqshabandi Sufi orders that had emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Pirs* from longer-established shrines of the *sajjada nashin* families had shown less interest in these ideals. Nevertheless, because of their significance in Sindhi society, *pirs* were central to the widespread support for the Khilafat movement. They were, as scholars have argued, the 'pivot' on which support for the Khilafat movement hinged. They provided the urban, western-educated Khilafat campaigners access to rural Muslims who remained isolated from emergent political and intellectual movements and cared little about the future of Turkey. *Pirs* translated the threat to the position of the Khilafat as a threat to Islam itself, perpetrated by the British. The Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements thus came together on an anti-imperial platform. *Pirs* issued numerous *fatwas*, calling on their many thousands of spiritual disciples (*murids*) to participate in demonstrations and boycotts. They toured rural areas and were prominent at Congress and Khilafat Committee conventions, all the while speaking of the danger that faced Islam and the Holy Places and the need for Hindu-Muslim unity to combat it.

The Khilafat Movement in Sind, 1919–22

Proponents of the Khilafat movement in Sind had advocated non-cooperation from the outset. They said that Islam was in danger and that there were three ways to save the faith: '1. Non-cooperation i.e. to sever all connection with the enemy of "Din" (religion i.e. Islam); 2. Hijrat i.e. to leave the country of the enemy of religion; 3. Jehad i.e. to fight with the enemies of Din by drawing sword'.[1] Gandhi was quickly drawn to the issue of the Khilafat. He saw the anti-British sentiment embedded in the concerns of the Indian Muslim intelligentsia. Moreover, his time in South Africa had convinced him that the British could only be successfully challenged if Hindus and Muslims united. In the brief time since his return to India, he had developed strong relationships with a number of Muslim leaders of whom the most prominent was Maulana Abdul Bari. By supporting Indian Muslims in their concerns, Gandhi pledged himself and, by extension, the rest of 'Hindu' India to this ideal. He declared 6 April 1919 as a 'day of humiliation' in response to the Rowlatt Act, the legislation that attempted to make permanent the wartime restrictions on civil rights, and announced that *satyagraha*s would be held around the country.[2]

The First World War had a profound impact on India's society and economy, affecting life through massive recruitments, high taxation and sharp price increases. This resulted in a fall in the standard of living for many. The rise in prices of coarse grains, the staple of the poor, had hit rural societies hardest (Sarkar, 1983: 168–71). The Rowlatt Satyagrahas channelled these grievances. Gandhi drew on political networks established during the war, including the Home Rule Leagues and certain pan-Islamist groups, to mobilise the *satyagrahas* and to extend their reach in the worst affected sections of society (Owen, 1968). In the towns and cities of Sind, the Rowlatt Satyagrahas proved successful. A large proportion of shops remained closed in the hinterland (*mofussil*) towns of Larkana and Shikarpur, and in Karachi a scheme was worked out to cut off the food supply to large sections of the population. Public meetings were attended by thousands of people. Hindu and Muslim spokesmen came together to denounce the colonial state, the Commissioner in Sind noting, in April 1919, that 'the week has been distinguished by the remarkable phenomenon of united assemblies of Hindus and Muhammadans in a Muhammadan mosque and a Hindu temple'.[3]

Gandhi drew on these successes in order to integrate the goals of Non-cooperation with those of Khilafat. During *satyagraha* week in Hyderabad, he proposed 'to cease cooperation with the Government if it took any part in dismembering the Empire of the Khalifa against the dictates of the Islamic law'.[4] Then on 19 April 1919, at Jallianwallah Bagh in Amritsar, General Dyer's troops killed 327 people, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, who had been peacefully demonstrating against the Rowlatt Act. Referring to this, Gandhi continued that

> the Muslims and Hindus of India were not only united over the question of the Khilafat, but also on all political questions relating to their motherland—India. This was the

> National Week in memory of the tragedies in the Punjab. The blood of Hindus and Muslims mingled in Jallianwalla Bagh and other places last year had cemented the Hindu-Moslem unity.[5]

He reiterated at meetings around Sind that Khilafat was a Hindu question *because* it was a Muslim question. Certain Hindus had taken the position that they would support the Khilafat cause only if Muslims would stop cow slaughter or mobilise around Jallianwalla Bagh. But, Gandhi maintained, their support should be unconditional—Khilafat was an Indian concern.[6]

In a gesture of solidarity, Muslim activists in Hyderabad announced that their co-religionists would adopt the *swadeshi* (home industry) movement as their own and boycott foreign goods. Many also declared that they had stopped eating beef. In several districts, at the encouragement of local *ulema* and the Khilafat leadership, individual families gave up beef in their diet.[7] Activists in Sind called on people to withdraw co-operation with the government: to resign their titles and civil appointments, withhold taxes and boycott the municipal councils whose responsibilities had been recently extended under the constitutional reforms of 1918. Large numbers were reportedly doing so.[8] By mid-October 1920, a dozen Muslim students from Karachi had left their schools and it was rumoured that 300 others, Hindu and Muslim, would follow.

Religious leaders provided the essential link between urban Khilafat activists and the rural population.[9] During the All-India Khilafat Day held on 17 October 1919, Sindhi *pirs* had organised protest meetings in villages and had begun to attract the attention of rural society (Minault, 1982: 77). The shrines of *pirs*, sites of protest against government activity in earlier decades and centres of *mujahidin* (those who wage *jihad*) activity in the nineteenth century, again became politically charged spaces (Minault, 1982: 105). Officials noted with some alarm the intensity that the movement had so quickly achieved:

> The Caliphate agitation has assumed a gravity of which it is difficult to trace a parallel in the history of political unrest in this country….Whatever the origins of the movement and the causes of its growth…it would be underestimating the situation to declare that it is confined to a few discontented Muhammadans. It is true in some parts the agitation is more violent than in others. Sind, for example, is the most affected part of this Presidency.[10]

A number of *pirs* who had been associated with Deoband or with the Khuddam-i Kaaba joined the Sind Provincial Khilafat Committee and quickly came to hold some of its most important offices. The president of local and district branches of the committee was often an influential *pir*, and prominent figures such as Pir Turab Ali Shah Rashdi and the Pir of Jhando were members of the provincial committee (Ansari, 1992: 87).

Pirs also took a leading role at provincial Khilafat conferences which were often attended by all-India leaders. They organised meetings across Sind right down to the

smallest villages where they preached that the infidel government had defiled the Holy Places by slaughtering pigs and drinking alcohol. Every Muslim, it was declared, had to non-cooperate with the government or face eternal damnation (Minault, 1982: 105). *Maulvis* in urban areas did much the same. The *maulvis* of Sukkur, for instance, issued a *fatwa* declaring the Holy Places sacred, 'wherein non-Muslims cannot rule or remain in possession' (Hasan, 1991: 161). Religious leaders encouraged donations to the Khilafat funds and issued *fatwas* to wear home-spun cloth (Ansari, 1992: 86). District officials reported with some anxiety that:

> the disloyalty amongst pirs, sayyids and mullahs is spreading. As meetings are generally held in mosques or idgahs in small towns it cannot be controlled. The extremists like Dr Shaikh Nur Muhammad and Shaikh Abdul Majid are giving up propaganda in Hyderabad for small towns and are working through pirs, sayyids and mullahs.[11]

In Karachi, urban-based campaigners Abdul Jabbar, Nur Muhammad, Aminuddin N. Munshi, Sheikh Abdul Majid and Muhammad Hashim asked *maulvis* 'to pass a fatwa on the authority of the Koran, directing the boycott of Councils'.[12] Soon after, Pir Ghulam Mujadid Sirhandi, a member of the Sind Provincial Khilafat Committee, declared that the authority of the Quran superseded that of the British: 'If we find anything being done against our religion we can no longer remain faithful to Government….Mussulmans are not afraid of being hanged or going to jail for the sake of Khilafat….I would urge you to adopt non-cooperation and boycott the Councils'.[13]

The authority of the *fatwa* was central to drawing Sindhis into the movement. Other *fatwas* were issued on a number of subjects, the *hijrat* to Afghanistan being perhaps the starkest example of its use. In the summer of 1920, Maulana Azad and Maulana Abdul Bari had issued a *fatwa* calling for *hijrat*, the withdrawal of Muslims from *dar-ul-harb* (the land of unbelief) to *dar-ul-Islam* (the abode of Islam). In response, an estimated 60,000 Muslims from the rural areas of Sind, the United Provinces and the Frontier Provinces left India for Afghanistan. They had been told by their *pirs* and *mullahs* that Islam was in danger, that *hijrat* could be an alternative to Non-cooperation and that Afghanistan, not India, was within the *dar-ul-Islam*. The migration was a debacle. The refugees were mostly poor Muslims who had sold their few possessions to make the journey. As their caravans travelled through the Khyber Pass, many were attacked and looted by tribesmen. The Amir of Afghanistan soon issued a proclamation that no more Indians should come. Several thousand returned penniless to India, many others dying on the journey home (Qureshi, 1999: 174–232).

Despite the enthusiasm with which Sindhis appeared to be taking up the campaign, there were real ambiguities from the outset. It was clear, for instance, that participation was sometimes enjoined by coercion.[14] When activists were organising a Sind-wide work stoppage (*hartal*) to take place in March 1920 in honour of Khilafat Day, Pir Mahbub Shah, a prominent figure in Hyderabad, announced that *jihad* would be

declared on all Hindus and Muslims who did not observe the strike.[15] In Karachi, a Memon friend of the assistant superintendent of police told him that 'the Caliphate leaders are trying to arrange that all Muhammadans who do not take part in the *hartal* should be excommunicated, no one should attend marriages or funerals in their families and they should be excluded from the burial grounds'.[16] Pir Ghulam Mujadid was reported to have decided with other *pirs* and *maulvis* 'that a party of Moulvis should visit the Thar and Parkar district and endeavour to force those harris who are working upon the lands of loyal zamindars to boycott them and work only for those zamindars who are pro-Caliphate'.[17]

Thus, gauging 'support' for the movement proves complex. Even as people in *mofussil* districts gathered at Khilafat and Non-cooperation meetings, many audiences seemed unmoved. In Larkana, the district magistrate noted, 'so far these non-cooperation preachers have not cut much ice in this district outside towns of Larkana and Dadu'.[18] And a letter from one organiser noted that the Muslims of rural Sind were 'totally ignorant of the Khilafat'.[19] Furthermore, *pirs* were divided amongst themselves. There were a number whose support for the movement had been distinctly lukewarm. Their wealth and status were closely tied in with British rule and many had little reason to undermine this. Few openly opposed the Khilafat movement for fear of losing credibility among their *murids*. One exception was the prominent Pir Pagaro of Kingri who had expressly forbidden his followers from contributing to the Khilafat funds and attending meetings.[20] Criticism of the movements came from *waderos* and *zamindars*, most of whom had no affiliation with them (Ansari, 1992: 91). Thus, when officials feared the possibility of open revolt, it was the *zamindars* they relied on:

> It is the object of those manipulating the agitation to impress upon Government officers…the idea that there is widespread popular feeling and indignation….So far as the mass of Sindhi zamindars is concerned, the Commissioner believes that this is not yet the case; the zamindars as a whole, are to some extent indifferent, and to a great extent entirely loyal.[21]

During 1920 the government in Sind began arresting *pirs* for allegedly seditious speeches. Many buckled under the threat of prosecution. The Sirhindi *pirs*, for instance, an influential family with thousands of *murids*, had preached non-cooperation and death to the *kafirs* during the *hijrat*. However, faced with possible incarceration, they retracted their speeches before the cases reached the courts, agreeing to stop future political activity (Ansari, 1992: 92). When Pir Mahbub Shah, a vocal advocate of the Khilafat movement, was arrested, he went on a hunger strike. His defiance caught the attention of Gandhi and brought thousands of his disciples to Hyderabad, where he had been imprisoned. However, when he realised that the authorities were not prepared to relent, he voluntarily abandoned his protest and, under pressure, signed the unconditional apology required by the state for his release (Ansari, 1992: 92–3).

Such retractions and admissions of guilt caused great consternation in Khilafat circles. Pir Mahbub Shah, once seen as a martyr and role model, was denounced as 'utterly shameless' (Ansari, 1992: 94). Minault (1982: 154) and Ansari (1992: 95) have argued that this political inconsistency had to do with the *pirs*' inability to see beyond the religious aspirations of the movement quite narrowly defined. Moreover, they were limited by their interest in maintaining their respective spheres of influence. When these were threatened, the importance of their relationship to a wider Indian Muslim community came a firm second.

Thus the support for the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movement campaigns, while intense in parts, was questionable in others. Nevertheless, there was something striking about this moment. Congress and Khilafat activists toured all parts of Sind together, urging Hindu-Muslim unity and asking people to take a stand against the wicked (*khabis*) British. Newspapers and pamphlets advocating this proliferated during this time. Close working relationships grew up around the campaigns and certainly for some, the two movements were indistinguishable. The involvement of three Hyderabadi men stands out in particular: Sheikh Abdul Majid, Dr Choitram Gidwani and Javharmal Totiram Mansukhani. Sheikh Majid had been released from prison in March 1919 after having been interned for 'pan-Islamic activities'. He returned to his editorship of the Sindhi-language paper, *Al-Amin*, where he published extensively in support of Khilafat and Non-cooperation.[22] His associate, Gidwani, had been an ardent advocate of the Swadeshi movement in 1907, opening a Swadeshi store in Hyderabad and founding a Brahmacharya Ashram modelled on the National Schools in Bengal. Mansukhani, a close colleague of both, had been campaigning for the Non-cooperation movement since January 1919 and was regularly seen at Khilafat meetings. All three were involved in the *satyagrahas* of 1919, wrote and spoke of the broken promises of the British, their transgressions against Turkey and the need for Indians to stand united.[23]

1922 is the year that many take as the point at which the alliance between the Khilafat and Non-cooperation leadership broke down. But, again, the experience of Sind shows that there was nothing so decisive. In April 1921, when the campaigns were at their height, it was apparent that many Muslims in Sind supported Khilafat but had begun to distance themselves from Non-cooperation:

> The Muhammadans of Sind as a whole, especially the cultivating classes, are almost entirely unaffected by the non-cooperation movement….The Pir of Kingri who is perhaps the most important Pir in Sind, has not only declared himself against it, but he advises those who consult him to remain faithful to the British Government….There is an exception in Pir Mahbubshah of Hyderabad District who is responsible for considerable agitation…there is an interest in Khilafat but not non-violent non-cooperation. The reasons for men like Rashidullah Shah, the Jhande Pir, holding aloof from non-cooperation is that it is initiated and controlled by Hindus.[24]

As the Non-cooperation movement took shape, many influential *pirs* of longer established shrines who had been 'neutral' around the Khilafat, openly condemned Non-cooperation. They took the lead with *zamindars* in organising peace associations (*Aman Sabhas*), initiated by the government to counter Non-cooperation, calling on their *murids* to steer clear of Non-cooperation altogether.[25] The same fault lines were reflected in numerous places across Sind. In Karachi, Muslims were not adopting Non-cooperation, but support for the Khilafat campaign continued.[26] On the Upper Sind Frontier, Hindus took an interest but no Muslims appeared at Non-cooperation meetings.[27]

By late 1921, the coalition was in decline. Enlistment of volunteers had fallen off and meetings once attended by both communities were now attended almost exclusively by one or the other.[28] Rural areas such as Sakrand and Sinkhoro *talukas* were least affected by Non-cooperation, the most concerted support for it being found in *talukas* with towns or large villages such as Tando Adam, Shahadapur, Nawabshah and Naushahro.[29] That support for Non-cooperation came mostly from towns can likely be explained by the large proportion of urban Hindus. In this sense, participation in both movements was not necessarily ideological but was mobilised through chains of authority represented by *pirs*, *mullahs*, activists and publicists. Thus, as the sanction of *pirs* fell away, so did the participation of their disciples. At the end of 1921, the year that *Swaraj* was supposed to have been won, and well before Gandhi called off the all-India movement, dissension in the joint leaderships of the campaigns meant that Non-cooperation in Sind had come almost entirely to a standstill.

A number of incidents had taken their toll on the Khilafat/Congress leadership at the all-India level. In August 1921, demobilised Muslim peasants (*Moplahs*) in Malabar flew the Khilafat flag as they rebelled against their Hindu landlords, creating a backlash against Muslim communities in other parts of the country (Ansari, 2005; Hardgrave, 1977). In December, Hasrat Mohani introduced a resolution at a Khilafat Committee meeting in Ahmedabad that Muslims should abandon non-violence if it would ensure a positive outcome for the independence of the Khilafat. And Mahomed Ali declared his support for an Afghan invasion of British India. However, Gandhi's calling time on Non-cooperation in March 1922 is considered the most momentous among these. To ardent non-cooperators such as Abdul Bari, Gandhi's decision appeared an arbitrary retreat just as the anti-colonial movement was gaining ground. Moderates such as Motilal Nehru and Muhammad Ali Jinnah had been apprehensive of mass mobilisation and urged accommodation with the government. Gandhi's decision is seen to mark not only the end of the movement but also of the possibilities that this moment represented. These events certainly had repercussions in Sind. Hasrat Mohani's resolution caused friction in Choitram Gidwani's relationships with his Muslim colleagues who supported abandoning non-violence while Gidwani sought to continue with Gandhi's condition for the campaign. Moreover, as negotiations between Britain and Turkey indicated a possibly successful resolution to the Khilafat question, a number of religious

leaders began to lose interest in the agitation, further undermining Muslim support for Non-cooperation.[30]

However, in Sind, the breach between Hindu and Muslim communities can be more meaningfully dated to the campaigns launched by the Arya Samaj in 1923. The Samaj, a Hindu reform organisation founded in the late nineteenth century, had begun aggressive *shuddhi* (purification) and *sangathan* (unity) campaigns in parts of north India, including Sind, in this year. *Shuddhi* was directed at reconverting those that Hinduism had 'lost' to other religions, specifically Islam. This was supported by the Hindu Mahasabha, an organisation propagating an explicitly Hindu nationalist agenda, founded in 1915 and revived in December 1922 (Gordon, 1975). It was the Mahasabha's leader, Madan Mohan Malaviya, a *pandit* from the United Provinces and close companion of Gandhi, who had spearheaded this move. At its 36th anniversary meeting in Karachi in September 1922, the presiding officers of the Arya Samaj spoke of the spiritual, moral and physical weakness of Hindus that had allowed the tyranny of the *mlecchas* (foreigners, non-Aryans), witnessed during the Moplah rebellion, and urged *sangathan*, Hindu unity, of its followers.[31] In January 1923, the Arya Samaj began converting Rajput Muslims in the United Provinces. The *Al-Wahid*, a Sindhi paper and once an advocate of Non-cooperation, but now an opponent, called upon the *ulema* to save these people from becoming '*kafirs*'.[32] The *shuddhi* campaign continued through March into April with the Arya Samajis moving their efforts from the urban areas of Sind further afield. In April, a *shuddhi* committee travelled to the Upper Sind Frontier to work among the Sheikhs of Shadadkot. This was a community of Muslims who still used Hindu names and followed many Hindu customs and would therefore, it was believed, be more open to being 'reclaimed'.[33]

The campaign led to a wave of recriminations within Muslim circles. *Al-Wahid* argued that religious ignorance amongst Muslims had led to this situation. It criticised the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind (an organisation of *ulema* founded by Abdul Bari in 1919) for the *shuddhi* campaign, blaming the *maulvis* for not having 'educat[ed] Muhammadans sufficiently in the tenets of their religion'.[34] Yet it was the Jamiat that took the lead in responding to the *shuddhi* campaign. In March 1923, it organised a protest meeting in Bombay with the intention of beginning a movement to revive religious knowledge 'amongst all those who called themselves Muslims'.[35] This movement, known as *tanzim*, sought first to counter Arya activity among the Rajput Muslims. The breach that had become apparent between Hindu and Muslim communities at a more popular level in Sind was now also reflected in relationships between those who had worked together during the campaign of 1919–22. Of the three friends who had participated in the 1919 *hartals*, Mansukhani was sentenced in 1921 to five years' transportation. During the years of his incarceration he became a *sadhu* (ascetic), taking the name Swami Govindanand. On his early release in 1924, he emerged a Hindu nationalist and began campaigning for the Hindu Mahasabha, arguing that Muslims were working not for *swaraj* but for *Khilafat raj*. Gidwani supported the

incarceration of Sheikh Abdul Majid who in turn stated that no Hindu, including Gandhi, could aspire to Heaven unless he recited the *Kalma*.[36]

Khilafat in Sind cannot be said to have been unconnected to the movement in other parts of India. However, the course it took was particular to the historical distribution of wealth and ritual status in the region. Political alliances were complex and shifting from the outset, indicating the need for a more nuanced, located understanding of how Khilafat and Non-cooperation intersected with an array of political aspirations and loyalties at the district level. The Khilafat movement had its own story in Sind and cannot so easily be appropriated into a general narrative of nationalism. Given the ambiguous nature of popular support for Khilafat and Non-cooperation in Sind, how far can it then really be argued that 1919–22 represented a 'high point' of Hindu-Muslim unity and thus the potential of nationalism? This question is not simply one of chronology, but of how a narrative of these events was framed. What constituted a legitimate politics of nationalism in India was defined in the aftermath of Khilafat/Non-cooperation, in opposition to what many represented as a politics of religious intolerance brought about by the so-called mixing of religion and politics that the movements had been founded on. This process of definition took place outside Sind, largely by liberal nationalists, in the second half of the 1920s.

Nationalism and Communalism, 1922–27

As the Khilafat/Congress alliance unravelled in 1922, violent conflicts between Hindus and Muslims erupted around the country, notably in Calcutta, Dhaka, Patna, Delhi and throughout the United Provinces. Many on the Congress platform, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, B.C. Pal, C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru for instance, saw the two as related. They had been nervous about Non-cooperation, fearing that Gandhi's attempts at mass mobilisation, as well as his efforts to make religious identity the foundation of the movement, would unleash primordial tendencies that would be impossible to contain. The violence after 1922 seemed to confirm their worst fears. In the aftermath of Non-cooperation and Khilafat, liberal nationalists saw this mobilisation around religious identity as a failed and misdirected nationalism, a phenomenon that came in this period to be called 'communalism'.

The Hindu Mahasabha had been revived in December 1922 after a period of relative dormancy. Its first session was called in response to the Moplah uprisings and riots in Multan during Muharram. In both cases it had been widely reported that Hindus had been the disproportionate victims of violence. Malaviya, the Mahasabha president, set the agenda for the coming years and emphasised the need for *sangathan*. Hindus were weak and degenerate, he said, as never before. He called for a Sabha presence right down to the village level to protect Hindus from Muslim communal attacks (Thursby, 1975: 161–2). The *shuddhi* and *sangathan* programmes were clearly of militant Hinduism. They were Hindu politics just as *tabligh* and *tanzim* launched two years later

were politics of Muslim consolidation. In this sense, they could be seen as opposite equals. However, it was the way that Mahasabha leaders like Malaviya successfully appropriated the legitimating language of nationalism that ensured that this was not so. The Mahasabha aligned Hindu unity with national unity, and all else as a politics of communalism. While a spectrum of nationalists did not support his position of aggressive self-strengthening, when it came to the relationship between the community and the nation and the role of a majority in providing the foundation for national unity, they shared the same discursive ground. At the Mahasabha's 1924 session, Malaviya argued that the Lucknow Pact, the 1916 agreement between the Muslim League and Congress about Muslim representation on provincial councils, had intensified rather than diminished 'communal feelings'.[37] Nationalism and communalism could not co-exist, he said: 'If communalism dominates the affairs of the country to the extent to which it is dominating the affairs of the land at present…it would not be profitable for the country to have a full system of national government established in India'.[38] Significantly, the term 'communalism' was not used to describe conflict between different Muslim sects or between Hindu sects or castes. It was specific to conflict between Hindus and Muslims in the context of a debate around nationalism.

Taraknath Das, a Bengali socialist residing in the US, argued similarly. In a letter to M.R. Jayakar in 1927, Das maintained that while he wanted as much as anybody else to 'enforce our National Demand of absolute swaraj', he preferred that 'the Indian Nationalists refuse to accept any concession which is mixed with communalism', which was 'a great curse' and should be opposed.[39] Hindu Mahasabha members should join forces with the leaders of the Non-Brahman movement, he continued: 'Hindu Maha Sabha should conquer the Non-Brahmin movement by accepting their just demands of abolition of social inequities'. But Das did not see this as communalism. On the contrary, forging Hindu unity would strengthen what he called the 'National Demand': 'If the Non-Brahmin Party leaders join your nationalists and stand by the Hindu Mahasabha then much is accomplished towards national unity'.[40] In contrast, communalism was an approach exemplified by Mahomed Ali:

> 'For God's sake see to it that the next President of All India National Congress does not do the same kind of disservice to India as…Mahomed Ali did when he said "I am a Moslem first and Indian afterwards". In Madras the President…should proclaim "I am an Indian first and I am opposed to all forms of communalism"'.[41]

Mahomed Ali had been severely criticised for his position that India's religious communities should provide the basis for Indian unity.[42] He became disillusioned with the anti-colonial movement, writing in his publication *Comrade* in 1925 of Congress's 'barren record' in Hindu-Muslim relations. But it was not simply that a politics defined around religious identity had been deemed by some as illegitimate and anti-national that troubled him. A range of political groups—peasant and non-Brahman organisations, Left parties, regional associations and business elites—held

competing positions on what counted as a legitimate politics of nationalism. Rather, it was the widening consensus on what constituted communalism—an *illegitimate* politics—and particularly Gandhi's role in this, that was his most pressing concern. Many have understood Gandhi's decision to suspend civil disobedience as 'primarily a moral issue', since he 'would not countenance violence at any cost' (Nanda, 1989: 347). However, others have maintained that there was more to it (Hasan, 1991: 168–70; Minault, 1982: 184–6). Those who had once supported Non-cooperation, Hasrat Mohani for instance, had begun to drift away, entertaining the use of violence as a way to challenge the Raj. Moreover, after the Chauri Chaura incident in 1922, Malaviya urged Gandhi to call off Bardoli immediately. This was less a response to the transgression of Gandhi's condition for the movement than Malaviya's belief that with the settlement of the Turkish question, the loss of Muslim support for the movement was imminent (Sharma, 1987: 144).

Gandhi had sought to bring religious communities into the centre of Indian nationalism advocating their parity regardless of relative numerical size. He had been critical of the Hindu Mahasabha's aggressive programme especially as articulated by Swami Shraddhanand. However, David Hardiman (2003: 172) has argued that it was his close relationship with Malaviya and his reluctance to criticise the positions of other Mahasabha leaders such as Lala Lajpat Rai that made many wary. While Gandhi (1967, Vol. XXII: 449) insisted that the decision to suspend civil disobedience was his own: 'I assure the public that Pandit Malaviyaji had absolutely no hand in shaping my decision', Mahomed Ali and Abdul Bari were not so sure. In June 1922, Abdul Bari (quoted in Bamford, 1974[1925]: 204–5) wrote of his doubts about the future of the anti-colonial movement:

> Hindus will succeed in attaining Swaraj and that Swaraj will not be in any way beneficial to us. Malaviya by his cleverness is usurping the position (of Gandhi) but Muslims have no faith in him nor can they have as they had in Gandhi. Let us see whether we have still to cling to this movement (non-violent Non-cooperation) or some other way is found out of the difficulty. In my opinion it would be far more beneficial if the Muslims improve their own status, Indian Muslims in India, Arabs in Arabia, Afghans in Afghanistan and Turks in Turkey. They should then unite.

The Jamiat-ul-Ulema echoed Abdul Bari's concerns, alleging that the Central Khilafat Committee had merely become 'a tail' of Congress, that they had been misled by the Non-cooperation movement and that Gandhi had forgotten the interests of Muslims.[43] They maintained that the reasons were because 'Gandhi had been promised some special concessions and favours through Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and that he had left Muslims in the lurch at a real critical moment when he was satisfied that the Hindus would be benefited by the suspension of mass civil disobedience'.[44]

Gandhi was genuinely troubled by the loss of trust between Hindus and Muslims. His close relationship with Malaviya was based on his ideal that no one, however

contrary their views, should be forsaken. However, his failure to criticise the Mahasabha's position on the relationship between Hindu unity and Indian nationalism lay at the root of the perception among Muslim leaders that Gandhi had made a decision about where his priorities lay. A series of communications that took place a decade later between Jayakar and the secretary of the Mahasabha, Ganpat Rai, on the issue of the Communal Award, a provision that accorded separate electorates in legislatures to a range of minority communities including untouchables, indicated that this was not a view held only by Muslims. Rai urged Jayakar to dissuade Gandhi from supporting the terms of the Award, saying that it would 'sharply divide the Hindus amongst themselves'.[45] Jayakar responded that he had no influence on him. Rather, it was 'men like Pandit Malaviya and Dr Moonje who have influence with the Mahatma and have openly opposed the Communal Award from the very start'.[46] Thus, as late as 1934, at a time when the position of the Mahasabha was increasingly anti-Muslim, there was a clear perception within its ranks that its leaders could sway Gandhi's opinion. This confidence arose from Gandhi's tacit acceptance that the Mahasabha was representative of 'Hindu' opinion more broadly and that Gandhi could not proceed without their support.

The optimism that Mahomed Ali had for Hindu-Muslim unity began to wane as early as 1924. After a meeting with Gandhi following his release from prison in the same year, Mahomed Ali described his fears to Jawaharlal Nehru thus (Nehru, 1960: 38):

> I do not know whether my conversations with Bapu…had any effect at all in the matter of the Hindu-Muslim tension….In one respect…I am positive that I failed to impress him at all and that is the character of his 'worshipful brother' Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. He comes of it the best of us all! And yet both Shaukat and I were under the impression that Bapu thought very differently of the noble Pandit. If Bapu believes all that he says about him—and there can be little doubt of it—then I must despair of the near future at any rate. I had discussed the matter frankly with your father and he told me that he largely agreed…that Malaviya was out to defeat Gandhism and to become the leader of the Hindus…and that Hindu-Muslim unity was not his ideal. My dear Jawahar, God knows that the Mussalmans too have their Malaviyas and there is no love lost between them and me. But thank God they have not the influence over their community…that Panditji has over so many people of his community.

Mahomed Ali's despair thus had to do with Malaviya's relationship with Gandhi and the sanction this seemed to give him to define nationalism as Hindu unity and Muslim politics as communalism.

Conclusions

The Khilafat and Non-cooperation movements have come to stand in for the promises of Hindu-Muslim unity in the nationalist movement, a possibility that is seen to have

been scuppered by the violence that followed. Examination of the Khilafat campaign in Sind shows that it had its own regional texture and chronology even as it was connected to campaigns elsewhere in India. Several of the later developments of this period, the waning support of *pirs* and the increasingly segregated Khilafat and Non-cooperation gatherings, as well as the *shuddhi* and *tanzim* campaigns that aimed to consolidate the strength of one community or another, are easily appropriated into a story of the 'communalisation' of Indian politics. However, the way the Khilafat movement in Sind unfolded and the identification of these events as 'communal' are separate historical developments that should remain analytically distinct.

Communalism and nationalism were never disinterested terms of description whose meanings were transparent. They were political categories that emerged historically. During Khilafat and Non-cooperation, some such as Mahomed Ali and Gandhi challenged a formulation of nationalism that privileged a majority position: they argued that Muslims and Hindus were equal partners in nationalism regardless of their relative size. After the campaigns ended, a range of political figures from across the ideological spectrum questioned the wisdom of making religious identity the bedrock of nationalism. The promotion of such identities was termed communalism and was seen to be fragmentary and divisive. Nationalism represented an understanding of political unity that stood in contrast to this. This formulation of unity relied on an understanding of India as constituted by majority and minority populations, and that this majority was Hindu. The Hindu Mahasabha, headed by Malaviya, who was also an influential figure in Congress, sought to constitute another meaning for nationalism. Rather than the parity of religious communities, which he argued fragmented nationalism through prioritising a variety of 'narrow' interests, he emphasised the unity of the majority. The persuasive power of such a formulation brought many others with him, including Gandhi. Mahomed Ali's position on the other hand, once at the centre of nationalism, was now represented as communal.

Thus, nationalism and communalism were defined in the later part of the 1920s and emerged out of contentious discussions between prominent leaders of the time. These meanings framed an understanding of the Khilafat movement, retrospectively. It is in this sense that 1919–22 has come to represent a moment of both possibility and closure in narratives of the nationalist movement. The particularities of the regional Khilafat campaigns, or of the localities in which subsequent conflicts took place, had little bearing on these discussions. The history of the Khilafat movement in Sind and its aftermath was brought in only as confirmation of how far nationalism could go awry when religion was made a constitutive part of political activity. The regions, Sind in particular, would become the primary focus of nationalists only later, in 1928, during the All Parties Conference.[47] Sind re-entered the story as part of a discussion around the reorganisation of Muslim-majority provinces in the north-west of India. Nationalists debated whether it should be separated from the Bombay Presidency and whether such a separation would be politically neutral, that is, in line with the interests of the country, or if it constituted a politics of communalism.

Notes

1. Mr Jan Muhammad Junejo, barrister, speaking at a conference at Jacobabad. Bombay Archives (BA) Home/Special 355-B 1919, 'Khilafat Agitation in Sind'.
2. *Satyagraha*, literally 'truth in action', was the foundation of Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent non-cooperation. It was a form of civil disobedience based on the moral action of the individual born of truth (*satya*), non-violence (*ahimsa*) and self-sacrifice (*tapasya*). On the Rowlatt *Satyagraha*, see Kumar (1971).
3. The Sind Satyagraha. Memo from H.S. Lawrence, Commissioner in Sind, Karachi, 13 April 1919. BA, Home/Special, 521-Part XII, 1919.
4. Secret Abstracts of Police Intelligence for the Bombay Presidency (henceforth: SAPI), Deputy Inspector General's Office, Bombay CID, para. 646, Hyderabad, 1920.
5. *Id*.
6. SAPI, Hyderabad, 1920.
7. However, Muslims in several municipalities resented the efforts by Hindu activists to make cow slaughter illegal. See *Al Wahid*, a Muslim-owned newspaper in Sind, 9 January 1921 (for week ending 29 January), *Report on Native Papers in the Bombay Presidency*, Oriental and India Office Collections.
8. SAPI, Karachi, August 1920.
9. On the role of the *ulema* in the Khilafat movement, see Hasan (1981b).
10. SAPI, Special Officer for Bolshevism, Poona, 7 May 1920.
11. SAPI, Hyderabad, 30 March 1920.
12. SAPI, Karachi, 13 October 1920.
13. SAPI, Karachi, 20 October 1920.
14. On the use of coercion to enforce solidarity in subaltern movements, see Guha (1983), chapter 5.
15. SAPI, Hyderabad, 24 March 1920.
16. SAPI, Karachi, 11 March 1920.
17. SAPI, Karachi, 5 August 1920.
18. SAPI, Larkana, 2 November 1920.
19. SAPI, Nawabshah, 20 April 1920.
20. SAPI, Karachi, 15 October 1920.
21. Commissioner of Sind reporting, SAPI, Karachi, 3 February 1920.
22. Demi-official letter, 27 May 1919, District Superintendent of Police, Hyderabad. BA, Home/Special, 521, Part XII, 1919.
23. Demi-official letter, 27 May 1919, District Superintendent of Police, Hyderabad. BA, Home/Special, 521, Part XII, 1919.
24. SAPI, 15 April 1921.
25. SAPI, Hyderabad, 2 July 1921. They were later rewarded for their loyalty with the option of buying, at nominal prices, large areas of land that would be served by the huge irrigation project under consideration at Sukkur (Ansari, 1992: 99).
26. SAPI, Karachi, 1 March 1921.
27. SAPI, Upper Sind Frontier, 3 April 1921.
28. SAPI, Sukkur, 15 July, 26 August 1921.
29. SAPI, Nawabshah, 4 November 1921.

30. SAPI, Larkana, 28 October 1921; Karachi 25 January and Hyderabad 1 February 1922.
31. SAPI, Karachi, 9 September 1922.
32. SAPI, Sind, 20 January 1923.
33. SAPI, Sukkur, 28 April 1923.
34. SAPI, Karachi, 10 March 1923.
35. SAPI, Bombay, 20 March 1923.
36. SAPI, Hyderabad, 19 January 1924.
37. Agreements were drawn up between the League and the Congress at the Home Rule headquarters that in provinces where Muslims were a numerical minority, in Bihar, Bombay, Madras and the Central Provinces, they would be represented by seats in excess of their proportion in the population. In return, their seats in Punjab would be reduced from 55 to 50 per cent.
38. M.R. Jayakar Papers (Mahasabha member from Maharashtra), Reel 64, File 448 II, Item 24, National Archives of India (NAI).
39. T.N. Das to Jayakar, 20 May 1927. Jayakar Papers, Reel 57, File 406, Item 123, NAI.
40. T.N. Das to Jayakar, 20 May 1927. Jayakar Papers, Reel 57, File 406, Item 123, NAI.
41. T.N. Das to Jayakar, 20 May 1927. Jayakar Papers, Reel 57, File 406, Item 123, NAI.
42. Mahomed Ali wrote extensively on this. See for example 'The Communal Patriot', *Comrade*, February 1912, reprinted in Iqbal (1966: 75–81).
43. SAPI, Bombay, 3 April 1922.
44. SAPI, Bombay, 3 April 1922.
45. Ganpat Rai to Jayakar, 24 April 1934. Jayakar Papers, Reel 63, File 439, Item 51, NAI.
46. Jayakar to Ganpat Rai, 26 April 1934. Item 52.
47. See All Parties Conference (1975 [1928]: 31–33, 61–69).

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