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'Nation' or 'Community' Forming an Identity, Being of a Group*

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Not only rules, but also examples are needed for establishing a practice. Our rules leave loopholes open, and the practice has to speak for itself.
Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 139

I

After five decades of practising 'secularism' as state policy we know that not all is fine with the policy. Efforts of the state to maintain equi-distance from all religions got involved in all sorts of controversies since a strong sort of equidistance did not seem to exist in practice. Earlier it used to be said that problems happened because the policy was not implemented with enough political and executive will. Today it can be said that the policy itself has flaws. What the policy of secularism sought to attain, peaceful and constructive coexistence of various social groups within a democracy was un-exceptional. Yet it had problems. Problems that often generated pressures to even deny legitimacy to the idea of secularism.[1] To say that the state should keep equi-distance from all religions was easier said than done. For, very often functionaries of the state and its ideologues themselves were not sure how equi-distancing should work or even what it was all about. If unworkable for a long time, in substantive ways, then its ability to withstand criticism of detractors was so much diminished. Correspondingly there have been pressures, both intellectual and political, to do away with secularism altogether.

In this paper we submit that much of the problem with practice

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*The opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of the organisations where we work.

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of secularism in India emerged from certain innocence about contestations between the idea of 'nation' and 'community'. Of the manner in which people integrate themselves into a 'nation', an entity made up of diverse social and ethnic groups, while ignoring, denying, or simply making irrelevant their membership of other collectivities focusing around religion, region, or language. To presume simply that secularism was a good political virtue for a pluri-cultural democracy and that its detractors, as also the common people, would come round to accept its functional utility has obviously not been good enough.[2]

How do people choose it? It is a complex process to determine. The choice could easily go this or that way. Much of it, however, happens through actual social interactions, talking about them, trying to find ways of functioning which best suit perceived needs as individuals and as members of a collectivity and theorising about experiences in everyday language.[3]

In the process there are some contexts in which people find membership of a 'nation' or even a 'nation-state' more conducive just as there are other contexts when membership of other collectivities, 'communities' if you wish, seems more attractive and is chosen.[4] The trick then, for a polity like ours to achieve peaceful coexistence of diverse people, would be to ensure that the one kind of context remains dominant while those of other kinds do not. Our effort in this paper is to look at one case concerning the process of choosing between the two. We look at the manner in which one significant Muslim leader, Maulana Mohamed Ali 'Jauhar', made efforts to come to terms with various possibilities of forming public identity for himself. Mohamed Ali is all the more interesting since he was considerably a dialogic person who went out of his way to highlight, ratiocinate and share with others his own experiences. Not so much conscious self-reflection as informing others. Strongly driven by a desire to do something meaningful in life, a desire that made him seek an identity in public life for himself. As events unfolded of themselves he asserted his identity as a true 'Muslim'. Often, given the sectarianism of those times, this meant having to attribute various small personal misfortunes to himself being Muslim in Hindu surroundings. Almost immediately he had to contend with various other identities. Is 'Muslim' also a 'nation'? I think, 'Hindu' too is a nation? Or is it that 'Muslim' and 'Hindu' as also many other sectarian groups were actually part of yet another, larger nation called 'India'? There were no easy guidelines to follow for locating oneself. The colonial government, the only entity

wielding overwhelming secular power at that time, did not provide any definite indications on what could be the correct interpretation. Some of the government's policies seemed to support one interpretation, and some of its actions seemed to support the contrary. And, of course, in its own home country it rooted for 'secularism' as also giving broad hints that one of the indicators of the backwardness of India was that sectarianism was the defining flavour of Indian society.

II

In January 1911, Mohamed Ali, till recently an employee of the Gaikwar of Baroda, but originally from Rampur state in Rohilkhand, started his English language weekly, *The Comrade*, in Calcutta, the then capital of British India. The stated agenda for this journal was to safeguard 'the claims of Indian Muslims to be represented as a community'.[5] Admittedly religion has been an ancient and well-tried method of establishing communion through common practice and a sort of brotherhood between people who otherwise have nothing much in common. But the task that faced Mohamed Ali did not require the propagation of religion, debating its efficacy in dealing with the mundane matters of life, or contesting the goodness of Islam against other religions and/or non-religious ideologies. In fact Mohamed Ali was not well-versed in Islam: he was not a good scholar (*ālim*) though he claimed to be a devout Muslim. His self-imposed task, rather, was that of occupying the new electoral spaces that had been created by the colonial government when it created separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims in elected local government. Mohamed Ali's two-fold agenda, then, was concerned with insisting on the legitimacy of separate electorates and the need for Muslims to have separate representation in government. Further, his agenda concerned discussing or creating issues that could generate separative collective action. Thus, he sought to give space to his belief that Muslims were not merely a 'community' in the religious sense but it also connotes secular public life which revolved around modern religious, social and political institutions that had come up during the British rule: government jobs, liberal professions, electoral politics, etc. As it happened, the latter task tended to dominate his public life.

The seemingly simple task of claiming community status for Muslims took Mohamed Ali in the next decade or so, through many adventures. He visited foreign lands, intervened in various wars, and

got imprisoned in India. In the process he got opportunity to interact with big men like sundry kings, princes, viceroys, ambassadors and lieutenant governors. He also got to collaborate with important Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi. In due course he emerged as one of the important public figures in India only to end his life some two decades later stigmatized as a stooge of the British. In the following pages we shall read his life story to the extent of him becoming a public figure. We shall follow his own various narratives to trace some of his adventures in the course of establishing himself as a public figure and look at the small time tragedies that pursued Mohamed Ali through public life. We presume, in so far as such presumptions hold weight, that the life of collectivities is in many ways refracted through the ideas and deeds of individuals.

Mohamed Ali was born in 1878 in a family connected with the princely court of Rampur, a small state in what is now Uttar Pradesh. His early education was at Bareilly, and later at Aligarh. The burden of his education, the youngest of six brothers, fell on his widowed mother who sent him to Bareilly for English education in the teeth of opposition from other male kin.He joined the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1890 and passed his BA in 1896. Subsequently, financed by his elder brother Shaukat Ali, he went to Oxford to compete for the ICS. On failing to get the ICS he returned to India with another BA degree in 1902. He made an unsuccessful bid to join the faculty at the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College, and was appointed the Chief Educational Officer in Rampur. He left this last within a year and moved over to Baroda where he joined the opium department in the Gaikwar's service. This period onwards historians have been more aware of Mohamed Ali's presence in the history of India.[6]

Mohamed Ali's studentship at the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College had been fairly prosaic. Of the wide variety of activities that Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College offered its students—debating clubs, college union, sports field, college magazine, and academics—none recalls Mohamed Ali as a participant who left his mark.[7] Mohamed Ali's own recall of these days is limited to an anecdote about Shibli Numani, who as a teacher at Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College was impressed by Mohamed Ali's ability to compose Urdu verse when he was eleven years old.[8] In contrast, Shaukat Ali, Mohamed Ali's elder by six years established a name for himself as a sportsman, and as a

detractor of studious contemporaries.[9] Later in life it would be Shaukat Ali, and not Mohamed Ali who would recall his Aligarh days enthusiastically.

Mohamed Ali remained in the shadow of his brother. Many contemporaries recalled, in various contexts, of Shaukat Ali as the more outgoing and noticeable of these two brothers. Insofar as Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College folklore did remember Mohamed Ali it was to recall that he was fairly knocked around by Shaukat—on and off the sports field.[10] Mohamed Ali's own memories of these days suggest the same: in later life, as a recurrent joke Mohamed Ali would refer to Shaukat as the Big Brother who dominated the younger one: 'be a dog but do not be a younger brother'.[11]

Life at Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College, however, did have a silver lining. In 1896 Mohamed Ali came first in the BA examination of Allahabad University to which Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College was affiliated. The immediate result was modification of plans in Mohamed Ali's family. 'My brother', he recalled, 'had now far higher aspirations for me'.[12] Aspirations apparently ran high in the family. Earlier, in the 1880s Abadi Bano Begum, Mohamed Ali's widowed mother, still in her 30s, the widow of the youngest son, but intent on upward social mobility for her children, had opted for a Western education for three of her sons. Zulfiqar, Shaukat and Mohamed were provided with Western education so as to enable them to get away from the familial round in Rampur. On suggestion of Azimuddin Khan, an officer of the Rampur forces, she sent them first to Bareilly, and then to Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College.[13]

To compensate for absence of a familial fortune westernized education had become a proven way in colonial India of upward social-mobility. It permitted access to government jobs and to the steady income, power and patronage associated with them, providing thereby a certain amount of psychosocial autonomy *vis-à-vis* the traditional round of society. For Mohamed Ali, 'the youngest son of the youngest son' as he called himself, such autonomy would have been all the more welcome. The Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College, in turn, though not particularly renowned for its academic standing, yet had close connections with British administrators, and provided relatively easy passage for its 'good' graduates into lower rungs of the bureaucracy in British or princely India. Mohamed Ali's elder brothers, Zulfiqar and Shaukat, had managed this passage easily. Zulfiqar was in the service of the Rampur, and Shaukat was with the lucrative opium department

of the British government. Mohamed Ali would have followed suit but for the spark of brilliance shown in the exams. of 1898. 'Ordinarily I would have secured', he recalled in his autobiography, 'a nomination from my college for the post of Subordinate Magistrate or Land Revenue Collector in some district in my province at the ripe age of about 20 and would have begun to earn a modest salary not much less than my brother's reaching after some 15 years according to the scale of promotion current, a figure which used to form the initial salary of an Indian Civilian.'[14] But now plans were made to send Mohamed Ali to England to study and compete for the ICS. It is not very clear how funds were raised. One anecdotal account suggests that Shaukat financed Mohamed Ali by diverting all his salary to the latter and he subsisted on the travelling allowance given to government servants.[15] Need one also recall that Shaukat was employed in the excise department?

In the absence of introspective records like diaries, notes or even letters it is difficult to fill in details of Mohamed Ali's life in England. As far as general facts are concerned, it seems that he secured a comfortable entry into the remnants of the Victorian middle classes through hospitality in England that families of European faculty at Aligarh extended to Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College students.[16] Apparently Mohamed Ali could not interest himself in the extensive mugging schedule required for the ICS. In later life he did not remember these years much, though once recalling his first trip to England he conceded, somewhat obliquely, that extra-academic interests kept him from studies for the ICS examinations.[17] On failing the ICS Mohamed Ali returned to India without completing his degree course, 'in tatters' as he put it later.[18] His family interpreted it as a sign of decline in morale and resorted to a traditional device for restoring the young Indian male: they married him, and packed him back to Oxford to finish his BA.[19] After the examinations he returned home without paying college dues amounting to £30.[20]

In short, Mohamed Ali's years at Oxford seem to have been as unremarkable as his Aligarh years, with one difference: while Aligarh ended in glory Oxford did not. Mohamed Ali could not secure an appointment to the ICS, nor could he secure a first division. Instead he had to set his sights [possibly after consultations with Shaukat] for a job in the educational service: lower than the ICS in a status conscious bureaucracy, but still a position of some note in government service. He returned to India with a testimonial from Lincoln College testifying

to his fitness to work in the educational service.[21] Jobs in the educational field were, however, not as forthcoming as expected. Mohamed Ali's first choice, the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College, refused to offer him an appointment and he had to settle for the post of the Chief Educational Officer in Rampur. In his autobiography Mohamed Ali does mention the travails of the latter, but there is no reference to the former. Later detractors at Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College held that this refusal lay behind his articles in 1904 and after, when he criticised the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College trustees for being under the thumb of their European staff.[22]

Rampur proved a short stop in Mohamed Ali's life as an independent young adult. He says that he instituted some minor departmental reforms in school education like the introduction of religious education. But he also got involved in palace intrigue and was compelled, after some interventions in his favour by Shaukat Ali, to leave Rampur.[23] Thereafter he joined Baroda's opium department.

In Baroda, to begin with, things seemed to go well. He had been appointed on recommendation of the heir apparent [an Oxford acquaintance] and therefore was allowed an appointment even though he did not know the local language. After 4½ years he was given a promotion of sorts and appointed the 'commissioner' of Navasari district. For a brief while he was also made private secretary to the heir apparent.[24] Baroda also provided a somewhat stable life from where Mohamed Ali could participate in affairs of the Muslim community as the latter was defined by the institutional culture of the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College.[25] This implied developing interest in Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College affairs, and in the political condition of Muslim India. In the latter Mohamed Ali was active mostly on the margins of the leadership of the Muhammadan Educational Conference, and the Muslim League helping organise meetings, proposing and intervening on minor resolutions, and occasionally writing articles on the political condition of India and the position of Muslims therein.[26] At Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College he worked as a lieutenant to his brother Shaukat, emerging into his own only once, during the 1907 students strike, which the Enquiry Committee charged Mohamed Ali with fomenting.[27] Mohamed Ali denied the importance of his instigation for the strike, blaming it rather on the hostile relations between the European faculty and students.[28] As yet he did not perceive incipient nationalism in students' rebellion, later he would do so.

In Baroda, in the meanwhile, towards the end of 1906 Mohamed Ali sensed that he could stagnate in his niche in the hierarchy if he remained at the mercy of his superiors. Recounting those days to a friend, he wrote that he applied for a promotion late in 1906. For a long time there was no reply. Some of his articles in *The Times of India* meanwhile criticised the moderate politics of G.K. Gokhale and others for glossing over the concerns of Muslims and not supporting the demand for a Muslim university. He demanded support, not as a Muslim but as a 'citizen'.[29] His public statements, he averred, gave his superiors a lever to shelve the issue of his promotion and haul him up for supposedly spreading political and communal discontent.[30]

Since then Mohamed Ali suggested, he had been looking for a job elsewhere. The search for alternate employment became more intense in 1909. He insisted that employment was not a question of open competition but of suitable recommendations. Hence, he set about contacting his friends within British government and outside it, to do the needful, telling them in a variety of ways that the environment of Baroda State service was not 'congenial' for a man with his capacities.[31] Mohamed Ali seemed to think that his difficulties flowed from his 'unorthodox views'; Shaukat saw its sources rather in Mohamed's personal behaviour and the antagonism between Hindus and Muslims.

> You are of a nature too open and bold and never [hesitate?] to give your honest and free opinions. You are a public man also and a Muslim, for whom [you?] have stood and will always stand. This would bring you very often against the Hindus and naturally they would not forgive you, especially when you are working in a Hindu state. Besides you always hit hard and with enough interest return any attack of the opponent's. I can very well see that (R.C.) Dutt [currently Revenue Minister in Baroda] did not like you nor would any other Hindu of that type. You are much too able for them. Therefore it appears to me that you will always be in hot waters in Baroda.[32]

Mohamed Ali complained that he was 'fed up with (Baroda), in fact . . . am disillusioned with this job'.[33] However, as late as 1910, the job retained a primary place in his perception of himself as a person involved in meaningful activity: 'if I want I can get away without doing any work. But what to do: I cannot sit idle; I cannot eat unearned bread . . . (and now) because of work I do not even have time to breathe'.[34]

Government jobs, however, were not forthcoming. September 1909 onwards Mohamed Ali began to receive polite letters of refusal from his friends in the British administration referring to his lack of

experience in relevant departments or to budgetary constraints of the local government.[35] Yet they held out hope for him. By early 1910 Mohamed Ali began sounding his Indian friends also for alternatives to Baroda including plans with Mahfuz Ali to launch a journal from Calcutta.[36] When the Nawab of Rampur offered him a position at this juncture, Mohamed Ali refused.[37] As also he refused positions in other princely states.[38] Finally he had begun taking decisions which allowed him more existential autonomy in the public sphere than government service would. Thus he initiated the process that, hindsight suggests, would allow a substantial conclusion for the aspirations of his familial round; a conclusion simultaneously freighted with a substantial impulse to assert his subjectivity. Four years later, to anticipate later happenings, in the Summer of 1915, came for him the final evidence of his having risen above Shaukat and the infighting at Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College. He saw himself as a national leader whose journey halfway across the subcontinent, from Lansdowne to Chhindwara, was punctuated by large crowds eager to greet him. That he was making this journey as an internee, whom the British government considered a grave threat to its wellbeing, would have been even more satisfying.[39] And to top it, for once, the Big Brother had been forced to follow Mohamed. Government had extended the internment order to Shaukat too 'whose only offence' Mohamed noted with some satisfaction, 'had so far been his management of my financial affairs during the previous month'.[40]

III

Such climacteric moves, however, in order to be socially effective, presuppose a good measure of psychosocial autonomy. They also presuppose that social, material and intellectual resources required by circumstances would possibly be available. Mohamed Ali's particular move presumed varied skills ranging from an awareness of the fiscal-technological constraints and the social spread of publishing technology to a skilful handling of words to construct a reasonable debate over various issues. The debates themselves were suffused with overtly defined emancipatory interests in the overthrow of power that was deemed exploitative and social constraints that were considered illegitimate. But above all, they implied an awareness of the complex separateness between, and interlacing of, one's own subjectivity *vis-à-vis* the socially objectified world.

Francis Robinson's reconstruction of the story of Mohamed Ali's Baroda days have a considerable amount of difficulty in getting along with his superiors. 'His overweening ambition and consuming vanity stood in his way; he annoyed his superiors by bombarding them with fanciful projects and was regarded with suspicion by his fellow officers'. Robinson also quotes Shaukat ticking off Mohamed Ali for his attitude towards colleagues. 'If I was your boss, I would strongly object to your nature of correspondence. It borders on insubordination'.[41] But this is only one side of Mohamed Ali's complex story to achieve a high social status and lead a meaningful life. It also does not help us much in understanding the social impulses that led him into difficulties with his colleagues. Neither does it help us in comprehending the social inventiveness that would enable him to become an important public figure in the next decade or so. A figure which could set up important resonance with the public, which could, among other things, lead a public life (as Robinson would notice derogatorily)[42] on public funds. We notice, however, that this last itself was an important innovation in public life: where the leader was not required to either possess inherited wealth like Tagore or to be financially very well off himself through some other profession like Motilal Nehru.

Mohamed Ali at Baroda, having set himself up as a married, independently earning adult, began to take interest in the public affairs of the community as these were defined by the first generation of Aligarh. His first set of interventions was early in 1904 by way of newspaper articles criticising the management of Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College, and the relationship of subordination that he thought the college board of trustees had accepted *vis-à-vis* the European faculty. These articles published in *The Times of India* of Bombay, and *The Observer* of Lahore, were held to be influential in creating among the students at Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College a sense of discontent with both management and European faculty.[43]

From Mohamed Ali's point of view, it seems the internal affairs of the college were less important than long term policies concerning the 'Muslim' community. The point to remember here is that in early years of this century college affairs offered room for immediate action while there was no such promise of action where community was concerned. The time for that would come with the Act of 1909 and the creation of separate electorates for Muslims. Nevertheless, it was in this latter sphere, the domain almost exclusively of the upper layers in British administration and the landed and professional elite of the

Muslim community that Mohamed Ali chose to locate his concerns. This implied, *inter alia*, that there would be exemption from immediate action, and all ambiguities and contradictions associated with praxis for Mohamed Ali and his Muslim community.

An appropriate issue immediately available for comment, in his early months in public life, was the debate over the feasibility of converting the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College into a Muslim university. His interventions in the debate first appeared in the British journal *East And West* in the form of a solicited response to a contemporary's argument controverting the proposal for denominational university. It was presented first in India at a routine meeting of the Bombay Muhammadan Educational Conference. Mohamed Ali, however, considered it important enough to have his argument published as a booklet by year end.[44]

Noticeable about Mohamed Ali's intervention is its pitch: aimed at the makers of official policy. It is difficult to estimate what cognizance the English speaking public at large, or the officials of government, took of Mohamed Ali of 1904. At least the intelligence dossier on him, started about a decade later, does not read back political implications in the Mohamed Ali of 1904.[45] Nevertheless, for Mohamed Ali, even after the university debate died its first death in 1904-05, the pamphlet continued to be of considered importance as an expression of his own ideas, and hopefully, for India at large. 'I am sending for the favour of consideration and opinion,' he wrote two years later, in one of his early letters to G.K. Gokhale, 'an address I delivered on the proposed Muslim university. It is not the pride of the author but the patriotism of the citizen that compels me to ask this favour'.[46] *The Comrade* continued to advertise this pamphlet 'for sale' through 1910s and 1920s. As for the university debate, in 1904 Government of India killed it by categorically prohibiting denominational universities. That, we are told, was the end of the Muhammadan Educational Conference.

Sometime later, in 1906, persons associated with the Educational Conference resurrected themselves as a political pressure group, the Muslim League. Mohamed Ali soon saw here an opportunity to intervene in public affairs, this time primarily along the political axis. This was largely because public affairs of import were being defined during the middle of the decade in primarily political terms. A new political party, the Liberals, had come into power in Britain (January 1906); the anti-partition agitation, started in 1905, seemed to be carrying on triumphantly; and government began to give out hints

that it would invite Indians to participate in the polity of the nation through elected bodies. As Mohamed Ali wrote concerning this period: 'Muslims were galvanised by these great events, and their leading men, one and all, spontaneously came to think that the times required instant activity, if they aimed at self-preservation in the political deluge that looked like swamping them.'[47] Mohamed Ali certainly became more active. He discovered that his official position in Baroda allowed him enough opportunity to participate in discussions on future policy in India, and hope for a role for himself in it.

Mohamed Ali's interventions themselves took the form of establishing personal contact with G.K. Gokhale, the leader of the moderates in the Congress, and of involving himself in the organisation of the Muslim League.[48] Towards the end of 1907 he also came with a 9,000 word analysis of his own overview of the contemporary political situation in India.[49] This last appeared as a series of articles in the Anglo-Indian press initially, and *circa* December 1907 was published by him in the form of a booklet.

This time, in contrast to his earlier booklet on the Muslim university, he strove to bring his ideas to the notice of the viceroy and the King Emperor. A mere Gokhlae, Tilak or any other Indian leader would not do. His letter to the King Emperor, alluding to his loyalty to the empire, his analysis of the Indian problems, his claim to being an able interpreter to the British of the concerns of Indian Muslims, and his hope that the King could do something for Indian Muslims deserves to be seen in some detail.

'I take the liberty of forwarding to you a copy of the reprint of some of my articles published in *The Times of India* and *The Indian Spectator* on the subject of the present discontent', he wrote to the Private Secretary to the King Emperor. 'I trust, sir, that you will be good enough to bring to His Majesty's notice the little volume which I humbly beg to offer for His Majesty the King and the Emperor's gracious acceptance.

'His Majesty's representative in his Eastern Empire of India, the Earl of Minto, has been kind enough to express his great sympathy with the object I had in view in writing these articles, and has encouraged me in my humble efforts at bringing about a mutual understanding between the Englishmen in India and the people of the country.

'Anything concerning the welfare of the three hundred millions of His Majesty's Indian subjects is sure to be of the deepest interest to him and I venture to hope that this little booklet in which a conscien-

tious effort is made to express without malice but with a condor born of confidence in my own honesty of purpose and in its just appreciation by others the true state of the feelings of His Majesty's subjects in India would meet with the sympathy and encouragement which India has learnt to associate now with the name of Edward the Peacemaker just as she had so long associated it with the name of our late lamented sovereign, Lady Victoria the Good. India feels sure that the work of the Peacemaker will be as successful at home in his own vast and varied possessions as it has been abroad.'[50]

We do not know how the King responded to Mohamed Ali's overture, but the Viceroy appreciated it; or at least this is what Mohamed Ali claimed. Viceroy Minto, Mohamed Ali wrote, expressed 'hearty agreement' with much that he had put forward, and wished 'the book the wide circulation it deserves'.[51] Time and again in his later life, Mohamed Ali would draw attention of his varied audiences to this sympathetic reception of his analysis by the Viceroy.

IV

From his base in Baroda then, Mohamed Ali's interventions in public life were confined to the realm of ideas. In public action he continued to follow the lead of Shaukat in Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College affairs, and to remain in the Muslim League as a potential leader. When conjunctures lifted him into a public role, he did not hesitate to take the necessary bows and to acknowledge the uniqueness of his ideas and the autonomy of his action. But this was done privately; not in public. 'I slept an ordinary man one night, and rose the next morning, a full-blown "agitator" or "patriot', he reported to Gokhale in the aftermath of the March 1907 strike at Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College, and the infighting for control over college management amidst the provincial government's support to the European faculty.'[52] 'All this must be strange to you', he protested in a lighter vein, 'but the poor Muslims give me up for lost and think that we two brothers will shortly fill the vacancies that have occurred at Manadalay. Your friend Mr. Lajpat Rai ought to give me a few hints as to the proper department (deportment?) for the deportees'. Considering that this brief strike did not involve any major issue of public policy, or even of college policy, and did not threaten the law and order situation within the campus, Mohamed Ali's claims seem astonishing. But considering that such claims were prefatory to a much more meaningful public

life, they give us a glimpse of things to come; the idiom of martyrdom ('deportees' to the Andaman for a minor college strike?) had begun to find expression in his as yet limited public life. It would become more powerful in the following years.

However limited Mohamed Ali's experience may have been from his base in Baroda, the point is that journalism, writing for the newspapers, seems to open up a new opportunity for him. Especially so when the Act of 1909 and the status of separate electorate that it granted the Muslims opened up a new arena for public activity. 'The only avenue through which I could hope to reach a place in which I could prove of any appreciable use', Mohamed Ali recalled about the 1909-10 period.[53] The step away from petty bureaucracy into journalism was to be momentous for him in more ways than one. Not only in terms of its subsequent implications for political life, but also in that it marked a major departure from the designs and aspirations, in bureaucracy and law, of the usual member of Aligarh's first generation.[54]

Momentous steps, however, demand greater caution. Therefore while there was a certain rashness in Mohamed Ali's action in plunging into a field not usually populated with men of his background he did not exactly cut his life lines with Baroda before testing himself in the waters of journalism. Going to Calcutta 'by disguising my departure as two years' "leave without pay"'.[55] Mohamed Ali was keeping avenues for retreat open should his steps forward falter. Once *The Comrade* got going Mohamed Ali refused to return to Baroda even, he claims, to collect the Rs. 7,000 gratuity (*inam*) that was granted to him in recognition of his seven years' service.[56]

Mohamed Ali's break from Baroda to *The Comrade* involved innovations at two levels. At a personal level his English language journalism was a break from the familiar grooves of his peers amongst the English educated Muslims: law and bureaucracy. Journalism *per se* was not something new. By 1910 there existed notable examples of leadership weighted with journalism, especially in terms of journals addressed to 'one's own people', of acquainting them with the editor's idea of what the world is and what it ought to be.[57] Mohamed Ali's journal too took on a pedagogical role. In making journalism his metier, however, Mohamed Ali's innovativeness lay in relocating journalism along the Muslim-British government interface. He pitched himself as an equal at the most dominant section of imperial policy making

and at others who interacted with this circle, or proposed to do so. In the process he established a new social role for himself that of a public figure who lived off public funds, a role that we know today as that of the contemporary professional politician. Noteworthy here is Mohamed Ali's social inventiveness. Hitherto people with ancestral riches, a reasonably successful professional career, or a saintly disposition had projected themselves as leaders of the public. With Mohamed Ali this changed. *The Comrade* did make Mohamed Ali a public figure but not as much as Mohamed Ali's public activities helped sell *The Comrade.*

V

Despite lack of prior experience Mohamed Ali's *The Comrade* planned to assert itself at the highest levels in the realm. He chose Congress leaders, English-educated Muslims and personnel of the Raj in the imperial capital, as his immediate audience. In terms of self-perceptions of the first generation of Aligarh, he took these English-educated Muslims to represent the 'community'.[58] Hence by addressing them and the imperial capital, Mohamed Ali said, he sought to serve the 'secular affairs of my community', viz. 'the claims of the Indian Muslims to be represented as a *community* in the legislatures and the local bodies of the country' (emphasis added) and thereby enabling the community to take its 'proper share in the political life of the country'.

As it turned out the simple agenda of representing one's 'own community' to government involved Mohamed Ali in a complex task involving, *inter alia,* the identification of the community, contesting the claims of the Congress to represent the 'nation' and above all, coming to terms with the presence of government. Neither was an easy task; and all involved a number of ambiguities, contradictions and dilemmas. Mohamed Ali's positions regarding each would change over time as the context of actions changed too.

'We deeply feel the many dangers of unceasing controversy between races, and earnestly desire a better understanding between the contending elements of the body politic in India', Mohamed Ali had declared in the maiden issue of *The Comrade.*[59] Simple though it sounded, this statement contained within itself some of the most dilemma-ridden ideas that confronted political life in India early in this century. 'Few except Hindus accepted the claims of the Congress to be "Indian" and "national"', he pointed out.[60] 'We have no faith (at the moment) in the cry that India is united', he had declared a while

earlier and argued, using the analogy of Japan, that only in a 'homogenous' people was it possible to form a unified political movement against 'foreigners'.[61] What is a state? Who are the people who constitute this state? What need be the characteristic of an appropriate political community? Is India a nation? Do 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' in 'India' form a 'community'? These have never been easy questions to answer in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Mohamed Ali did not have easy and consistent answers for them either.

Mohamed Ali spent some effort in theorsing about the absence of a nation and national feeling in India. Later he would modify his theories a little. For the moment, though, in the early days of *The Comrade* in 1911, he insisted that the Congress, when it talked about the existence of a nation in India, was 'advocating measures which are impractical'.[62] Quoting a 'Hindu gentleman' approvingly *The Comrade* advocated patience. 'Let evolution run its course. Do not force India into a definite coherent state. Unity of thought and action is still wanting in India'. Only when such a unity is achieved would it be possible to have Indians control government of the country. However, in India he identified 'homogeneity' of the people in terms of their 'religion'. 'Universal suffrage in a country government by a common faith is the expression of national will; but in a country deprived of a common belief, what can it be but the mere expression of the interest of those numerically the stronger to the oppression of the rest?'[63] Clearly in Mohamed Ali's analysis of 1911, the Congress did not represent the nation, it did not represent the Hindus either (there being so many diverse creeds of Hindus). In contrast Muslims were presumed to be eminently ready for the transition to nationhood.

In a leading article in *The Comrade* on the process of 'nation making'[64] Mohamed Ali explained that the development of a 'nation' was a new kind of social grouping evolved from the various social groupings that had existed earlier. 'Evolution requires steady progress, and a nationality cannot be evolved anywhere unless the smaller forces of unity are utilised to diminish the number of scattered atoms by combining them into subsidiary organizations'. Politics in Europe during the nineteenth century provided the example of diverse small groupings being bound together into territorially defined political entities, namely nation states. Or at least so seemed to be the process viewed from India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This also had been the basis of much of the rhetoric of various nationalist demands that had become associated with the Indian

National Congress. The Indian case, Mohamed Ali challenged the Congress interpretation, was different. 'Territorial bonds are very weak in India, while communal bonds are strong'. However, this was not considered to be a major hindrance in the development of India as a nation. 'If the existing ties are utilised to form larger unions, India need not despair of a nationality formed out of a federation not of provinces, but of communities'. For, according to him, within India itself examples existed where ties of an over-arching religion had allowed for creation of a larger unified group.

The example of Islam, Mohamed Ali argued, showed the feasibility of using religion as the basis of nation-formation. 'Muslim unity has been to a great extent accomplished by uniting the so-called 72 sects of Islam into one solid whole'. Islam, he observed, had bridged the gap not only between its various sects, but also between the Western educated Muslims, and those trained in the indigenous systems of knowledge. 'The feeling which has welded Shias and Sunnnis together has also removed the narrowness which regarded Western education as opposed to Islam'. But when it came to establishing unity between 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' there was little that Mohamed Ali had to offer. All that he could do was to contest the frequent iterations by certain 'Hindus' that India was the homeland of Hindus alone, and insist that Muslims had as much of a right to live in India as Hindus.

In challenging the claims of the Congress to represent India, and of Hindus to have India as their homeland, it seems Mohamed Ali found the presence of the British government an advantage. 'It is our belief that the demarcation between the (Indians and the British) is growing fainter everyday, and to call some people the rulers and others the ruled would soon appear as absurd and meaningless to British India as it does in Great Britain . . . where one brother is a member of government and another is a loyal subject', he would insist.[55]

It is easy to see the contradiction with reality that such a statement involved. But surely there was more meaning in Mohamed Ali's statement than a mere positioning *vis-a-vis* social reality would allow us to grasp. For, since the early nineteenth century at least government, its personnel, and associates had made it amply clear that its European ways of societal organization were different and superior to the ways obtaining in society in India. Moreover, since the battles of 1857-58 the British had chosen to limit their interaction with Indians to a primarily official/political level. There may have been individuals like G.F.I. Graham (who consorted at length with Syed Ahmed Khan) and

A.O. Hume (associated with the early Congress), but they were exceptions. There was little doubt that the British government ruled and that the white man was super-ordinate to the Indian wherever there was a possibility of interaction between the two. Nevertheless Mohamed Ali went on to claim a position of equality (or at least a possibility in the future *vis-a-vis* the English as a prelude to claiming his right as a journalist, his 'right of criticising the government. . . . Standing shoulder to shoulder with our brethren of either denominations when we find our country suffering under real grievance'.[66] 'At the same time', he was quick to explain, 'we declare that in our relations with government we do not permit malice to cross our path, warp our judgement, or create disaffection'. Such a declaration, however, was not enough. For, not every Indian accepted that the British government was an integral part of the country; and there had been prominent examples of social and political hostility to the existence of British Indian government.

Indians had in the recent past conducted primarily in the agitation against the partition of Bengal, a—sometimes-violent—struggle against government. Important members of the Congress, men like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lajpat Rai had earned the ire of government for spreading what it called sedition. Hence Mohamed Ali had to point out that even well intentioned criticism had to be cautious and had to take into account the special context existing in India, of the widespread hostility in the populace against the Raj. 'A mass of ignorance and all the prejudices that ignorance breeds'. Criticism, he held, had to be within certain bounds lest it disturb the equanimity of the 'body politic'. The bounds, as he defined them, were fairly represented by the restrictions on the press incorporated in the Press Act of 1910 which gave the 'journalist all the latitude he needs'. In the same refrain, presuming the journalist in the role of a leader of men and ideas, Mohamed Ali cautioned that journalistic criticism of government had to be cautious. It needed to be aware of the 'existence of a vast quantity of inflammable material spread all over the country which a chance spark might at any moment kindle into an ungovern-able flame' burning the edifice of government. Such incendiaries he did not approve of.[67]

In short, Mohamed Ali was of the view that colonial government's position in India had to be accepted. As the unknown 'Hindu' correspondent of *The Comrade* pontificated: 'in order to succeed, you (the Congress) must conform your views as much as possible to the wishes

of the rulers and the great bureaucracy which is administering the country. The latter is no doubt autocratic in some ways, but is sincerely benevolent in its aims and purposes'. And just in case the Congress persisted with the aim of political governance of the country he pointed out that 'power can be achieved only through the good will of the rulers and of those of other creeds'.[68] The Congress might not have accepted such a proposition benevolently but, as Mohamed Ali saw it, government's paramount control over power provided the Congress with a coercive logic for accepting the English in India. It simply did not have the power to defy government. 'If honorable members will blunder into questions about the right of the English to be in this country', he remarked in one of his interventions in the ongoing debate on the provision of separate electorates in the Minto-Morley reforms, 'they fully deserve to be made to understand the disagreeable reality of paramountcy'.[69] For, was it not amply demonstrated that government could hold its own against the most strident of Congress demands? In 1905 it had partitioned Bengal and then in the following three years, effectively suppressed the Swadeshi movement that the Congress tried to organise. Later, in 1909, government's ability to undermine the Congress was further demonstrated when it went ahead to provide for separate electorates—in favour of Muslims—despite opposition by the Congress. It was plausible then, to recognised as Mohamed Ali did, that government was in a position to act decisively and show the Congress its place in the scheme of politics in British India. He hoped that the English could play an important role as an intervener in the Hindu-Muslim interface.

By the beginning of the next year Mohamed Ali got ample opportunities to practise what he had preached to the Congress during the previous year. He found the practice difficult. For in all of his analysis he seemed to forget that imperialism stood only for itself and had little altruism for others. Altruism, such as there was, was specifically tied to imperial interests. The year 1911, we should remember, had not ended yet. By the beginning of the next year government made it clear that it did not hold any special brief for Muslims of India. It undid the partition of Bengal.

VI

What happened was this: in December 1911, as part of its effort to impress Indians about its might and control, government planned a

Durbar in Delhi at which the recently appointed king, George V was to accept the homage of his Indian subjects. The king, officers of the government believed, needed to offer some boon to Indians on the occasion. After some thought at the highest level in the administration it was decided that the king would announce the shifting of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi and as a sudden afterthought, also the revocation of the partition of Bengal that had resulted in considerable political agitation since the partition had been announced in 1905.[70] Both the plans, of the shifting of the imperial capital and of the revocation of the partition of Bengal, were known only to a select few. Both came as surprise announcements to everyone else. The most surprised, it seems were the Muslims, many of whom at least in eastern Bengal, had begun to stake out a larger space for themselves in the public arena in East Bengal.[71] Among those who felt that the annulment of partition had hurt Muslims was Mohamed Ali. Yet he advised Muslims that in his 'judgement the Muslims should accept the decision of the government'. At the same time he pointed out that by accepting the annulment Muslims stood to lose. For, as he saw it, the re-united Bengal that government was giving to 'Hindus' was essentially out of Muslims' interest in that region. To him it seemed that, for the British nothing 'could be easier than to politely disburden the loyal and contented [Muslim] of their few gains in order to load the discontented if not disloyal [Hindus] with rewards and compensations'.[72]

Later, in 1913, when a police history sheet was prepared on Mohamed Ali it was noted that 'the views expressed in his paper during the first year were generally moderate, though frequently very critical of government measures and occasionally rather impertinent in tone. But he was not regarded as a political agitator'.[73] As an exhibition of its good will government too allowed *The Comrade* to function without a security deposit. *The Comrade* was not asked to pay a security deposit even after it had begun to subject government to criticism over the annulment of the partition of Bengal.[74] Mohamed Ali saw this as a sign of government's acceptance of his good faith.[75] Moreover government agreed to patronise some of Mohamed Ali's activities even though these concerned the Balkan wars and were organised around religious issues. Thus the Viceroy readily agreed that Indian Muslims could raise a loan to help Turkey in the Balkan war. He even agreed to become the patron of the Red Crescent mission [analogous to the Red Cross] that Mohamed Ali planned to send to Turkey and consented

to have his patronage announced from the pulpit of the Jama Masjid.[76]

Such a honeymoon would not last long for soon Mohamed Ali began to find various issues on which to assert himself against government. He began by insisting ever more that government re-do the partition of Bengal. The post-annulment condition of the Muslims, he felt would be 'worse' than that before partition and this could result in disaffection among Muslims.[77]

Following upon his self-assumed role of the representative of Muslims to government he also made bold to send a copy of his articles on 'the annulment' to the Secretary of State for India to solicit 'instant action'.[78] He also sent copies to the Viceroy warning him of the possibility of a political agitation by Muslims to press for the revocation of the annulment. 'If any relief is due to the Muslims of Bengal it should be announced without delay'. He was, Mohamed Ali added, aware 'of the fact that Lord Hardinge [the Viceroy] would certainly not like that there should be a Muslim agitation on the subject of announcement; [and] that well-merited concessions wisely made at a suitable moment would prevent such an agitation far more effectively than the most strenuous efforts of the leaders of Muslim opinion'.[79]

Rather than respond positively to Mohamed Ali's suggestions, government seemed to create further points of friction. By the middle of 1912 it once again, as in 1904, put pressure for withdrawal of the movement for a Muslim university. Harcourt Butler, a supporter of the movement and a member of the Viceroy's council, for example, wrote to the Raja of Mahmudabad, then a leading light among Muslims in UP:

> I earnestly hope that you will do nothing foolish, for I fear that the whole of our public life will be injured. It is perfectly childish to run up against a brick wall. There is not the least chance that the decision [to prohibit denominational universities with affiliating powers] will be rescinded. . . . No one has helped with the University more than I as a friend, this you know quite well. If this movement for an university is to end in a political agitation, then I think that it is very doubtful if you will get an University at all.[80]

Mohamed Ali, at this time, was one of the groups that tried to coax the Constitution Committee of the proposed university not to be subdued by such threats from government. The leaders were reminded of 'what happened in Bengal, and the result of agitation in regard to partition' but to no avail.[81] However, one result of such exhortations to Muslims to assert themselves against government was

that Mohamed Ali, by the end of 1912, was increasingly considered by observers from government as one of the 'younger men. . . .Very much out of control. . . . Described as having been practically unbridled'.[82]

Apparently unfamiliar with official perception of his activities, Mohamed Ali continued to consider himself a most loyal member of the empire. 'I do not know what view you and your friends have formed of the character of *The Comrade*', he had written to an unknown English correspondent. 'So far as I am concerned my motive is to assist government sometimes by removing misconceptions formed in the minds of people about the intentions of government and the character of its measures, and to warn others of the coming dangers'. He accepted that this entailed frequent critical scrutiny of government. As he explained, 'after all, journalism cannot take the form of the poetry of ancient bards who were paid to praise. However, even they sometimes let fall many a warning and, when heeded, it sometimes saved the ancient rulers much pain and trouble'. Hence he claimed good faith for his criticism of government. 'Without prejudice to the public I have always aimed at doing my duty to government and although you may sometimes differ, and that differences may be emphatically expressed, I find in ours no consciousness of a desire to weaken the hold of government on the people.[83] Such assertions of loyalty themselves were not dismissed as so much glib talk by the men of government. Rather Mohamed Ali and his newspapers were taken to be important supporters of government, that is, if they could be controlled suitably.[84] Yet, from the official point of view had little sympathy for those who seemingly acted in political life on behalf of a religion based community. Very soon Mohamed Ali and his coeval public men were taken to be consciously motivated towards self-aggrandisement. The motivation was noticed to be of a very personal sort, ranging widely from the desire to be a leader of the entire community to simply earning a decent livelihood. Mohamed Ali was regarded as spanning the whole range. The high moral ground that Mohamed Ali sought to occupy from the point of view of representing his 'community' was denied to him and instead a narrow-minded selfishness was attributed to him.[85]

But attributing a narrow self-serving instrumentality to the support that Mohamed Ali offered government would be unfair to him. For, he did realise that the British were not always supportive of 'Muslim' causes.[86] Yet, as, he wrote to a [possibly] Muslim student. 'In spite of its occasional mistakes, and what I may call, its repeated mistakes during

the last two years, it is a government under which we have our best chance of making progress in these days'. The instrumental utility of government then was not for him as an individual but for what he perceived to be interests of the entire community. Therefore, he consoled: despite 'repeated provocations' from the British, Muslims in India need to support government. 'I would be sorry to learn that any co-religionists of mine through temporary annoyance developed ideas hostile to the British connection with India'.[87]

VII

We began this essay by submitting that how people choose between membership of 'nation' or 'community' is a complex process wherein the context in which the choice is made is of considerable importance. Belonging to a religious group was something that was already given to Mohamed Ali as he entered the world of adulthood. Located as he was in the new kind of institutional spaces that were being created at this time he talked of his early troubles in the adult world as emerging from his being a Muslim living in a Hindu dominated world. There were other explanations for his troubles too, his personal and official behaviour and the difficulties he faced in understanding the logic of institutions where he worked was pointed out to him by his own brother. But Mohamed Ali was not receptive to such answers.

As he tried to play out the aspirations that were desired of him from his familial round and find a better place for himself in the world he even began to create newer avenues for himself, but well within the confines of his belonging to a 'community'. In fact when he used his skill with words and ideas to start the journal, *The Comrade*, the stated aim was to articulate ideas and aspirations of the Muslim community. Creating a role for the Muslim community in the public spaces of colonial government was however substantially dependent on whether the government wished it to be so. Sometimes the government would be encouraging, at others it would douse Mohamed Ali's enthusiasm. Mohamed Ali remained at a loss to make sense of changing government positions. Yet he could see that there was much that was to be gained by retaining his sectarian affiliations, not merely for himself, but also to assuage a certain altruistic impulse for doing 'good'. Mohamed Ali had little reason to reflect upon his experiences in order to change his primary affiliations. In the event, given the context of those times, there was little possibility of his launching a strong claim

for belonging to a 'nation' as the idea had come to be widely accepted by the liberal ideologies of his time. Instead he spent considerable effort in establishing synonymity between 'community' and 'nation'; as also arguing that belonging to the one was a greater good than belonging to another.

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2. Note please that many states of Europe from where the Indian State adapted its practice of secularism had gone through substantial periods of religious intolerance and various kinds of ethnic cleansing before opting for secularism as state policy in practice. Even today, despite an all-powerful state to mediate between diverse people, European countries do feel strong undercurrents of sectarian intolerance given an appropriate context.
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   Cf. K.J. Gergen, 1991, *The Saturated Self*, Basic Books, New York and his (1994) *Realities and Relationships*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge and (1994a), 'Mind, Text and Society: Self Memory in Social Context', U. Neisser and R. Fivush (eds.), *The Remembering Self*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
4. See Meeta and Rajivlochan, 1992, "Conceptions of India as a Nation in Modern Times", *Social Science Research Journal*, Panjab University, Chandigarh. Also Meeta and Rajivlochan, 1997, "Some Antinomies in Understanding Communal Stress", Asghar Ali Engineer (ed.), *Gandhi and Communal Harmony*, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi. Also Meeta and Rajivlochan, "The Past in the Present: a

Case Study of the Weavers of Malegaon", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16 March 1996

5. 'We', *The Comrade*, 14 January 1911.
6. For an extensive bibliography on Mohamed Ali, see Rajivlochan, 1987, "The Communal Social Process", Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, unpublished Ph.D. thesis.
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8. Mohamed Ali, *My Life: a Fragment: an Autobiographical Sketch*, (ed.) Afzal Iqbal, Lahore: Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1946. Also, Mohamed Ali to Daryabadi, 16 August 1916, in M. Sarwar (ed.), *Khutut Mohamed Ali*, Maktaba Jamia, Dilli 1940.
9. But Shaukat Ali was only two classes ahead of Mohamed Ali. He passed out of Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College in 1894 and Mohamed in 1896. Also see Lelyveld, 1978: 291-93.
10. Raza Ali, a contemporary, in his *Amal Nama*, recalls that "if Maulana Mohamed Ali was respected it was because of his brother who was a famous cricket captain". Cited in Bhatnagar, 1969: 151. Similar anecdotes are given A.B. Yusufi, 1970, *Life of Mohamed Ali Jauhar*, Mohamed Ali Educational Society, Karachi, and Rais Ahmed Jafri, 1932, Sirat Muhammad Ali, Dilli, Maktaba Islami.
11. *My Life*: 38: f. Abdul Majid Daryabadi (ed.), *Zaati Diary*, Maarif Press, Azamgarh, vol. 1: 386, 1954, says that the sobriquet 'Big Brother' was coined by Mohamed Ali. Erikson has variously suggested that such statements from potential leaders need to be taken quite seriously in order to have a more rounded understanding of happenings in later public life. See E.H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther* and, *Gandhi's Truth*, both from W.H. Norton, New York, 1969.
12. *My Life*: 39.
13. 'In mother's memory', *The Comrade*, 5 December 1924, and *My Life*: 6, 17, and 39.
14. *My Life*: 39ff.
15. Jamiluddin Ahmed, 'Maulana Mohamed Ali', Rais Ahmed Jafri (ed.), *Selections from Mohamed Ali's The Comrade*, Ali Academy, Lahore, p. 182.
16. Azim Husain, *Fazl-i-Husain: A Political Biography*, Longmans, Bombay, 1965. Also for social links between the students and faculty at Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College and their extension into Britain, see Lelyveld, 1978: 283ff.
17. Mohamed Ali to Daryabadi, 16 August 1916, *Khutut*: 127-28.
18. Ibid.
19. Mohamed Ali to Daryabadi, 6 June 1928, *Khutut*: 175.
20. "During my stay at Oxford from 1898 to 1902 I spent Rs. 28,000 which averages Rs. 600 a month". Mohamed Ali to F. S. A. Slocock, 29 January 1917, in Mohamed Ali, *Mohamed Ali in Indian Politics: Select Writings*, Mushirul Hasan (ed.), Atlantic, Delhi, 1982 (henceforth *HSW*) 2: 10. Mohamed Ali finally cleared his dues in September 1905, see J.A.R. Munro to Mohamed Ali, Mohamed Ali Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi, 6 September 1905 (henceforth *MAP*). Apart from college dues Mohamed Ali also owed £127-14-8 in sundry debts. These were repaid in June 1905, see Thomas Cook and Son to Mohamed Ali, 27 June 1905, and *MAP*.

21. 'I think he's very well fitted for doing good work in an educational post in India, which is the career he desires' testified the Rector of Mohamed Ali's college. See Testimonial of Rector, 19 Oct. 1901, *MAP*; also testimonial of James Williams, 14 October 1901, *MAP*.
22. *Confidential Report of the Committee of Enquiry at Aligarh*, March 1907, Allahabad, 1907, carries one set of accusations of this nature by college authorities against Mohamed Ali. Also various attacks *ad hominem* on Mohamed Ali in the pages of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* during November 1920.
23. *My Life*: 41 and Jafri 1932: 187-89. At least once Mohamed Ali tried to reconstruct the reasons for leaving Rampur. 'My starting salary as the officer-in-charge of education in the state was Rs. 300.... As this amount was inadequate for my needs I left the service of the state after a year'. Mohamed Ali to Slocock, 29 January 1917, *HSW* 2: 10. But there is little reason to take Mohamed Ali's statement at face value for, as we shall see repeatedly, he was prone to reconstruct the past somewhat drastically.
24. Jafri 1932: 189ff.
25. See, for example Nasim Ansari, 1996, Aligarh Muslim University, 1935-1947: Recollections of a Student', *Society, Religion and the State: Identity Crises in Indian History*, Parshotam Mehra, Narayani Gupta and Rajivlochan (eds.).
26. S.S. Peerzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan, 1906-47*, 2 vols., National Publishing House, Karachi, pp. 10 *infra*.
27. *Confidential Report*, op. cit. Much before the report was published, the Lieutenant Governor of UP sent in his first impressions to the Viceroy, 'Apparently some of the students have been influenced by one Mohamed Ali (employed in Baroda state), who has been paying a long visit to Aligarh' (J.P. Hewett to Minto, 24 February 1907, *Minto Papers*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library). The Viceroy pooh-poohed the suggestion of students being under some political influence. 'The trouble was really a sort of school rebellion against discipline'; he suggested (Minto to Hewett, 7 March 1907, *Minto Papers*).
28. Ibid. and Lelyveld 1978: 330ff
29. Mohamed Ali to G.K. Gokhale, 4 February 1907, *HSW* 1: 2.
30. Mohamed Ali to Mahfuz Ali, 14 January 1910, *Khutut*: 252-54.
31. G.S. Clarke to Mohamed Ali, 20 September 1908, *MAP*, Mazaharul Hasan to Mohamed Ali, 13 June 1909, *MAP* and other letters of this time in *MAP*. Though it also seems that Mohamed Ali had considerable difficulty in fulfilling departmental requirements for a promotion. The one carrot that Baroda was willing to offer to induce him back after he had left service was a slight relaxation in these requirements. 'If you find it difficult to pass the departmental examination he [the Gaikwar] would allow you a little more time to complete it', wrote the Sirsubah, Baroda to Mohamed Ali. From Tekchand to Mohamed Ali, 2 January 1912, *MAP*.
32. Shaukat Ali to Mohamed Ali, 4 July 1909, *MAP*
33. '*is riyasat se sakhta bezar hoon, aur darasl naukari se bezar hoon*', Mohamed Ali to Mahfuz Ali, 14 January 1910, *Khutut*: 253.
34. Ibid.
35. H.A. Stuart to Mohamed Ali, 16 September 1909, in *MAP*.
36. Mohamed Ali to Mahfuz Ali, 14 January 1910, *Khutut*: 252f. Also pp. 255-61f, and Jafri 1932: 196.

37. Mohamed Ali to Nawab of Rampur, 23 November 1910, *MAP.*
38. *My Life*: 44. 'I was offered the highest post in the Jaora state. . . . I do not at this date remember the exact figure of the salary offered to me in addition to a furnished residence and horses and carriages, but I do not think it was less than Rs. 1,000 a month', Mohamed Ali to Slocock, 29 January 1917, *HSW* 2: 11.
39. See, for example, the extensive account in a letter from Mohamed Ali to Abdul Ghafoor, 15 December 1915, *Khutut*: 278-97. This 3,500-words letter is mostly concerned with descriptions of the cheering crowds on the way to Chhindwara.
40. *My Life*: 86.
41. Francis Robinson, 1975, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 180-81.
42. Obviously Robinson had little experience of public life. He seems to be part of that vast majority of middle class people who believe that public life and activism is possible only for those with private sources of income that could subsidise activism.
43. Confidential Report.
44. 'The proposed Muslim University', 16 October 1904, *HSW* 1: 75-87.
45. *Hom. Pol. B.*, 149, November 1913, National Archives of India (NAI), Delhi.
46. Mohamed Ali to G.K. Gokhale, 4 February 1907, *HSW* 1:2.
47. 'On Muslim League', 1 March 1907, *HSW* 1: 17f.
48. Mohamed Ali to Gokhale, 27 January 1907 and 4 February 1907, *HSW* 1: 1f.
49. 'On Muslim League', op. cit.
50. 5 December 1907, *HSW* 1: 19f.
51. Mohamed Ali to Gokhale, 8 February 1908, *HSW* 1: 22.
52. Ibid.
53. *My Life*: 45.
54. Lelyveld 1978: 320ff.
55. *My Life*: 43. Though the exact nature of Mohamed Ali's leave is not clear. 'His Highness is not in favour of your taking long leave', wrote the Sirsubah of Baroda State. 'He would like you to return soon and resume your work if you wish to keep your connection with the Baroda service'. Tekchand to Mohamed Ali, 2 January 1912, *MAP.*
56. Jafri 1932: 196. Also Mohamed Ali to Raja of Mahmudabad, 11 May 1918, *HSW* 2: 95.
57. Various studies of India have detailed the conjunction between journalism and leadership in nineteenth century India. Among the more easily accessible and widely referred are the books on local politics and social reform by Christine Dobbin, Charles Heimsath, Kenneth Jones, David Kopf, R. Parthasarthy and Francis Robinson.
58. *My Life*: 45f. The following from same source.
59. 'We', *The Comrade*, 14 January 1911.
60. 'The Congress and the Hindus', *The Comrade*, 18 February 1911.
61. 'We'.
62. Letter to editor, *The Comrade*, 1 April 1911.
63. 'Muslim representation', *The Comrade*, 22 April 1911.
64. 'Nation making', *The Comrade*, 29 April 1911. Glosses in this and following two paragraphs from same source.

65. 'We'.
66. Ibid.
67. Little wonder that barely within six months of its inception the Chief Secretary of Bengal commended *The Comrade* for being 'the most reputable and important among the Muslim papers'. 4 August 1911, note by the Chief Secretary, Bengal: 97, *Hom. Pol. B.*, 21–52, November 1911, NAI.
68. From unnamed 'Hindu' gentleman, letter to editor, *The Comrade*, 1 April 1911.
69. 'Separate electorates', *The Comrade*, 28 January 1911.
70. 'Why not make the two Bengals into a Presidency like Bombay and Madras? This would flatter the Bengalis very much, allay discontent and stop sedition, and would be well worth the extra cost to the country. Think it over!' King George to Hardinge, 16 December 1910, *Hardinge Papers*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. Also see R.E. Frykenberg, 1986, 'The coronation darbar of 1911: some implications', in R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Delhi Through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp. 369-90, and Alan Trevithick, 1990, 'Some sequential and structural aspects of the British imperial assemblages at Delhi 1877–1911', *Modern Asian Studies*, 24: 561-78.
71. Mushirul Hasan, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1916-28*, Delhi: Manohar, 1979.
72. 'The annulment', *The Comrade*, 16, 23 and 30 December 1911.
73. The History Sheet on Mohamed Ali is in Hom. Pol. B., 149, November 1913, NAI.
74. For documentation of Mohammed Ali's critique of the government as it was seen by various government departments. See Donald W. Ferrell, 1969, 'Delhi 1911-1922: society and politics in the new imperial capital of India', Australian National University, Canberra, unpublished thesis. Ferrell uses the Fortnightly reports of the local administration and the weekly reports of the director, Criminal Intelligence.
75. Mohamed Ali to unknown, 14 September 1912, *HSW* 1: 52.
76. Mohamed Ali to Private Secretary to Viceroy, 1 November 1912, and 8 November 1912. Both in *HSW* 1: 52 and 53 respectively. Also see Mohamed Ali to E. Batchelor, 22 November 1916, *HSW* 1: 303.
77. Mohamed Ali to F.H. Lucas, 3 January 1912, *HSW* 1: 39.
78. Mohamed Ali to James DuBoulay, 3 January 1912, *HSW* 1: 38.
79. Ibid.
80. Harcourt Butler to Raja of Mahmudabad, 22 July 1912, *HSW* 1: 108f.
81. Hewett to Hardinge, 13 August 1912, *HSW* 1: 111.
82. Ibid.
83. Mohamed Ali to unknown, 14 September 1912, *HSW* 1: 51.
84. Hardinge to Craddock, 9 February 1913, *Hardinge Papers*.
85. Robinson 1975: 176ff.
86. For example 'Great Britain and the Muslim kingdoms', *The Comrade*, 14 October 1911, 'We', *The Comrade*, 14 January 1911.
87. Mohamed Ali to unknown, 6 September 1912, *HSW* 1: 49.