

THE SEVENTH NIZAM : THE CLAIM FOR INDEPENDENCE
AND THE KHILAFAT QUESTION

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The personality of the seventh Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan [ruled 1911-

1948, died 1967] continues to be a matter of debate after his death, as it was during his lifetime. As he is almost the only ruler of Hyderabad who is well known to students of modern Indian history, they find it difficult to place him in the context of his time. This is especially the case since the people of Hyderabad themselves point to the great differences in the personalities of Mir Osman Ali Khan and his father the sixth Nizam, Mahboob Ali Khan, who ruled from 1869 till his death in 1911.

This paper seeks to draw a distinction between the personality of the ruler

and the state identity ñ a difficult task, as he was avowedly an absolute ruler, subject only to the intervention of the British Government of India. The administrative modernization achieved under some of the Indian princely states has been widely noted, and Hyderabad has a valid claim to be placed in this category along with Baroda and Mysore. However the lack of political modernization, the failure to recognize the regional and linguistic identities and the notoriously exploitative Jagirdari system, especially in the Telengana area, are factors which prevented the widespread acceptance of the state's administrative legacy.

The paper draws on material collected during the research undertaken by

the present writer for his two books on the Nizams of Hyderabad [Hyderabad under Salar Jang, second edition, 1996, S Chand & Co., New Delhi, and The Last Nizam: the Life and Times of Mir Osman Ali Khan, Penguin Viking, Delhi, 1992,1993] as well as studies undertaken after the publication of these two books, some of which has already appeared in article form.

The paper seeks to examine the following aspects of the last Nizam's controversial career as the ruler of Hyderabad from 1911 to 1948 :

1. What led the seventh Nizam to claim that Hyderabad should be an independent state, his frequent petitions to the British for the title of King, and his failure to accede to India in 1947 ? Was there any basis for his claim to superiority over other Indian rulers, and was it linked up with his support to the British on the Khilafat question in 1914 ?

2. Why did Mir Osman Ali Khan refrain from supporting the Khilafat movement openly, when he clearly agreed with its aims ? Did he have a separate Agenda which led him to refrain from publicly espousing the cause of the Caliphate ?

3, Why did he arrange a marriage between his two eldest sons and the daughter and niece of the Khalifa, Abdul Hamid, in 1931 ? Was there an intention that he, or his family, should benefit from this alliance by claiming succession to the Caliphate ?

4. What were the causes of the failure of the Nizam to achieve his goals in the Khilafat question ?

I. Pan Islamism in Nineteenth Century India

The late nineteenth century saw the emergence of a conflict between the ideologies of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the proponent of a modernized, liberal, Islam which sought to interpret the Quran according to the rational tenets which had emerged in the west, and the founder of the modern Pan-Islamic movement, Jamaluddin Afghani, who though born in Iran, or perhaps in Afghanistan, was a well-known figure in many parts of

the Islamic world, and had lived for a period of time both in Istanbul, the Turkish capital, and in Hyderabad state in India.

The Indian Muslim elite was torn between two very disparate interpretations of Islam. On the one hand Sir Syed in the columns of his journal Tahzib-ul-Akhlāq [Muslim social reformer] attempted to substitute reason for authority in the interpretation of the Quran. "Reason alone he argued is a sufficient guide." His aim was to create an Islam thoroughly compatible with progress." Francis Robinson, Separation among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims, 1860-1923. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 109. On the other side there were the orthodox Alims of Firangi Mahal In Lucknow, such as Maulvi Abdul Hai, who swnounxws him as a follower of Satan. Small-town Maulvis denounced him, and threats against his life were frquent. The Ulema of Mecca also issued a verdict against Sir Syed. [ibid.]

Sir Syed, who had started his public life working closely with his Hindu friends for the promotion of a scientific frame of mind in India, ended his life as a strong opponent of the Indian National Congress which had been founded in 1884: "A congress becomes a national congress, only when all the aims and objects of the nation whom that congress represents are common without exception. My honourable friend admits that some aims and objects of the Muslims and the Hindus are different and contradictory. it may be appropriate or not but no Muslim, be he a cobbler or nobleman, would ever agree to the Muslims being relegated to a status where they become slaves of another nation which is their neighbour, even though time has reduced them to a very low position and will reduce them still further.." [Quoted from Pakistan Movement: Historic Documents, compiled by G Allana, p. 2, in G. Allana, Eminent Muslim Freedom Fighters, 1562-1947. Delhi: Neeraj Publishing House, 1983, p. 121 .]

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Jamaluddin Afghani [1838-1897] was said to have been born in Asadabad, a town near Hamadan in Iran, and was described as a descendant of Hazrat Imam Hussain. He served under two successive kings of Afghanistan, Amir Dost Mohamed Khan and Amir Sher Ali Khan. He left Kabul in 1285 AH, was barred entry into Iran, and was kept under close watch during his short visit of one month in India. He spent time in Egypt, the Hijaz, and Turkey. In Turkey he was welcomed by the Prime Minister Ali Pasha, gave lectures in Constantinople, and influenced the Young Turks. However he made enemies among the orthodox clergy

and was forced to leave the country, reaching Cairo on 21st March 1871. He was sent away from Egypt by the Khedive, Tawfiq Pasha, under instructions from London. He visited Hyderabad during the lifetime of Sir Salar Jang, and started publishing a magazine which expressed anti-Western views on world politics. In England he met Sri Wilfred Blunt, whose book *India under Ripon*, describes his visit to India, and the influence and respect which Afghani commanded there.

In 1882, the Sultan of Turkey invited Afghani to Turkey as his guest, an invitation which he gladly accepted. After his arrival there, however, the Sultan, influenced by jealous courtiers, posted a police guard at his house. Blunt visited him there, and found him suffering from cancer. He died on 8 March 1897, at the age of 60. According to Allana, the ideas of Sultan Abdul Hamid of Turkey on the unity and expansion of Islam, broadly approximated those of Jamaluddin Afghani. The movement which came to be known as Pan-Islamism began to raise its head at this time. There was however a difference of opinion between the two proponents of the idea. While the ruler of Turkey wanted Islam to be unified under his personal leadership, Afghani wanted it through a free association of independent and sovereign Muslim States. [See the article by G. Allana on Jamaluddin Afghani in the book, *Eminent Muslim Freedom Fighters*, cited earlier, pp. 137-149.]

The very different personalities and political stances of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Jamaluddin Afghani, who died within a few months of each other, both influenced the rise of Muslim nationalism in the Indian sub-continent in the twentieth century. While Sir Syed rejected the pan-Islamic approach, and urged Indian Muslims to imitate the British model, both in the field of education, and the scientific and rational approach, Jamaluddin Afghani was uncompromisingly anti-British, anti-imperialist and for the revival of traditional values. He strongly rejected the approach of his contemporary, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.

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II. The Decline of the Ottoman Empire and the Origins of Pan-Islamism

The Turkish empire was seen as the sick man of Europe for centuries. Its control over large territories on the European continent made it impossible to ignore. During the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, the Sultan of Turkey claimed to be Khalifa of all Muslims and the priests of Mecca appealed for the assistance of all Muslims in fighting the threat from the Christians. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan promptly wrote in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, that the Sultan of Turkey had no right to be Khalifa, and he

was sure that there was not a single Indian Muslim who considered him as such. Political rights, he said, were more important than religious traditions, and so long as the Muslims lived freely under British rule they would remain good subjects. During the Afghan War of 1878-80 and the bombardment of Alexandria of 1882, Syed Ahmed took the same reassuring line. [Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims*, pp. 111-112].

This stand of Sir Syed contrasted strongly with the pan-Islamic views of Jamaluddin Afghani, who held that "the cause of the decline of Islam was that the Dar-ul-Islam was no longer politically integrated, Afghani's solution was that the ulama should build up regional centres in the various parts of the Dar-ul-Islam and that these regional centres should be affiliated to a universal centre based at one of the holy places where regional representatives would meet to try to create a unified approach. " Moreover, "he regarded it the religious duty of Muslims to reconquer any territory taken from them by others and, if this was not possible, to migrate to some other land that was still part of the Dar-ul-Islam. Resistance to infidel aggression and reconquest was the duty not merely of the Muslims of the particular region involved, but of all Muslims." [ibid., footnote, pp. 112-113.]

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"As a result of her intervention in the General War of 1914-18, Turkey

lost her Arab provinces and her suzerainty over Egypt, just as she had lost her European provinces and Tripoli-Benghazi as a result of the Revolution of 1908." Had it not been for the rise of Kemal Ataturk and his establishment of the Turkish nation-state, the Turks would have probably ended up as a protectorate of a European power, as Egypt had been since 1882. [Arnold J Toynbee and Kenneth P Kirkwood, *Turkey*, Vol VI in *The Modern World: A survey of Historical Forces*. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1926, pp. 57-58.]

The Young Turks who dominated Turkey from 1908 to 1914 "attempted to mobilize the entire Islamic world and obtained a legal opinion [fetva] from the chief religious jurisconsult of the Ottoman Empire [the Sheikh-ul-Islam] to the effect that hostilities against the three infidel Powers in the Entente camp - Russia, Great Britain, and France - would be a Jihad or Holy War, even though waged in alliance with infidel Germany and Austria-Hungary. There was a good case for this opinion, since practically all Muslims who in 1914 were under non-Muslim rule [and at that time they greatly outnumbered those under Muslim rule] were subjects of either Russia, France or Great Britain, while the Central Powers only possessed a handful of Muslim subjects in Bosnia and East Africa." However, the call for Jihad did not fetch the Turkish Empire any great support among the Indian or other Oriental Muslims. The former only became active in defending the Turks after the Armistice of 30 October 1918" [ibid., pp. 55-56]

In fact the "master-stroke of the British propaganda was the fomentation, in 1916, of an Arab national revolt against Turkey, which was launched in the Hijaz under the leadership of the Amir of Mecca" a descendant of the prophet himself. [p. 57.]

On 20 November 1922, Mustafa Kemal Pasha in a speech in the Turkish Great National Assembly at Ankara, claimed that the relation between the de facto Turkish rulers of Baghdad in the 11 century and the shadowy Caliphs in whose name they governed was a relation between a *temporal* and a *spiritual* power. Similarly, he argued, the Great National Assembly of Turkey exercised the *temporal* and the Caliph, who continued to rule in Constantinople, exercised the *spiritual* power.

The Toynbee-Kirkwood study firmly rejected the argument that there was a *spiritual* authority of the Caliph of Turkey over the countries ruled by the Turkish empire. They argued that "the Caliphs never, at any time in their history, exercised those powers of interpreting, modifying and promulgating dogma, or of disciplining the doctors and administrators of the Islamic Law, which were actually exercised by the Popes [or rather the Popes and the Church Councils between them] and which were the essence of the *spiritual* power of the Papacy. Their position was rather that of "Defenders of the Faith" like the position of the temporal sovereigns in certain modern Protestant countries. So far from being amenable to the Caliph's *spiritual* authority, the divines maintained that their consensus could depose and incumbent of the caliphate from his temporal power, if he broke the social Contract.."[p. 166-167]

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Abdul Hamid, the autocratic sovereign of the Turkish Empire from 1876-1909, was a figure who seemed to prefigure the last Nizam of Hyderabad. He strongly resisted the constitution which was sought to be imposed on Turkey by Midhat Pasha, with widespread support from the Turkish and other Muslim elements in the Ottoman Empire. Instead, he resuscitated the traditional concept of the Caliphate, which he hoped would declare him to be the head of the entire Muslim world, not just the Ottoman Empire, as it then existed, or the Turkish-language speaking countries. At about the same time, Queen Victoria of England had been declared Empress of India in 1877. Meanwhile the Czar of Russia and the Emperor of China were bringing under their imperial sway the Muslim principalities of Central Asia.

In 1908 when the Committee of Union and Progress, led by the Young Turks, deposed Abdul Hamid, they could have abolished the Caliphate itself. However "Abdul Hamid had turned the Caliphate into so imposing an instrument that the revolutionaries could not make up their minds to throw it away when they deposed its author." [p. 176] They therefore retained the Caliphate, hoping to use it as an instrument of prestige and hegemony. In 1914, as we have already noted, a Jihad was declared by the Turkish Sultan-Caliph. While it did not seem to have made any major impact on the Muslims of the world in general, it had at least a delayed impact on the leadership of Indian Muslims, who took serious note of the adverse effects of the loss of power by the Caliphate. [p. 175] There was a prolonged agitation against the British on this issue, led by Mahatma Gandhi, the Ali Brothers and other leaders during the 1920s.

By the Treaty of Sevres in August 1919, the Ottoman Empire was dismembered by the victorious Allies. Armenia and Hijaz became independent. Syria became a French mandate, and Mesopotamia and Palestine became Greek protectorates. The Nationalist party under Mustafa Kemal, however, which controlled Anatolia, rejected the terms of the treaty and began to drive out the various occupation forces. The then

Sultan-Caliph of Turkey, Vahid-ud-din, was living in Constantinople [Istanbul] under British protection.

. On 11 April 1920, Sultan Vahid-ud-din, after obtaining the opinion of his Shaikh-ul-Islam, or official advisor on theological affairs, "publicly condemned the Nationalist Movement, in his capacity of Caliph, as contrary to religion." In November 1922, the Nationalists abolished the Sultanate. Vahid-ud-din was replaced by his cousin Abdul Majid. The Nationalists continued the "spiritual" Caliphate because they thought it may be of some value to themselves. The Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923, stabilized the Turkish position, and in October 1923, the Republic was declared. On 1 March 1924 the the President of the new Turkish Republic announced the abolition of the Caliphate, and the Khalifa Abdul Majid left for Europe three days later. [Turkey, pp. 174-178. See also Roland E Miller, Mappilai Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends. Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1976, pp. 129 ff.]

Toynbee and Kirkwood, writing two years after this event, held the view that there was no particular charge against Abdul Majid; in fact he was considered more pro-nationalist than others in his family. The abolition of the Caliphate, to the Nationalists, was an essential part of the ending of the old order, when Christendom and the Islamic world had both given way to the world of nation-states. From the purely Islamic world, the rest of the world may be described as Dar-ul-Harb. The first Muslim member of the League of Nations, they pointed out, was "non-Sunni Persia, which has always repudiated the Ottoman Caliphate.." [Turkey, p. 181]

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III. The Khilafat Movement in Northern India and its Repercussions Elsewhere

The Ali Brothers are known to have been among the most vigorous supporters of the Khilafat movement on the Indian scene. Maulana Mohammed Ali, the younger of the two, is better known, though it was the elder brother, Maulana Shaukat Ali who survived him and played a role in the affairs of Hyderabad. Born in Rampur in December 1878, Mohammed Ali died in London in January 1931, soon after the first Round Table Conference which he attended in London. . After a brilliant academic career at Aligarh University, this scion of a respectable but not prosperous family in Rampur state in U.P. obtained a scholarship at Oxford, and acquired an enviable command over English. He appeared and failed in the Indian Civil Service examination. Returning to India in 1902, he took employment under Maharaja Fateh Singh Gaikwad of Baroda, who had been his contemporary at Oxford. He left it to start a journal Comrade at Calcutta, which acquired a reputation as a hard-hitting organ of the young Muslim intellectuals of the time.

Western-educated yet yearning for the traditional values of Islam, Mohammed Ali looked to Mahatma Gandhi for political leadership, but did not accept his spiritualism nor his intuition. He regarded Tilak as his ěguruí but he also felt that "the spectacle of a go-ahead Hinduism, dreaming of self-government and playing with its ancient gods, clad in the vesture of democracy.." As a Muslim of the class that considered itself the heir to the conquerors of India, Mohammed Ali felt that the Muslim was to "lose his self-respect "along with "the loss of empire." He argued that "the responsibility of the Hindus is much greater" in regard to the breaking down of the "walls of separation},

because "they are more powerful and have sometimes used their strength with strange disregard to consequences. The Muslims stand aloof because they are afraid of being completely swallowed up."

Yet in spite of these differences, he asserted "I belong to two circles of equal size, but which are not concentric. One is India, and the other is the Muslim world. We are not nationalists but supernationalists, and I as a Muslim say that "God made man and the Devil made the nation. Nationalism divides, our religion binds." [See "Mohammed Ali: Patriot and Defender of the Faith" in the chapter, Islamic Revival, Reform, and Nationalism, in Stephen Hay, Ed., Sources of Indian Tradition, 2nd edition, Volume Two: Modern India and Pakistan [New Delhi, Viking, 1988, pp. 195-204. Quotations are on pp. 198, 204.]

One of the leaders of the Communist peasant revolt against the exploitative agrarian system in Telengana [the Telugu-speaking districts of the Nizam's Dominions] Dr. Raj Bahadur Gour, is of interest to those puzzled by Mohammed Ali's combination of modern and traditional views. Gour describes the mood in northern India in the early twenties as follows: "Maulana Mohammed Ali was turning heaven and earth to retain Khilafat. In India, he and Gandhiji led a big mass upsurge against the British. Khilafat became in common usage a word that meant opposition to the British." However Mustafa Kemal "turned the tables and Khilafat was abolished. This was beyond endurance for Mohammed Ali. He led a deputation to England. But Lloyd George would not give any assurance. On his way back he wanted to meet Turkish leaders. They were too busy [mashghool] to meet him."

Gour's critique of Mohammed Ali is also of interest: "His attitude to Khilafat arose from his ardent adherence to a supra-national centre and "the most essential institution for the Muslim community throughout the world." While he rightly blamed the British for wreaking vengeance on Turkey and the Muslims, he did not see the other side - that Khilafat, as it then existed, had lost its positive features and was crumbling under its own weight." The modern Muslim, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, was opposed to sustaining the Khilafat. Mohammed Ali had an unduly optimistic view of the capacities of the Young Turk leadership, and Anwar Pasha. "He totally underestimated the anti-Turk urges of the Arabs. They were not prepared to accept Turkish tutelage. He did not realise that the Afghans and the Iranians were not prepared to give up their independence." [Maulana Mohammed Ali, Great Leader of the Khilafat Movement, in Raj Bahadur Gour, Random Writings. Hyderabad: Makhdoom Society and Prachee Publications, 2002, pp 161-166.]

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IV. . Mir Osman Ali Khan's Manifesto of 1914 and the Khilafat Question

A detailed examination of the Khilafat movement in India is not relevant to our purpose in this paper. What is of concern to us is the part played in the Khilafat question by the seventh Nizam of Hyderabad. Mir Osman Ali Khan was born in the Purani Haveli palace in the old city of Hyderabad on Tuesday 6 April 1886, to the sixth Nizam, Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, and Amat-uz-Zehra Begum, said to be a lady of the Shia persuasion. Mir Osman Ali Khan is sometimes compared unfavourably to his father, who was considered to be a generous and deeply loved ruler, in contrast to

the somewhat parsimonious and aloof Osman Ali Khan. However, the British Resident in 1905 stated that "the Nizam is very austere in his treatment of his son," as the latter was given very little money to spend. The seventh Nizam told a later Resident that though he had resented the strict treatment of his father at the time, he realised later that it had helped him, as liberty without license to young boys because of their high status would lead to serious consequences in later life. [V.K. Bawa, the Last Nizam: The Life & Times of Mir Osman Ali Khan. New Delhi: Penguin Viking, 1992, p. 41.

Neither the sixth Nizam, Mir Mahboob Ali Khan nor his successor was exposed to the enlightening influences of a Western education, as the British had hoped. During the childhood of Mahboob Ali Pasha {as he is still affectionately known in Hyderabad,} the suspicions of the Diwan cum Regent, Sir Salar Jang, about the surreptitious nature of British role in the Nizam's Dominions, stood in the way. The situation was evidently not dissimilar during the childhood of the seventh Nizam, who had acquired through the traditions of his family, a deep sense of his own importance, which was further strengthened by the medieval atmosphere of adulation and flattery which surrounded him when he ascended the Gaddi in 1911, at the comparatively early age of 26.

The British Resident at Hyderabad during the early years of the seventh Nizam's reign was Sir Alexander Pinhey. His papers at the South Asian Centre at Cambridge throw light on the early years of Osman Ali Khan's reign. His mature advice evidently assisted Osman in establishing himself as the ruler in the face of a challenge to his legitimacy. The removal of the Diwan Maharaja Kishen Pershad [1901-12], the appointment of Salar Jang III as Diwan and his subsequent removal [1912-14] were matters of great delicacy, especially since the Nizams had traditionally to consult the British about the appointment of Diwans since around 1803. An indication of the popularity he enjoyed in the court was the proposal to confer upon him the title Hashmat-ul-Mulk, perhaps the first time such a proposal was made since the title of Hashmat Jang was awarded to James Achilles Kirkpatrick, the Resident at Hyderabad during the signing of the treaty of 1800, and the subject of the book *The White Mughals* by William Dalrymple.

Although the British did not agree to the acceptance of the title by Pinhey, he was entrusted with the delicate task of requesting the Nizam to make an appeal to the Muslims of India and the world to support the British and not the central powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary, in spite of the imminent danger that Turkey would be joining the central alliance. The Nizam was at first reluctant to issue such an appeal. His kingdom had no doubt been a traditional supporter of the British, but during the revolt of 1857 there had been a threat to the Nizam from the revolutionary elements in Hyderabad, - not only those influenced by the followers of Shah Waliullah, described as Wahabis, but also emissaries of Nana Sahib and supporters of Tatya Tope. {See V K Bawa, *The Nizam between Mughals & British: Hyderabad under Salar Jang I*. [New Delhi: S Chand & Co., 1986, pp 38-44. A second edition of this book was issued in 1996 by the same publisher in 1996 [with a fresh Introduction] under the title *Hyderabad under Salar Jang I*.]

The Manifesto took the form of a letter from the Nizam to the Viceroy Lord Hardinge, dated 4 November 1914 : "As a true Mohammadan, who has the welfare and

prosperity of the community at heart, and who takes a just pride in the glorious traditions of the Mohammadan Nation, I cannot but view with profound grief the unwise, short-sighted and futile course adopted by the Turkish Government in joining Germany, as one of her allies in the war now raging in Europe." While noting the "perplexity as well as distress" in the minds of the Indian Muslims due to the conflict, "true to the tradition of my house, as a faithful ally of the British Government, I regard it not only as a duty but as a privilege to place all the influence at my command towards assisting the British Government." He therefore appealed to Indian Muslims to remain "staunch in their fidelity to British rule." [V K Bawa, *The Last Nizam*, pp. 71-72.]

I. The Impact of the Manifesto on the Nizam's Position in India

This somewhat startling announcement was an indication of the sorry pass to which the British had fallen, being forced to appeal to one of their own subordinate rulers to counter the ruler of the mighty Turkish empire. As this writer wrote in 1992 : "All over British India and the Muslim world, Muslims paid attention to this appeal on behalf of the Nizam. It started a train of thought among many Muslims which made them feel that the glory of Islam could be revived." While some in India wished to show their appreciation and gratitude to the Nizam by offering him the title of *Muhibul-Millat-wad Din* [Restorer of the Nation and the Faith] others suggested that the Nizam should be declared King of Hyderabad, on the analogy of the Grand Sharif of Mecca, who had been made King of Hijaz by the British after the removal of the Turkish protection from the holy places of Islam.

There was thus a subtle change in the status of the Nizam, which the stern opposition of the British Residents and Viceroys could do little to suppress. The appeal or Manifesto, as it was sometimes called, was drafted by Syed Hussain Bilgrami, an aged official of the Nizam, who had come to the Nizam's Dominions from the United Provinces, had served as Private Secretary of Sir Salar Jang till his death in 1883, and had been a loyal supporter of the British throughout his life. He firmly rejected the idea that there would be an upsurge of feeling in India against the British. [*The Last Nizam*, p. 31]

Although the Nizam's appeal seems to have had little effect on the radical elements who dominated the Khilafat movement from 1918 onwards, he was not slow to take advantage of his improved status. While the war was still in progress, the Nizam returned from a trip to Bombay, Delhi and Aligarh, where he was evidently led to believe that the British were likely to lose the war, to issue an order removing three senior British officials from their positions in the state, and appointing undesirable persons in their place. The Resident, who had been out of Hyderabad when the order was issued, soon had the order cancelled, but this extraordinary reversal of the traditional subservience of the Hyderabad Durbar to the British in India, gave a shock both to the Residency and the Foreign Office in Delhi.

The new situation was of concern to the British for two reasons – first, the question of misrule, and second, the basic question of the Nizam's loyalty to British rule. The latter was more important in the long run, but the first was of immediate concern to them. A severe warning was administered to him about his misgovernment in 1918. The Council form of government was introduced in the year 1919, with a *Sadr-ul-*

Maham or President of Council as the chairman of the executive council. The first President was a distinguished legal man from Patna – Sir Ali Imam, the first non-Hyderabad –Mulki to be appointed to such a high position in the state. However he was allowed to resign on a comparatively minor issue, and replaced successively by two local dignitaries, amenable to the Nizam, but also in the confidence of the British. Sir Ali Imam continued to advise the ruler on his claim for the restoration of Berar, an issue which had caused the first Salar Jang [born 1829, Diwan from 1853-1883] to challenge unsuccessfully the right of the British Government to dictate terms to the state of Hyderabad. [see The Nizam between Mughals & British: Hyderabad under Salar Jang, passim, especially Chapter V and pp.223-233.]

The seventh Nizam's claim to independence from the British in India, and his claim that the the Berar question was only a controversy between "two independent Governments having mutual relations with each other" and that the Nizam was therefore on par with the British on this question. This claim was decisively rejected in the famous letter of Lord Reading to him in which he asserted that "The sovereignty of the British government is supreme everywhere in India, and no ruler of an Indian state can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing." [The Last Nizam, pp. 112-113]

When the new Council system of government failed to stop the illegal exactions, to which the young Nizam had become prone during the latter part of his personal rule after the resignation of Salar Jang III, they imposed on him a strict regimen. The Nizam finally accepted the high British officials whose appointment was insisted upon by the Viceroy. The decision to take a strong stand on the question, even threatening the Nizam with a public enquiry against misrule, was taken by Lord Reading but he left the communication of it to his successor Lord Irwin, having already earned sufficient unpopularity through his letter on the Berar issue. {The Last Nizam, pp. 114-118]

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II. The Impact of the Nizam's Claim to Leadership of the Muslims on Internal Politics of the Nizam's Dominions

The question of the Khilafat is, in this writer's opinion, an issue separate from the question of Muslim identity in Hyderabad state. I have tried to show in The Last Nizam that Mir Osman Ali Khan's alliance with the Majlis Ittehadul-Muslimeen was a strategic alliance in which each appeared to be using the other for their own purposes.

His alliance with the Majlis was on the other hand an attempt to use the Muslim minority in such a way that his power would continue. His frequent consultation with M A Jinnah, the links he established with the Majlis during the lifetime of Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang [who died in June 1944], and his brief appointment of Sir Mirza Ismail, a former Diwan of Mysore reputed to be pro-Congress, therefore need not detain us here.

The Nizam's claim to independence was a product of the personal ambition which had been encouraged by the British decision of 1914 to request him for an appeal to the Muslims of India and the world. In this respect his opinion did not coincide with that of the Majlis. In his famous poem, which is remembered even today by almost every elderly former subject of the Nizam, he stated

Salateen-I-salaf sub hogai nazar-I-ajal Osman

Mussalmanon ka hi teri saltanat se nishan baqi

[All the rulers of the past are dead, Osman

The name of the Muslims survives only because of your Kingdom]

This was countered by a supporter of the Majlis point of view as follows:

Salateen-i-salaf sub hogai nazar-I-ajal Osman,

Musulmanon se hai teri Saltanat ka nishan baqi

[All the rulers of the past are dead, Osman,

Your kingdom survives only because of the Muslims]

After Indian independence someone in Hyderabad took a still more cynical view,

by altering the couplet further as follows:

Salateen-I-salaf sub hogai nazar-I-ajal Osman,

Mussulmanon pe hai teri Saltanat ka nishan baqi

[All the rulers of the past are dead, Osman,

Your kingdom survives only in the memory of Muslims]

The second and third couplets throw light on the psychology of some in Hyderabad who followed the Majlis philosophy, and considered themselves the Hukumran Qaum [the ruling race or nation.] This mind-set was however rejected by many others, such as Nawab Ali Yawar Jang who criticized the theory in a series of articles in the Times of India, Hyderabad in Retrospect after police action, and by the Communist poet and writer Makhdoom Mohiuddin. We are concerned here however with the personal views of the Nizam, and not of the elite Muslims or others in his state.

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VII. The Khilafat Movement and Its Impact on Hyderabad State

The abolition of the Caliphate did not have the traumatic effect in Hyderabad as it had in the northern and other parts of India. "One of the most thoughtful men in

Hyderabad" probably Syed Hussain Bilgrami] was interviewed by the Resident and told him that "the Khilafat had been mainly a temporal affair." He deplored the unseemly efforts of the Ali Brothers to persuade the Turkish Nationalists to restore Abdul Majid to the Caliphate. Most people had rejected the claim of the King of Hijaz to the position, and there was little possibility of the Nizam being supported for the position. In fact the head of the ecclesiastical Department, Sadarus Sudur, had advised the Nizam not to accept the lesser position of Sheikhu'l Islam which had been offered to him, as "there was no guarantee that those who made it might not be the first to dispute his religious authority." [The Last Nizam, p. 95] The Nizam however sanctioned a pension of 300 pounds per annum to the ex-Caliph, and asked the Resident to obtain the approval of the Government of India to the proposal. The latter cannily enquired whether there was any intention on the Nizam's part to revive the Caliphate in some form, or whether it was merely an act of charity to a defeated and fallen monarch. Whatever the motives of the Nizam at that time, there is sufficient evidence of his seeking to build his image and to claim a higher status, which was not unrelated to the Caliphate question. [pp. 95-96]

The Khilafat movement however had its impact on Hyderabad through the activities of young men like Mir Akbar Ali Khan, Syed Mohammed Ansari, Badrul Hasan and Jaffar Hasan, who left the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh and joined the national college started by Maulana Mohammed Ali, at the call of the national leaders. Jaisooria, the son of Mrs Sarojini Naidu, left his studies at Grant Medical College, Bombay, and trained as a doctor in Germany. As the agitation, led by Muslim Khilafatists and Arya Samaj leaders, gathered strength, the Nizam in a letter to the Viceroy identified himself with the moderate view of the Khilafatists, describing the Caliph as "a bitter foe, but a fallen one now." He urged the Viceroy to prevail upon the British government to alter the terms of peace and make them less stringent against the Caliphate. The Viceroy however made it clear that he had done all he could and would not be able to do more. Although the Nizam rejected the methods of the movement dominated by "Hindu extremists", his basic position was no different from that of the Khilafatists. [pp. 100-102]

The Indian National Congress annual session was held in Cocanada [Kakinada] in Andhra in 1923 and it was chaired by the Khilafatist leader, Maulana Mohammed Ali. However, Mahatma Gandhi, shocked by the incidents in Chauri Chaura, the Mappilai rebellion in Kerala, and other developments, had succeeded in getting the entire civil disobedience movement called off the previous year. In Hyderabad state, Sir Ali Imam had left the Presidentship of the Council, and the Nizam was concerned only about demanding the return of Berar and continuing his search for financial benefits.

The Hindu-Muslim divide showed itself at the Kakinada session of the Congress among the delegates from the Nizam's Dominions. By the late twenties, the Khilafat movement had become a spent force in Hyderabad, as in the rest of India. The demand for political rights in the Nizam's Dominions, a by-product of the Khilafat movement, was resolutely rejected by the Nizam, who thus threw the incipient liberal movement into the arms of Hindu Mahasabha elements, based in Maharashtra. Their conciliatory remarks to the Nizam having failed to elicit response, they turned to a direct attack on the communal situation in the Dominions. [The Last Nizam, pp. 105-113]

VIII. The Marriages of the Nizam's Sons, 1931

and the Claim to the Title of King

The Nizam had two half-brothers, for whose marriages, maintenance and welfare he was responsible. He was less solicitous about their welfare than he was about that of his two eldest sons, who had reached marriageable age by the year 1927. Their appointment to important positions in the state was also under consideration. The Resident, Sir William Barton was opposed to the appointment of the elder Prince, Azam Jah Bahadur, to the post of President of the Nizam's Executive Council. He also prevailed upon the Government of India to sanction the payment of Rs 20,000 per month to the elder prince, and Rs. 15,000 per month to the younger prince, Moazam Jah, from the state funds, rather than allow them to depend on the meagre amounts which the Nizam was willing to spare from his private estate, the Sarfikhlas.

The Nizam had no idea at this time of marrying them to girls from outside the state. In fact, he was urging them to marry girls from among their own close relatives.

"Afterwards you can marry as many outsiders as you like, but the elephant which carries the standard at the head of the procession should be the pick of the train. What you want is a wife who will be obedient to you and capable of managing properly the domestic arrangements – not the kind of girls so common now-a-days who know English well but are not of good disposition but are filled with a spirit of freedom so strong as to be likely to lead to some disasters." The young men were not however keen on such marriages, as "they felt that the Nizam meant to use their future wives as weapons against them" and also because "if they marry in good Hyderabad families their parents may create trouble in case the brides were not treated properly." [The Last Nizam, pp. 122-125]

The marriages which took place on 12 November 1931 at Nice in France between the Nizam's two sons and the daughter and niece of the last Khalifa of Turkey, Abdul Hamid, were a break with the traditions of the state, and also contradicted the plans of the Nizam, cited in the preceding paragraph. In the first place, the marriages were conducted privately in Nice, with the ex-Khalifa performing the marriages himself. The Nizam had never left the shores of India, even to perform the Haj, and did not find it necessary to attend the function. The officials from Hyderabad who were present were Akbar Hydari, Sir Richard Chevenix Trnech, and Nawab Mehdi Yar Jang Bahadur, all three being members of the Nizam's Executive Council and delegates to the second Round Table Conference which had just been held in London. Maulana Mohammed Ali had been a delegate to this conference but died in England in January 1931. Mahatma Gandhi had not participated in this conference, but attended the second Round Table Conference in London in October 1931. Apparently, Maulana Shaukat Ali was also in London with his brother, and had been in touch with the delegation from Hyderabad. [The Last Nizam, pp. 125-127]

The assertion of his independence by the seventh Nizam began very early in his reign. He gave an annual dinner to celebrate the alleged "declaration of independence" by his distant ancestor, Asaf Jah I, the first Nizam-ul-Mulk. There is however no evidence that the first Nizam ever declared his independence. Following the medieval tradition of recognizing the overlord as the ruler, his Testament to his successors states that "since the state of the Decan is in a condition of subservience,

the respect to the kings, who are indeed the shadow of God, should never be overlooked, lest the offenders should stand condemned in the eyes of God and man." [The text will be found in Yusuf Hussain Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I: Founder of Hyderabad State. Mangalore, 1936, pp. 284-290.] In 1810 the British Governor-General Lord Hastings offered the title of King to the Nawab of Oudh and the Nizam of Hyderabad. The former accepted it, the latter did not. The Nizam's government continued to issue coins in the name of the Emperor till the British pointed out that there was no Emperor there any longer; then the practice ceased. [V K Bawa, The Nizam between Mughals and British. New Delhi, 1986, p. 10.]

Contrary to his family's traditions, however the title of King was claimed by the Nizam soon after the marriages. . His sons had returned from Nice in a triumphal fashion, with much fanfare late in 1931. The next year, during the third Round Table Conference at London, Akbar Hydari the Finance Member of the Nizam's Council and the leader of the delegation to the Council, put forth the claim to the title of King for his master at a meeting with Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India. The latter was inclined to agree to the proposal, but the Viceroy was totally opposed to it, and Sir Terence Keyes, the Resident at Hyderabad felt strongly that the Nizam was ambitious to enjoy the title of Khalifa after the expulsion of the Turkish Caliph from Turkey. Maulana Shaukat Ali, Akbar Hydari and Marmaduke Pickthall [an English Muslim in the employment of the Nizam] were apparently behind the proposal. The Resident persuaded the Nizam to withdraw his request for the title of King, [The Last Nizam, pp. 127-29] However the claim was made again in Delhi by the Nawab of Chhatari, the 1942. [ibid., p. 199]. Both the Nizam and the Majlis were in favour of this title of King of the Deccan being given to the Nizam, but the Majlis wanted him to be the symbol of Muslim sovereignty, and not king in his own right. {p. 197]

The last Caliph of Turkey died in France in October 1944. His daughter, the Princess Durreshavar could not go to Nice, due to wartime conditions. According to the Nawab of Chhatari who was then the President of the Nizam's Council, the Caliph had expressed the desire to be buried in Hyderabad and had also desired in his will that his son-in-law, . Azam Jah, should succeed him as Caliph. This request did not receive wide publicity, probably due to the war, and the fact that the Caliph had been largely forgotten. The Nizam had shown the will to the Nawab of Chhatari. [The Last Nizam, pp. 226; 384.]

Although Osman Ali Khan obtained the title of Prince of Berar for his son on the analogy of the Prince of Wales in the mid-thirties, the territory was lost for ever to the Nizams. The ruler who took his claim for independence to the United Nations, ended his days as a common citizen in 1967, declining to be buried with his ancestors in the Mecca Masjid.

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IX. Findings and Conclusion

We now turn to the questions raised at the beginning of this paper, and try to examine them in sequence.

The first question was the alleged superiority of the Nizam over all other rulers in India. The evidence in this article as well as in the book makes it clear that the British were obliged during the first world war to Mir Osman Ali Khan for his generous financial support, as well as his appeal to the Muslims in the Manifesto. This was the background of his receiving the titles of Our Faithful Ally and His Exalted Highness, which caused so much heart-burning among the other Indian princes, that the Government of India resolutely opposed any proposal to raise him to the rank of a King. The traditions of his family did not give him a status higher than that of other Indian rulers.. His claim to independence was contrary to the first Nizamís advice to his descendants, and his implicit claim to the Caliphate was not justified on grounds of historical evidence. The claim was never formally put forth for that reason, but must have been a well thought out part of the strategy. The seventh Nizam emerges as a figure comparable to the Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid [1876-1908] who steadfastly refused to surrender his autocratic power to the people, till he was deposed, and sought to be the Khalifa or Caliph in fact, as well as in name. The pan-Islamic movement was accepted not only by Jamaluddin Afghani, but even by the young Turks who removed the Sultan from power. .

The second question was about the differences in the approaches of the Nizam and of the Khilafat movement. While apparently the two were in agreement, the Nizam did not make his view public. The financial support he offered to the last Caliph was evidently given out of goodwill, but the idea of deriving some benefit from the latter must have occurred to him in course of time. If the Nizamís Archives were available, we could explore the matter further.

The third point we raised was regarding the motivation for the marriages of his sons. We have attempted to show that the marriages were so contrary to the earlier stand taken by the Nizam, and to the traditions of the state, that they could not have been entered into without some ulterior motive. He never met the last Caliph [the father-in-law of his eldest son and heir], although the latter performed the marriages in Nice. The Testament of the Caliph asking that he be buried in Hyderabad, and that his son-in-law succeed him, was shown by the Nizam to the Nawab of Chhatari when the Caliph died, but till the Nizamís Archives are opened for research, we cannot verify the facts.

The fourth and last point we raised at the beginning of this paper was, why the Nizam failed in his attempt at independence and the claim for his family of the Caliphate.

There is evidence to suggest that there was an element of long-term planning in his claim for independence for Hyderabad. Mir Osman Ali Khanís government realised the need for access to the sea, and sought access to the port of Machlipatnam very early in his rule. . When this failed, he tried to get access to the port of Marmagoa in Goa, The iron ore mines of Bastar were also a subject of his concern. All these indicate the working of a mind with some understanding of long-term trends, and the determination to build for a future when the British would leave India. [See p. 321, the Last Nizam.]

The British were however opposed to giving him the title of King , as it would upset the other rulers of Indian states. The only way he could have won the title of King or of Khalifa would have been by conquest. A British official in New Delhi in fact implied this when he told the Nawab of Chhatari that "the title of King is not given, it is taken". Yet the Nizam had neither the capacity to lead an army to battle, nor the support of an armed force which could support him in his claim to independence. Sir Walter Monckton felt that realism should have demanded that he claim the title of king only if he commanded the loyalty of his people. This alternative was totally unacceptable to him, till it was forced on him in 1948. A case has been made by Clyde Eagleton and Mohammed Hamidullah, for the independence of Hyderabad. [The Last Nizam, pp. 336-344] The case was rejected not on legal grounds but because of practical considerations.

If this paper succeeds in bringing to the notice of specialists on the Indian States, the wealth of material in Indian and foreign Archives on Hyderabad state, especially the Archives of the seventh Nizam, which are yet to see the light of day, it will have fulfilled at least a part of its purpose.. [END]