FAZL-I-HUSAIN
A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

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WITH A FOREWORD BY
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LONGMANS, GREEN & CO. LTD.
BOMBAY :: CALCUTTA :: MADRAS
LONDON :: NEW YORK :: TORONTO
1946
legislature nominated exclusively by the Governor. Fazl-i-Husain, as in 1917-18, refuted all the charges of the Governor and said that the Punjab had worked the Reforms successfully and should receive reforms on the same scale as the rest of India. As in 1919, Fazl-i-Husain was successful in helping to win equality of treatment for the Punjab.

With regard to Burma he was strongly of the view that the Burma Government was acting wrongly in encouraging the movement for separation. In 1932 at the General Election the anti-separationists secured a majority, but Government hesitated to declare against separation in spite of the promise made by the Prime Minister to decide according to the wishes of the Burmese electorate. Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan to impress upon the Secretary of State his view that “I believe the British Indian view is that Burma does not want separation, that it should be allowed to remain a part of India as hitherto, no case for separation having been made out. This is the Indian Muslim view and it is a matter on which Muslims and Hindu India can very well unite.”1 From a military and strategic point of view he considered the separation of Burma dangerous to the safety and unity of India. The disastrous effects of the policy of separation, noticeable in 1941-42, are too obvious to require any comment.

On the threshold of provincial autonomy and the federation, there was an imminent danger in India of provincialism developing to the detriment of national unity. Fazl-i-Husain, therefore, considered it necessary to create all-India organizations which would counteract centrifugal tendencies. The danger was greatest in education. In order to qualify the electorate to choose the electors and to

1 June 26, 1933.

In 1931 the Congress resolved as follows:—

"The Congress recognises the right of the people of Burma to claim separation from India, to establish an independent Burma State or to remain an autonomous partner in a Free India with a right of separation at any time they may desire to exercise it. The Congress, however, condemns the endeavour of the British Government to force the separation of Burma without giving adequate opportunity to the Burmese people to express their views and against the declared wishes of their national political organizations. The endeavour seems to be deliberately engineered to perpetuate domination so as to make Burma, together with Singapore, by reason of the presence of oil and her strategic position, strongholds of Imperialism in Eastern Asia."
under the Government of India, 25% vacancies should be reserved for Muslims, and 8½% for other minority communities. It added that if members of other minority communities obtained less than their reserved percentage in open competition, and if duly qualified candidates were not available for nomination, the residue of 8½% would also be available for qualified Muslims.

The way in which Fazl-i-Husain helped the Muslims in the Kashmir agitation is an excellent indication of the tact and ability with which he led them and protected their interests. Muslims had long standing grievances in regard to the absence of their representation and voice in the administration of the State. Trouble arose in 1931 and the Punjab Muslims evinced great interest in the welfare of their co-religionists in Kashmir; they went in Jathas and offered non-violent resistance; many were killed or injured; there were 7,000 prisoners in Jammu State alone. The Maharaja went on making promises but doing nothing, while the volume of agitation went on increasing. Fazl-i-Husain was greatly perturbed and at once secured confirmation of various official and non-official reports. He placed them before the Viceroy and urged that the Sovereign Authority must discharge its obligation to the people. He pointed out that the Muslims were not receiving fair treatment, and pressed again and again for an impartial enquiry committee which should be supplied with facts and figures about riots, loss of life and action taken by Government. As he considered that this was going to prepare the background for the satisfaction of India Muslim demands at the Round Table Conference an enquiry seemed imperative.\(^1\) In deference to the views expressed by Fazl-i-Husain, Government appointed an enquiry committee under Sir Bertrand Glancy and decided that if the Durbar refused, it should be overruled. The Maharajah refused to admit a British officer, on the ground that his appointment would increase the Muslim demands and he was not prepared to give any further concessions to the Muslims. The Maharajah was forced to appoint the Glancy Committee,

\(^1\) Diary—November 10, 1931.
including four non-officials, two of whom were Muslims. British troops were sent and the atrocities complained of against State troops came to an end.

Fazl-i-Husain then diverted the energies of the Muslims into constructive channels. Through the Press and his friends in the Punjab he appealed to the Punjab Muslims to assist their co-religionists with legal advice and funds to enable Kashmir Muslims to have justice done to them. He asked them to substantiate their grievances as well as their demands in as thorough a manner as possible. At the same time he asked the Viceroy to approach the Maharajah with the request that in order to create a suitable atmosphere in which ill-feeling and hostility might disappear and enquiries might be conducted in a spirit of fair play, the Maharajah should release political prisoners. In return the All-India Kashmir Committee could be induced to stop sending Jathas from the Punjab and creating agitation within the State. The Maharajah agreed, and declared an extensive amnesty. The enquiry was successfully completed, and as a result of the recommendations of the Glancy Committee a Legislative Assembly was established, 10% of the population was enfranchised, and the Muslims were given separate electorates with 60% representation in the legislature.

Although Fazl-i-Husain was very eager to secure communal representation for Muslims in services, this did not mean that in individual appointments he was communally-minded or showed favouritism. He preferred Indians to Europeans, and among Indians the only criterion was efficiency. This principle is well illustrated by the promotions and appointments made in his own Department during his term of office. Although the Under Secretary was the only Muslim officer in the Department and was the son of a friend, yet when his work was found unsatisfactory, Fazl-i-Husain did not hesitate to dispense with his services.1

A more significant example is the way in which he supported his Hindu Joint Secretary. Shortly after he

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1 Diary—October 13, 1930.
became Member he wrote in his diary: “Bajpai is working well and I show him every consideration. There is no reason why he should not get on in the Department. I want work and a fair amount of discipline. Anyone giving this has my support.” In 1932, Fazl-i-Husain recommended Bajpai for Secretaryship. The Viceroy wanted to appoint a European instead. Since Bajpai had competently discharged the duties of a Secretary when officiating on two previous occasions, the Viceroy objected on grounds of seniority, against which Fazl-i-Husain quoted instances of Europeans of the same seniority who had been appointed Secretaries. The Viceroy then offered to appoint a Muslim, thirteen years senior to Bajpai. Fazl-i-Husain refused in spite of the fact that the Muslim in question was a friend and a number of Muslim deputations pressed his claims because there was no Muslim Secretary in the Government of India. He recorded in his diary: “H. E. called me again this evening. He is very strongly against Bajpai, and he does not want me now to take Latifi, and suggested taking an Englishman, one Sloan. I restated my position — history of Bajpai’s progress in the Secretariat and that I could see no justification for obstructing his progress.” The Viceroy thought of bringing the matter before the Council but the possibility of a defeat restrained him from doing so.

The Viceroy then proposed that a European should officiate as Secretary. Fazl-i-Husain refused to agree and wrote: “This is very awkward, and I sent a letter to H. E. saying I recommend that Ramchandra (Deputy Secretary) should officiate. I am afraid H. E. will not think well of me for opposing his wishes persistently but what can I do? H. E. wants Reid to officiate as Secretary during Bajpai’s

1 Diary—August 5, 1930.
2 Diary—March 28, 1932.
3 "The Secretary, Bhore and Mitter are for Bajpai, and I understand Schuster is also favourable, so the possible active dissidents are limited to two or possibly three excluding the Viceroy. If there is an acute dispute it may mean equally divided opinion, three Indians and Schuster versus H. E., Commander-in-Chief, Rainey and Haig, but I doubt whether Haig will take such a decided attitude. As luck would have it such matters as have been taken to Executive Council have been mine—indicating differences of opinion between H. E. and me." (Diary—April 1, 1932.)
leave while I think Ram Chandra is a better man. H.E. relies upon seniority and I on merit. The question has its racial aspect. I don’t think Reid has sufficient guts to control the Department.”¹ The Viceroy did not agree, and persisted in asking for Reid’s appointment, and finally when he wanted to appoint Reid against Fazl-i-Husain’s wishes, Fazl-i-Husain agreed provided it was decided that Bajpai would become permanent Secretary.² This made Bajpai permanent Secretary and Ram Chandra Joint Secretary.

In the appointment of his successor Fazl-i-Husain regarded merit as the sole criterion for selection. In 1932 when he was to proceed on leave, he secured the appointment of Zafrulla Khan with great difficulty. He recorded in his Diary: “It will be a very startling appointment, a comparatively very young man, being put in India’s cabinet — well, there you are — merit should be the sole test and I really cannot think of a more competent man.”³ Some Muslims objected to Zafrulla Khan as an Ahmadi and started a violent agitation, but Fazl-i-Husain faced it courageously, and on his retirement he again successfully espoused his cause against a very large number of prominent Muslims.

¹ Diary—April 5, 1932.
² “H.E. has pressed me again to have Reid as Secretary. I think he is making a mistake, and putting himself in the wrong. There is no precedent for it but let him go on like this. H.E. has put himself in the wrong already more than once. 1. When he lost his temper in Council and then apologised —the matter was personal and I did not think it in good taste to force him to apologise in Council. 2. He nominated Mehr Shah to the Round Table Conference without consulting me, he did not consult any member of the Council, or the Governor—it was a scandal. 3. Regarding Public Services Commission, he did not accept my advice, but his excuse was that it was Crerar’s case, and he did not accept Crerar’s advice either. 4. Then his quarrel over Bajpai—(a) Permanent appointment, (b) Temporary appointment for a week or so. He gave in regarding (a), and I gave in regarding (b). For officiating appointment, I asked for Latifi, and he has not preferred to release him, and insists upon Reid filling the post. 5. He is wobbling over the Agent in South Africa. He is doing this, probably because I do not give in to him, where a question of principle is involved, I insist upon recording my dissent.” (Diary—April 18, 1932.)
³ Diary—May 17, 1932.
to Sir Malcolm Hailey to support the nomination of Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan, and while pointing out the necessity of the Muslim Delegation having capable speakers to put forward the Muslim view point ably and forcefully, he said: “Frankly, I do not like the idea of Jinnah doing all the talking and of there being no one strong-minded enough to make a protest in case Jinnah starts upon expressing his views when those views are not acceptable to the Indian Muslims. I want someone who would frankly say that it is not the Indian Muslim view. It is a difficult thing to say that and an unpleasant one, and the higher the position of a representative, the more difficult it is for him to say so in a Conference. I believe Shafaat Ahmad and Zafrulla will not hesitate, while Shafi’s repudiation may be attributed to rivalry.”

Dr. Shafaat Ahmad was accordingly nominated. As a representative of the Talukdars, the Maharajah of Mahmudabad was selected but when he failed to go on account of his illness Fazl-i-Husain had him replaced by a confirmed supporter of the Muslim Conference.

At the Second Round Table Conference Government was keen to secure the co-operation of the Congress, and the Viceroy proposed to nominate Dr. Ansari and Sir Ali Imam. As both were staunch supporters of the Nehru Report Fazl-i-Husain protested, and in spite of Lord Irwin’s commitments to Gandhi, it was agreed not to nominate Dr. Ansari. Fazl-i-Husain secured the nomination of four new members who were members of the Muslim Conference and this averted all possible dangers to the unity of the Muslim Delegation. The Aga Khan, as its leader, held all the members together and prevented disruptive tendencies.

issue of non-co-operation, but did not attack the Congress as a Hindu body and in fact on 3rd October, 1925, he wrote to the Times of India publicly repudiating the misleading report that the Congress was a Hindu institution. In the two All-Parties’ Conferences, one held in 1923 and the other in 1926, he was prepared to settle the Hindu-Muslim question on the basis of joint electorates. In 1925, speaking in the Legislative Assembly, he said: “I am a nationalist first, a nationalist second and a nationalist last. I once more appeal to this House, whether you are a Muslim or a Hindu, for God’s sake do not import the discussion of communal matters into this House and degrade this Assembly which we desire should become a real national Parliament.” In 1928, he joined the Congress in the boycott of the Simon Commission and split the League.

1 Letter dated May 10, 1930.
from growing up among them. Fazl-i-Husain told one of the members: "Whatever lionising may take place of Gandhi in London, you Muslim members of the Delegation, if you played your cards well, would have a pull over all other communities in as much as you have the Aga Khan, who stands pre-eminently in English public life, and no more popular figure, whether English or Indian, exists there. So, if you held together and acted under the Aga Khan's guidance, no harm could possibly come to you." In order to help the Delegation with publicity, Ghulam Rasool Mehr, Editor of Inqilab, and Sheikh Abdul Majid, Editor of The Weekly Unity were sent to London at the expense of the Muslim Conference. Throughout the three Round Table Conferences Fazl-i-Husain took infinite pains to coach his 'key' men, such as the Aga Khan, Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, and Dr. Shafaat Ahmad; he gave them detailed instructions and kept them well posted with weekly air mail letters containing 'notes' and 'points'. Similar views were constantly put forward in the India Council before the Secretary of State by Malik Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana.

All this, however, did not mean that he pursued a sectional policy. He realised that the main difficulty was to induce the British Government to part with power, and on this account the Muslims should not appear unduly obstructive. "Why", he asked one of the Muslim delegates, "are communal differences magnified so much in political talks and at the Round Table Conference. The Muslim position should be that there are no communal differences to speak of and that the so called communal differences have been settled on more or less equitable lines." Again, writing to Dr. Shafaat Ahmad he said: "I think the first formula that the Muslim representatives should enunciate is a genuine and keen desire of the Muslims to come to a friendly and brotherly understanding with the Hindus as to the things which the Muslims consider vital for the well-ordered development of nationalism in India, viz. the development

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1 Letter dated July 28, 1931, to Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan.
2 Letter dated August 30, 1931, from Haji Abdulla Haroon to the Aga Khan.
3 Letter dated December 1, 1930, to Sir Muhammad Shafi.
4 Letter dated December 1, 1930, to Sir Zafrulla Khan.
CHAPTER XVII

THE PUNJAB: 1930-1935

FAZL-I-HUSAIN was away from the Punjab for five years, but whilst at Delhi he kept himself in constant touch with his province, and at critical moments did not fail to give directions and purposes to its political development in several ways. He had devoted his entire public life of over twenty-five years to his province and could not cease to think of it and ponder over its future even when he was away from it. When he was appointed member of the Viceroy’s Executive Council he was indeed loath to leave the Punjab, and said: “I have been since my appointment, which is going to take me away from the province, not feeling quite happy about it. All along I have been feeling that it is a separation which is not of my seeking and I would rather serve here than elsewhere. And yet the only thing which has stood in the way of my staying here with you has been a sense of duty that has compelled me not to refuse the performance of a duty which I have been called upon to discharge.”

He was anxious that the Punjab should remain free from the Civil Disobedience movement, just as it had been free to a large extent from the Non-Co-operation movement. Whenever, therefore, the administration acted in any manner which was likely to stimulate the movement, he advised Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, the Governor, to the contrary, and Sir Geoffrey, who valued his advice, invariably acted on it. When in certain places women Jathas were harassed by prostitutes and goondas, Fazl-i-Husain advised that it should be stopped, as it would not prevent women

1 Speech delivered at a farewell party.
from going into Jathas, and at the same time cause bitterness and resentment among people which would add to the feeling in favour of the movement. On one occasion Fazl-i-Husain wrote: “Gujranwala seems to be developing into a civil disobedience centre of activity. I believe the movement is for the present confined to the Gujranwala town. Don’t you think it would be worth while mobilizing the rural forces to make a good counter demonstration in opposition to the civil disobedience movement?”

The Peshawar Disturbances raised a storm of protest in the Punjab and it seemed probable that Khilafatists might successfully use the happenings in the Frontier Province to win over Muslim opinion in the Punjab. Fazl-i-Husain asked his friends to get into touch with and influence the more moderate Khilafatists with the result that the Punjab Muslims remained unaffected by the extremist tendencies of their co-religionists in the neighbouring province. Rural areas had hitherto remained unaffected and when the Congress made some efforts to reach the masses Fazl-i-Husain counteracted its activities by strengthening the Punjab Provincial Zamindara League. This was financed and provided with able guidance. When Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency was fired at and wounded at the Punjab University Convocation, Fazl-i-Husain seized the opportunity and asked his friends to make a strong demonstration against terrorism as a political weapon.

These few illustrations indicate how vigilantly he watched developments in the Punjab and helped to keep Civil Disobedience and terrorism at bay. Prima facie this policy suggests the bolstering up of the bureaucracy with the help of the rural population against the national movement. But the fact is that while Fazl-i-Husain had no sympathy with the bureaucracy, and fully understood its policy and its intentions (which he never hesitated to criticize), and was in no sense opposed to the national movement, he wanted successfully to counter Civil Disobedience and terrorism,

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1 Letter dated June 1, 1930, to Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency.
2 Letter dated July 9, 1930, to Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency.
3 Letter dated April 26, 1930, to Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency.
4 Letter dated December 26, 1930, to Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan.
both of which he disapproved of. As it happened the rural population of the Punjab, unlike the rural population in some other parts of India, was largely unaffected by both these movements and Fazl-i-Husain relied on it for support. That his object and that of the bureaucracy was the same in this respect was a matter of coincidence. Besides, it must be remembered that when the major political party in the country is all the time non-co-operating, for a person with administrative responsibilities, even though believing in the ideals of that party, it is not possible to consistently pursue policies which would not at some stage or other go against the activities of that party.

Fazl-i-Husain was anxious that the Unionist Party should not weaken, and that the party system of Government should develop in the Punjab. In 1926 Sir Malcolm Hailey had formed a non-party communal ministry, but it was hoped that Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, the new Governor, would act constitutionally and form a non-communal party ministry. The Unionist Party became weak during Sir Malcolm Hailey’s regime and almost split as soon as Fazl-i-Husain left the Punjab. There was at the time no other outstanding Muslim leader who could place party interests above his personal interests. The outgoing Ministry consisted of Firoz Khan Noon (Unionist), Jogendra Singh (non-party) and Manohar Lal (Mahasabha). Fazl-i-Husain wanted the Muslim minister’s charge to include Education Department, and Firoz Khan Noon to remain the Muslim nominee of the Unionist Party. It was also his wish that the ministry should be constituted entirely from the Unionist Party, and that the other Ministers should be Chhotu Ram and Harbakhsh Singh, failing which the Party should oppose the non-Muslim part of the ministry. Some Muslim leaders, however, ruined the chances of a purely Unionist Ministry. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din (President of the Council), supported by Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, wanted to become a minister, or at least to prevent Firoz Khan Noon from becoming a minister again. It was hoped by this means to destroy the influence and prestige of the

\[3\text{Letter dated September 27, 1930, to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan.}\]
Maliks of Shahpur district. Besides, there was considerable discontent among urban Muslims against Firoz Khan Noon who during the elections had helped some of his rural friends against urban Muslims. As Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din had not many chances of becoming a minister he asked Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan to offer himself for the Ministry, but Fazl-i-Husain at once wrote to Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan advising him to the contrary: "The view I take of the matter is this: A capable Punjabi Muslim is needed badly in the High Court. Responsible authorities have repeatedly expressed the view that this need should be met, and, as you are aware, you have been believed to be the man to meet this need. The appointment will be a permanent one, and a long one. He also asked Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan and Firoz Khan Noon to have a frank talk with each other. To Sir Sikander Hyat he wrote: "The first question naturally is, does Zafrulla offer himself for ministership? If he does not, then this attempt at creating a split in the Party should be definitely suppressed. If, on the other hand, he offers himself, then the right course to adopt is for him as well as for Firoz to submit themselves to the vote of their Party, and if a substantial majority of the Party support one or the other, their opinion should be accepted by both and the matter not allowed to go any further." Fazl-i-Husain was anxious to avoid rivalry for leadership between two members of the Party. He wrote to Firoz Khan: "In the matter of ministership, so far as I can see, the number of your supporters from among the Muslim members of the Party is at least double the number of those likely to support Zafrulla Khan. Therefore, I strongly advise you not to make the mistake of forming alliances with Hindus or Sikhs with the object of strengthening your position. This is likely to react unfavourably on you and not to be helpful."

While Firoz Khan Noon was away at his village in Shahpur district intrigues continued in Lahore. Certain leading
urban Muslims formed themselves into a deputation and saw the Governor and asked for the appointment of one of themselves as a minister.¹ Most of them, however, felt that Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan was the only one among them who, on grounds of merit, had the greatest chances of success against Firoz Khan Noon. Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan told them that he was unwilling to offer himself for ministership, but if they convinced him that there was strong support behind him, he might do so. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din and Ahmadyar Khan Daultana tried to secure signatures of members promising to support him.² On hearing of this Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Sir Sikander Hyat: “This is very much to be regretted in as much as if some members canvass support for one candidate, others must canvass support for the other candidate, and both sides will decry each other’s candidates. This does harm to both, and, in the case of Zafrulla, will revive what some people had urged against him as not being acceptable to Muslims on account of his being an Ahmadi. I did my best to counteract that view, but it is the all popular view. What is more important is that this will not leave any very strong candidate for the High Court. We want at least two good and young men for the High Court, and Zafrulla is bound to be one of them. I have had in mind Din Muhammad as a candidate to be pushed for this. You should try to prevent this scramble for office degenerating into a squabble. Zafrulla is a sensible man, and if His Excellency wants to appoint him, there is no need for canvassing; and if he would rather not appoint him, then canvassing will not help. If Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din is interesting himself in him, then it is very likely that he is more keen on establishing the mistakes made by Sir Malcolm Hailey in appointing Firoz as minister, and by Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency in appointing you in preference to him; but he cannot establish this by supporting Zafrullah.”³

¹ “Things in Lahore are made lively by Shahab-ud-Din’s intrigues and he is coming out in his true colours. My influence for good on people does not appear to be of any lasting nature. But where has it been in the history of the world?” (Diary—October 4, 1930.)
² Diary—October 7, 1930.
³ Letter dated October 3, 1930.
As the contest proceeded apace, Fazl-i-Husain observed in his diary: "Punjab affairs are all topsy-turvy. Some people have been too selfish and personal. Had letters and talks with Firoz and Sikander, and letters from Shahab-ud-Din. I think Shahab-ud-Din has behaved badly and Mehr Shah has done great mischief. Curiously, the two men who got ten squares each only last March. The effect of this on the Party and on the Sikh and Hindu members is extremely bad. This is the first serious blow on my work in the Punjab due to my leaving the Punjab. I had better wait till I am in Lahore to see what can be done to put matters right." Some time latter he recorded: "The Punjab Muslims are today weaker than ever before. Firoz on one side, Shahab-ud-Din supported in part by Ahmadyar on the other side, and Sikander supported by Ahmadyar on the third. Shahab-ud-Din is at war with both Firoz and Sikander, but more with Firoz than with Sikander. Sikander has neither the power nor the inclination to produce unanimity and is not likely to sink his personal advancement. He is on the whole better than Firoz and Shahab-ud-Din; by 'better', I mean less open to criticism because his overt acts are not as outrageous as of the other two." Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, who was leaving for to England as a member of the Round Table Conference, definitely told the Governor that he was not a candidate for ministership, but the controversy gave sufficient excuse to the Governor to repeat the experiment of a non-party communal Ministry; and he appointed, in addition to Sir Sikander Hyat, who was Revenue Member, Sir Gokal Chand Narang, Malik Firoz Khan Noon and Sir Jogendra Singh as ministers.

1 Diary—October 10, 1930.
2 "Shahab-ud-Din had a long talk with me. He realizes that he made a mess of it and is ashamed of himself. I did not worry him for what is the use of condemning a man when his conscience is condemning him." (Diary—October 29, 1930.)
3 Diary—May 8, 1932.
4 "News from Lahore hopeful. Firoz will be reappointed and this is highly satisfactory. Manohar Lal will be ousted by Gokal Chand but really Chhotu Ram should have been appointed. Governor is caring more for peace than principle—the policy was initiated by Halley and retarded the development of parties in the province." (Diary—October 14, 1930.)
Fazl-i-Husain was disappointed and wrote to Chhotu Ram:1 "This personal squabble has hurt me more than anything else for many years. This shameful exhibition of spite and malice would not be worth noticing but for its most damaging effect in the best interests of the Party. United, the Party could demand its rights; divided, it becomes a laughing stock for all. I am in entire agreement with you that the least the Party was entitled to was to have two ministers from it. My personal views on the subjects are, as you know, quite strong. I would prefer a ministry of two, both ministers being non-Muslims, as long as they belonged to the Unionist Party which is the majority party. The Muslim minister came in only because of the possibility of a third minister not belonging to the Party. The position of the Party being reduced to have but one-third share, and that of a communal nature, is intolerable and one which the Party, if united, could have violently protested against."2 He also wrote to Harbaksh Singh in the same strain: "It hurt me very much indeed to see personal squabbles doing such immense harm to the Party and the cause. It was quite immaterial as to who became minister, either A or B or C. What the Party could have stood for was that there should be two ministers from the Party, a Muslim and a non-Muslim, the choice of the men being left entirely to the Governor. If during the existing transitional stage the ministry could not be entirely from the majority party it should, at all events, be largely so. It has been my great ambition and in fact, my only ambition in life to see established in the Punjab a school of thought which proceeds on principles, vital principles, and not on creeds, and I had aspired to bring together men, Hindus, Muhammadans, Sikhs, Christians, all subscribing to one political creed wherein, whenever there was an office of responsibility and trust the preponderating

1 "Chhotu Ram and Harbaksh Singh are very hurt in view of the squabble between Piroz and Shahab-ud-Din. This is perfectly true. Had the party kept its ranks closed they could have insisted on another minister being taken from the Party. The responsibility for this lies on Ahmadyar and Shahab-ud-Din and to a certain extent on Zafrulla Khan and Mehr Shah." (Diary—October 20, 1930.)
2 Letter dated October 13, 1930.
majority of Muslims would show their confidence and faith in their non-Muslim colleagues by putting their principles before themselves. Personally, I would have preferred a ministry of two only, and both non-Muslims, provided it came from the Party.”

The effect of the weakening of the Unionist Party and the formation of a communal ministry was disastrous to the province. The prestige of the ministry was lowered and the Governor became stronger than he ever was before. Sir Gokal Chand Narang, the Mahasabha minister, placed two measures on the Statute Book which crippled local self-government in the Punjab: the Municipal Executive Officers Act, 1931, which deprived the elected representatives of the people from exercising executive power, and the Punjab Municipal (Amendment) Act, 1932, which increased Government control over municipalities through Government officials and the Local Self-Government Board. Under the leadership of Sir Chhotu Ram and Malik Din Muhammad, the Unionists opposed both Bills tooth and nail, and held a walk out in the Council on the ground that the Bills took away the powers given to the people under the Reforms and invested the executive with autocratic power to override local bodies. Sir Gokal Chand Narang, however, carried the Bills with the support of urban Hindus and the official bloc. Apart from retrogression in local self-government, there was an appalling decline in the progress of education; and by 1935 the Punjab, which in 1926 had been the third best province in India, became educationally one of the most backward. The bureaucracy now resumed powers it had shed during the first ten years of the Reforms, and became intolerant of public opinion. Favouritism and nepotism corrupted the administration; the standard of efficiency declined. Towards the close of 1934, Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Sir Sikander: “Frankly, I do not feel too hopeful about the future. Somehow, it seems that the atmosphere has deteriorated. It is nobody’s fault, I am sure; but facts are facts. In the case of officials one is inclined to think that those of past were giants, and those that are now only human beings, and those

1 Letter dated October 13, 1930.
of the future are likely to be pygmies.... However, the trend of events, the general atmosphere, the attitude of mind, official and non-official, the material available, so far as one can judge at present, are none too encouraging for one who has worked, seen workers, and feels none too strong to mould circumstances and events to suit the discharge of his duties." The worst development of all was an increase in communal antagonism, of which the Shahidgunj agitation was the most alarming outburst. In view of these developments it was but natural that Fazl-i-Husain should wish, on the conclusion of his term of office with the Government of India, to return to the Punjab and once again be at the helm of affairs.

When Fazl-i-Husain returned to the Punjab he found provincial leadership in a deplorable state. Writing about it in his diary he observed: "Government policy is responsible for there being no leader in any community. As soon as Government officials find an Indian wielding influence, their tendency is to counteract his influence. This has come to be Government policy. In the case of Hindus, the excuse was that they are Congresswallas, and so opposed to Government. In the case of Muslims, when there is no excuse, resort is had to underhand propaganda so as to prevent the community from developing strength which unity brings. Sectarianism is encouraged. Personal factions created, encouraged and developed, and when they do not help recourse is taken to encouraging the leaders of the scum of society to create diversions by undermining the influence of leaders. And what is the result? Government has freedom of action—can do what it likes, but if things do not work out as desired by them, there is no one to help them. Members and ministers cannot be really useful if their position is no better than that of glorified Tahsildars to do the bidding of the Governor. What following, what party, what school of thought? Gandhi achieved great influence, but it was religious, based on the whole policy being anti-British. Government set itself to the task of undermining his influence and today (1935) Gandhi possesses but little

1 Letter dated November 8, 1934.
political influence. This policy is inevitable if the administration is autocratic or bureaucratic, and that is why Provincial Autonomy cannot be a success—autocracy of the Governor against the ministry. As a rule no ministry will function but if there is a case in which it functions, then you may take it, the Governor has ceased to function under the Reforms. Long Live John Bull!"¹

Sir Sikander Hyat,² who was soon to play an important part in the Punjab politics, deserves some attention. Under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Sir Sikander Hyat entered the Punjab Council, but on account of his heavy financial liabilities was interested more in commercial, industrial and banking concerns than in politics.³ In 1929 when Fazl-i-Husain went to the Government of India for four months, the Governor wanted to appoint Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, President of the Council, as officiating minister. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, after Fazl-i-Husain, was the most prominent Muslim member of the Unionist Party, and was accepted as a leader of the Muslims within the Party. A pledge to this effect was given to him by Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, and Sir Sikander Hyat. Sir Sikander Hyat had a devoted friend in Ahmadyar Khan Daultana, who through his intercession with Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, his brother-in-law, made the latter agree to let Sir Sikandar Hyat become Revenue Member in the officiating vacancy, on condition that when in the following year the question of a permanent vacancy arose he would not stand in his way but would support him for it. Sir Sikander Hyat made a favourable impression on the Governor, so that when the permanent vacancy arose in 1930, he was appointed Revenue Member. This disappointed Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din, who was told by Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency that his failure to be selected "was not due to any lack of talents, capacity and character but other

¹ Diary—July 18, 1935.
² 1892-1942.
³ "He was on the Board of Directors of about eleven different concerns including three Railway Companies, Messrs. Owen Roberts, the Punjab and Portland Cement Ltd. He also acted as the Managing Director of the Wah Stone and Lime Company and was the Managing Partner of the Mining Syndicate." (Sir Sikander Hyat Khan: Institute of Current Affairs, 1943, p. 9.)
considerations.” The Governor, who could not have two Muslim members of his cabinet differing from each other, was anxious to make Sir Sikander Hyat Revenue Member, but not if Firoz Khan Noon was unwilling to have Sir Sikander Hyat as his colleague. Sir Sikander Hyat appealed to Fazl-i-Husain and he pleaded with the Maliks and brought about a reconciliation between the two families, as a result of which Sir Sikander Hyat took office as Revenue Member.

Shortly after his appointment Fazl-i-Husain observed in his diary: “Sikander Hyat and I motored to Kalka. We had a chat about many things affecting the Punjab Muslims in various departments. He seems to have been poorly lately, and wonder if he will be able to work hard because he is not well equipped and so has to work harder.” Sir Sikander Hyat worked hard but pursued policies of which Fazl-Husain could not but disapprove. In 1932 he moved in Council that His Majesty’s Government be asked to provide a Second Chamber for the Punjab. Fazl-i-Husain, who was trying his best to have the proposal for a Second Chamber in Bengal, Bihar and U. P. abandoned, was horrified and asked Chhotu Ram to oppose it as leader of the Unionist Party. Chhotu Ram declared that the proposal was constitutionally retrograde, while financially it would be a “white elephant for the maintenance of which poor zamindars would have to be fleeced.” The proposal was rejected in the Council by an overwhelming majority of the elected members.

In 1932, during the illness of Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, Sir Sikander Hyat officiated as Governor, and got Mr. H. Calvert, I.C.S. to officiate in his own place; although the opportunity could have been availed of to appoint an Indian from public life. Fazl-i-Husain disapproved, but since the transaction was presented to him as a fait accompli there was little that he could do. A similar situation arose in 1934 when the Governor, Sir Herbert Emerson, went to England. Sir Sikander Hyat officiated again as Governor for four months, and a Revenue Member had to be appointed temporarily. Sir Sikander Hyat, in agreement with Sir Herbert Emerson, decided that Mr. Miles Irving, I.C.S., should be appointed and should continue to be Revenue

1 Diary—September 24, 1930.
Member when Sikander Hyat proceeded on four months’ leave to England on the conclusion of his term as Governor. As soon as Fazl-i-Husain heard of it he sent for Sir Sikander Hyat and asked him if it was true. Sir Sikander Hyat denied it, and said that the matter was still unsettled, but that he was helpless because Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan had refused to accept the post. Fazl-i-Husain then sent for Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, and asked him to inform Sir Sikander Hyat that he would be willing to accept the post. Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan obeyed, but discovered from Mr. Miles Irving that the decision had already been taken. Greatly disappointed, Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Sir Sikander Hyat: “It is alleged that as the acting appointment is only for a short term of four months no one cared. This is absolutely false. The question is one of principle. Should the tendency be for the non-official element to take the place of the official element or the reverse? There is no one who is interested in the welfare of India, who would take this light-hearted view of the situation. It should be made clear that now as in the past, in the Punjab or elsewhere, Indian representation in the Cabinet should remain intact and that under no circumstances should an official take the place of a non-official member of Government even for a short time. In the fourteenth year of the Montague Reforms for an official to take the place of a non-official member cannot but be treated as a censure on Indians and a serious reflection on the capacity of public men in the Punjab, and that on both grounds this step is bound to be resented throughout the province.”

As soon as Sir Sikander Hyat reached London he gave a statement to the Press to say that “I have the fullest confidence as to the effective working of the administrative machine under the Reforms. Both as a member of Government and acting Governor, I received the fullest co-operation from the I.C.S., the Police and other services. In the Punjab all the communities repose confidence in the British officers of Government, and we hope that under the new Constitution there will be a substantial leavening of the British element in the services.” Fazl-i-Husain at once wrote to him: “It

1 Letter dated June 16, 1934.
(your statement) conveyed ideas which have always invited criticism. The usual thing for a friend to do is to encourage one in what one is doing, but I feel it is the duty of a real friend to tell one what reaction his actions have called forth so that he may know this when considering what to do next.” Writing to Chaudhri Zafarulla Khan he commented: “A great deal of publicity was given to Sikander’s statement to the Press about the White Paper and the last part of it...has naturally aroused disappointment in certain quarters and indignation in others; and some papers have commented that proposals as to his permanent appointment as a Governor are being matured in London. You say he has gone to the Isle of Man. That must be to see Sir Montague Butler who may be able to put him in the way of meeting some conservative leaders and also putting him in way of being useful to them.”

On his return from England Sir Sikander Hyat was appointed Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank on a salary of Rs. 5,500 per mensem. Soon he was so preoccupied with his duties that when in February 1936, Fazl-i-Husain sent him his pamphlet *Punjab Politics* for his criticism and comments the latter replied: “I will go through the pamphlet *Punjab Politics* you have sent me when I have a little leisure and let you have my comments in due course.” These comments never came, in fact Sir Sikander Hyat had no time to participate in the foundation and building up of the re-organized Unionist Party of which he was shortly to become the leader.

The only person who held aloft the banner of the Unionist Party in the absence of Fazl-i-Husain was Chhotu Ram, the leader of the Party since 1926. Fazl-i-Husain wrote in his diary: “Saw Chhotu Ram. He is hardworking, intelligent and clear-headed, distinctly and considerably above the average. If my health permits my forming a ministry under the Reforms, it will not be without Chhotu Ram. We had a very satisfactory talk. I wish Firoz were possessed of even half the qualifications which distinguish Chhotu Ram from

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1 Letter dated July 16, 1934.
2 Letter dated July 16, 1934.
3 Letter dated February 23, 1936.
4 Letter dated February 27, 1936.
Sikhs and others of the Punjab. The Punjab question does not and cannot stand alone, it is a part of the all-India question and however strongly and persistently we may try to localize this issue it will be found that the whole question of communal proportions throughout India will be reopened for discussion;

"(iv) we have succeeded in settling this problem after years of strenuous work and campaign for our rights which is unparalleled in the history of modern Islam in India. If this question is reopened for discussion, I am very much afraid that all our efforts will be thrown away;

"(v) the Diehards here are very active and there is a very great fear indeed of Provincial Autonomy being shorn of a great deal of its vigour. I very much fear that if this communal question is raised afresh we will play into the hands of the Diehards, who will insist on reserving law and order throughout India."

Fazl-i-Husain explained the proposal as he had done to Dr. Iqbal and _inter alia_ added: “Indian Muslims cannot ignore a patent fact that they have been left in the lurch so far as Bengal is concerned, and that is entirely due to the fact that the British representation on the local legislature is excessive. The only province where, therefore, Muslims can consolidate their position and not remain at the absolute mercy of the Governor or other communities is the Punjab, provided in the province they can secure co-operation of certain sections of Hindus and Sikhs. If the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab are prepared to concede this (differential franchise) to Muslims, why should Muslims, provided they lose nothing thereby, refuse to make friends? It seems to me, therefore, that if Hindus and Sikhs support this arrangement, it would be wrong on the part of Muslims not to take advantage of it. . . . Lastly, the question of smooth working: Surely, if a general settlement between all communities is arrived at, the chances of smooth working are ever so much greater than when they start with embittered feelings as at

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1 Letter dated May 10, 1933 from the Aga Khan.
present. You may well ask: if the thing is so simple and so clear, why should there be this anxiety in certain quarters in Lahore, and why has Iqbal been sending telegrams to London and to the Press? Well, this is because politics in India are run in imitation of politics in England, and political parties without intrigue of some sort or other cannot exist. In view of the forthcoming elections, a few people in Lahore have got hold of the idea that under the Reforms, men with large landed interests, or men high up in professions, or men of families of note, have done themselves very well, and that the city people in some cases feel that they have been left out. They want to form a group of urban people, what they call non-zamindara people, so as to obtain a majority in the new Council. They consider that in picking up a man like Zafrullah Khan, so to speak, from the unknown I have not acted rightly, and their protest is taking this form. I have no doubt whatsoever that these people are misguided and that before very long they will discover that they are not serving the interests they have at heart, and towards Iqbal they are acting like foolish friends who are bound to prove worse than wise enemies. The best thing to do is to consider these proposals entirely on their merits. I trust this will reassure you that there is no danger and that the result of all this consultation, discussion, and controversy will, on the whole, be beneficial for Muslims."1 This convinced the Muslim delegates in London that the Punjab Formula was highly desirable both from the Muslim and the national point of view, and they agreed to stand by it if the Hindus and the Sikhs accepted it. But the Hindus and the Sikhs refused to agree and the negotiations failed.

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1 Letter dated June 5, 1933.
CHAPTER XVIII

THE SHAHIDGUNJ AGITATION

The Shahidgunj agitation of 1935 is a sad chapter in the history of the Punjab. According to the Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925, the property owned by Sikh shrines was to be ascertained, in order that the management might be vested in committees constituted under the Act. A dispute arose with regard to an old mosque to the south of what is now the Naulakha Bazar in the city of Lahore. During the time of Ranjit Singh the mosque came to be occupied by the custodians of the Gurdwara of Bhai Taru Singh situated in the precincts of the mosque. During early British rule one Nur Ahmad claimed to be a Mutawalli of the mosque but all his civil suits failed. The Muslims now tried to obtain relief from the Gurdwara Tribunal, but without success. In 1927 Government declared that the old mosque belonged to the Sikh Gurdwara Shahidgunj Bhai Taru Singh. Among seventeen claims made by various petitioners, the Anjuman-i-Islamia of Lahore claimed that the land and property were dedicated to a mosque and did not belong to the Gurdwara. The cases failed on account of adverse possession and while the Anjuman did not appeal, the appeals made by others were dismissed by the High Court. In March 1935 the property was handed over to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee for management. The committee began to build a northern bazar wall and partial demolition of the old structure was embarked on.

Tension grew rapidly and large Muslim crowds collected near the mosque to prevent its demolition. On July 20, arrests were made, and when the mob refused to disperse the military fired and caused several casualties. The position was made worse by the fact that while Government
sympathised with the Muslims no decisive action was taken. Muslim leaders failed to improve the situation; at a meeting held on the 23rd July it was suggested that Fazl-i-Husain might be requested to come to Lahore from Abbottabad (where he had gone to recover from his illness) and extricate the Muslims from a most difficult position. Fazl-i-Husain was suffering from one of his severe attacks of bronchitis and could not go to Lahore to take part in the controversy. But he closely studied the whole situation in the light of day to day information received from his friends, and decided to give the Muslims a correct lead. He believed that nothing could come out of the agitation except a few murders, a few death sentences, and general bitterness. He felt that the position of the Muslims, in so far as they proposed to take direct action in contravention of the decree of a civil court, was unwarranted. He had the moral courage to say so publicly, and attempted to undo the harm done by agitators and Muslim leaders in Lahore in refraining from publicly disapproving of the agitation. Strictly speaking, he said, Muslims had but one grievance against the Sikhs, namely, the actual demolition of the damaged mosque building. Their claim first for the mosque and then for the restoration of the site was not well-founded, and Sikhs could not reasonably be asked to give up what they had gained after prolonged litigation which had been started by the Muslims. Still less were the Muslims justified in urging that they should have the site as a result of the agitation because they had failed to get it through law. The only possible solution was to negotiate an agreement to refrain from building on the site of the mosque.

On the other hand, it looked as if Government was utilizing the whole affair to break the Muslim solidarity which had been a strong factor in Punjab politics during the last fourteen years. Fazl-i-Husain wrote to every Muslim leader in Lahore strongly disapproving of the agitation, and asked them to publish a statement to this effect at the earliest opportunity. Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din issued an appeal against direct action by the Muslims. The position would have improved substantially, and the Muslims quietened

\footnote{Diary—July 23, 1935.}
down, had Government agreed that the Sikhs had acted unreasonably in refusing to compromise on the issue of demolition of the building on the site of the mosque. But none of the Muslim leaders could induce the Governor to agree to this, and the suggestion of Fazl-i-Husain was turned down by Sir Herbert Emerson for fear of Sikh displeasure. The Sikhs had promised to hold their hand but nevertheless demolished the mosque. Government promised to do something but did nothing. Muslims were exasperated because they felt they had been deceived. The net result was that the agitators and those who espoused direct action gained in sympathy and public esteem all round, and their wrong doing was converted into heroism and martyrdom.¹

Thus the position grew from bad to worse, and the bitterness among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs increased rapidly. Firoz Khan Noon was unable to give any definite lead and blamed both sides for not listening to Government.² When Fazl-i-Husain took him to task for this he wrote back saying that he was helpless because the Governor was cowed by the Sikhs and refused to listen to Muslim grievances or claims. Fazl-i-Husain at once wrote back that if what he was saying was true, and Muslims were denied equality of treatment in the maintenance of law and order, he would risk his health and return to Lahore, and if the Governor did not come to terms, he would take the lead and act. In reply Firoz Khan Noon begged Fazl-i-Husain not to come and wrote that British officials were all for Muslims.³ Meanwhile Government brought pressure to bear on the leading Muslim

¹ Diary—August 6, 1935.
² "Firoz is apparently of the view that he is ‘making hay.’ He is out to be popular amongst Muslims—frequents mosques, says amen to all the popular slogans about mosques, goes for Fateha to the houses of the killed, pays visits to the wounded in hospitals, has cut out others—Muzaffar Khan, Ahmad-yr and Shahab-ud-Din, by readily carrying out the Governor’s wishes, and thus not allowing his rivals to steal a march over him. He is playing the game that they initiated. He is bound to be disillusioned and disappointed before long. He thinks that he has rendered great service to Government, and that the Governor will be grateful to him, and his position is thereby secured. I believe he has tumbled to the situation that if I am on account of health unable to resume public life and Sikander being occupied elsewhere, he should exert himself to take the chief place, and this he proposes to get through the Governor’s goodwill, while he has been abusing the Governor right and left…His letters to me have been funny." (Diary—July 30, 1935.)
³ Diary—August 16, 1935.
members of the Municipality, and the Municipality gave sanction to the Sikhs to build near the demolished mosque. Sikhs began to build but the public was kept ignorant of what was happening within the four walls of the mosque area.

In order to divert Muslim attention from the Shahidgunj mosque, Government started propaganda about two Bills it was proposed to introduce in the Council for their benefit. One was the Muslim Graveyards' Bill prepared by Firoz Khan Noon. The Bill had no bearing on the dispute vexing the Muslims. 1 The other Bill was the Auqaf Bill prepared by Mir Maqbool Mahmood on the lines of the Gurdwara Act and was likely to create parties and dissensions among Muslims on an unprecedented scale. Fazl-i-Husain pointed out that both the Bills would create further trouble among the Muslims, and though they might distract the Muslim attention from Shahidgunj for the time being, in the long run dissatisfaction among the Muslims would continue to grow on account of Government favouritism towards the Hindus and Sikhs and the ineffectiveness of Muslim members of Government, who allowed Muslim interests to suffer. In reply to this Firoz Khan Noon said: "The Governor was keen on preventing a strong Muslim Government being set up, and hence all the trouble." 2 In despair Fazl-i-Husain recorded in his diary: "I give it up, it is impossible to under-

1 "I have read Firoz's Graveyards' Bill. It enables Local Government to institute a purely nominated committee to take over a public graveyard where it likes and when it likes, but the grounds for the exercise of discretion are not given and no provision for finances, though the committee cannot function unless it has funds presented to it. For a purely nominated Committee to collect funds, and then disburse, and supplement existing administration—the whole is too much in the air. For a minister, on the eve of Reforms, to satisfy Muslims that they are being invested with democratic powers in purely religious matters though to a less extent than the Sikhs, and give them this Committee, and Local Government absolute discretion at all stages and in all matters—it is not intelligible how a minister can do a thing like this. The measure is not only useless, but most mischievous, and anti-self-government in principle and almost in every way. Saw Firoz regarding all the troubles. Asked about Graveyards' Bill. He said it has no connection with the trouble, that only Miani graveyard of Lahore was involved, and that nomination will be unpopular, and there was no guarantee that nominated members will be any better than elected members. Curiously, he, in answer to my question, admitted that the Governor told him that nomination will be objected to, and yet he kept it on. I give it up—it is impossible to understand him." (Diary—October 8, 1935.)

2 Diary—September 23, 1935.
stand him. What is needed is a complete overhauling, both Firoz and Muzaffar should go, and really capable men tried. They may do no better, but nothing like trying."

In September 1935 the agitators and the Muslim Press openly asked for recourse to civil disobedience, whereupon Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Syed Habib definitely and categorically expressing himself against it: "Firstly, civil disobedience has been tried during the last fifteen years throughout India and has failed in all cases and in all provinces with the possible exception of the Sikhs, who adopted it in the early years of 1921 decade. The Muslim proposal now is simply imitative, i.e. to imitate the Sikhs in the hope that they will do as well as the Sikhs, if not better and thereby defeat the Government as the Sikhs did and establish their prestige, and the Government in future will be frightened of them as they believe it is frightened of the Sikhs. I will not argue whether the assumption that Sikhs defeated the Government is right or not, or whether now the Government is frightened of the Sikhs or not, but for the sake of argument let us assume that both these assumptions are well-founded. The question is whether the Muslims now can do what the Sikhs did in the early years of 1921 decade. They cannot:

"(a) The Sikhs were a small community; the movement was led by the Akalis and directed against the Mahants who were non-Sikhs and the Sikhs had intimidated all sections of Sikhs into submission to them and the Government of the day had taken up the attitude that the Akalis were bent upon religious reform and Government should not stand in the way of that reform.
(b) Government had not then all the powers to deal with civil disobedience that it has today.
(c) Government had not then the experience of dealing with the movement then that it has today.
(d) The British Government then was quite different from the British Government of today.

3 Diary—October 8, 1935.
(e) There was civil disobedience in those days in all provinces and in almost all communities. It was rising. Today it is a discredited movement.

(f) Today Government is determined to undo the mischief that was done by what is called its weakness in those days, and I am convinced that if the Sikhs had tried their strength at civil disobedience today for the first time they would not have succeeded to the extent that they did 10-15 years ago. Muslims want to take up a method which has been tried and which has failed. They are taking it up at a time when Government is much stronger than it was before. They are taking it up against a community which is strong and organized and not weak like the Mahants who were left in the lurch by the Hindus.

"Secondly, there is no one in the Government strong enough to take an independent attitude and see that justice and fairplay is assured even to those who are guilty of defiance of law.....Thirdly, failure is bound to bring further discredit on the community and those associated with it. Loss of prestige, loss inflicted on individuals and groups, large sections of the community disowning the people who are promoting this policy, leading to disruption, and this on the eve of the introduction of reforms."\(^1\)

Thus, while Fazl-i-Husain considered direct action on the part of the Muslims legally unjustified and politically inexpedient, he felt at the same time that the Sikhs had showed no regard for Muslim feelings and their attitude was one of opposition to all constituted authority. This attitude, he considered, was inspired by Government. The protection given by Government to Sikhs in destroying the mosque was beyond the rights secured to the Sikhs by the Gurdwara Tribunal. Had the Sikhs brought a suit in a civil court to adjudicate the right to demolish the mosque and obtained a decree to that effect, they would then have been justified, from a strictly legal point of view, in demolishing it; but Government had afforded the Sikhs protection in doing what they wanted to do by taking the law in their own hands.

\(^1\) Letter dated September 9, 1935.
While analysing the political situation which had culminated in the Shahidgunj affair, Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Nawab Muzaffar Khan: "The position was, though one of tension, still quite sound up till 1932. The Communal Award was taken up by the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab for agitation against the Muslims and the Government. This agitation was allowed to proceed and become intense and in the course of it threats of defiance of law, breach of peace and bloodshed were hurled about. Still Government took no notice of all these things. The Muslims were on the defensive and during the last three years it appears that the policy of Government had been to do everything to appease the Hindus and the Sikhs, probably because Government felt that, as the Hindus and Sikhs were already very sore on account of the Communal Award, every effort should be made to please them; and in keeping with this policy the treatment meted out to Muslims was one of indifference and possibly, in some cases, of injustice. Again, probably due to the reason that the Muslim community has been favoured in the matter of the Communal Award and therefore no harm will be done by taking them a peg or two down. During this period the extremists among the Muslims felt that Muslims were down in their luck and that a reign of terror was not far off. The Hindus and Sikhs were organizing and intimidating others; they should also take a hand in this venture. They constituted themselves into the Ahrars. They had the support, direct or indirect, of many prominent Muslims for different reasons and it is believed of many Government officials. This put them in funds and organized them. The Ahmadi business came to them as a god-send and there again many influential people, and possibly some Government officials, helped them. The spirit of defiance of law among the Muslims was thus developed and whether the leadership of those who have imbibed the spirit remains with the Ahrars or someone else is immaterial. As I always pointed out to His Excellency the Governor and my friends, it was dangerous to play this game. The Muslim community is treading the path which the Hindus and the Sikhs have been treading in the past. The animus displayed by the Muslim community against the sister communities is only a
reaction to the spirit which the two communities displayed to the knowledge of the Government towards the Muslim community during the last three years…. Frankly, the prevailing idea amongst the Muslim community today is that the Punjab Government is bent upon acting unjustly and unfairly towards them; that it is afraid of the Sikhs, that the combination of the Sikhs and the Hindus is too much for the Government to tackle and that in the discomfiture of the Muslim community both the Hindu-cum-Sikh combination and many Government officials see an escape from the possibility of a Muslim Government being established under the reforms.”

The Muslims filed a suit about the demolition and recovery of the mosque in the court of the District Judge and the decision given against them was greatly resented by them. Fazl-i-Husain unhesitatingly asked the Muslims to drop the matter. They protested and said this meant defeat; but he told them that they had been defeated at all stages, and there was no point in courting more defeats. “If Muslims,” he added, “had not made utter fools of themselves and committed blunder after blunder in handling this matter, and if Pirs and politicians had not for the sake of popularity and very temporary and ephemeral applause acted in a manner most prejudicial to Muslim interests this matter would have been closed long ago.”

The agitation, however, continued and Government refused to release the detenues. Muslims embarked on a civil disobedience movement. Fazl-i-Husain advised Government to settle the matter of the Shahqaq grave so as to assist a compromise on the issue of Shahidgunj. He asked Government to resume the policy of holding the balance even, and not showing favours to one community at the expense of the other. He also asked Government to repudiate unequivocally the rumours of suspicions that communal trouble was not unwelcome to the official world. Towards the end of February 1936, all the prisoners were

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1 Letter dated September 21, 1935.
2 The appeal to the High Court was dismissed in 1938, and the appeal to the Privy Council was dismissed in 1940 in accordance with the provisions of the Limitation Act.
3 Diary—January 14, 1936.
released and newspaper security orders were cancelled. Government gave up the Shah Chiragh mosque, which quietened down the Muslims to some extent, but the question of the site of the Shahidgunj still rankled in their minds.

In June 1936 Fazl-i-Husain prepared a scheme and sent it to the Governor, Sir Herbert, and a large number of his Hindu and Muslim friends. "While the Shahidgunj case," he wrote, "is running its unfortunate course the point of the greatest possible importance for the Muslims is to calmly think over the real trouble and to see what can be done to prevent its recurrence." He explained that according to Muslim belief, what was once a waqf was always a waqf, but it often happened in practice that the Auqaf were abuse or extinguished by the neglect and dishonesty of the trustees, and the ignorance and carelessness of the beneficiaries. Whenever the Mutawalli (the trustee) went wrong, he abused the endowment, left the mosque, and converted the waqf property to his personal use. He was able to do all this because the majority of the Muslim worshippers did not bother to check him. This was a growing evil which existed not only in the Punjab but all over India. No solution had been found for it by legislation, and various communities had failed to combat it.

"What is required," Fazl-i-Husain concluded, "was to take steps to prevent recurrence of such criminal negligence on the part of Muslim Mutawallis and Muslim worshippers of mosques and invest some Government authority with power to prevent the abuse of Auqaf. In Muslim countries such work is done by the Auqaf Department of Government and in England by the Chancery, but in India the matter has been left to each community to look after their own religious endowments with the result that Auqaf are not registered, no one knows whether a particular property is waqf or not, and the question of their control does not arise." Fazl-i-Husain proposed the appointment of a Commission of Enquiry and a survey by the Commission of Auqaf of both Hindus and Muslims. He wanted a summary enquiry into their terms of trust and an authentic official
register for each community in every place throughout the province, giving the extent of the property and the nature and conditions of every religious endowment. When registration is completed then under civil law every Mutawalli should be made liable to render annual accounts by submitting them to the civil court in whose jurisdiction the waqf is situated, while a Superintendent of Auqaf should be appointed to scrutinize those accounts, and to see that they are in accordance with the terms of the endowments, failing which he may ask the civil authority to proceed against the trustees, a provision being made that in grievous cases of default the right of Tauliat be forfeited and the Mutawalli be replaced by a public control of the endowment.

Fazl-i-Husain maintained that this was the only way of dealing satisfactorily with the problem. A Mosque Act and a Temple Act, like the Gurdwara Act of 1925, which were contemplated by Government, would not serve the purpose; because the Gurdwara Act divested Mahants of their rights and reduced different forms of worship in Gurdwaras to one uniform practice, which would be strongly resented by Muslims as well as Hindus. Their various sects attached great importance to the variety of forms of worship, and would prefer to retain sectarian control rather than sacrifice it for the sake of uniformity. The result of such legislation would be a tremendous clash of opinion and the splitting up of each community into hundreds of parties, the disruption in Hindu and Muslim society causing a profound confusion in the Punjab.

All Muslims to whom the proposal was circulated agreed that this was the best solution of the problem, but a fierce opposition from Mutawallis and Pirs was expected, and it was said that since Gaddinashins were numerous and influential, the proposal coming from Fazl-i-Husain as leader of the Unionist Party might prove detrimental to Party interests. Fazl-i-Husain replied that in principle they could have no reasonable objection, and a just and proper cause should not fail for fear of unpopularity. Government circles objected on financial grounds; to which Fazl-i-Husain replied that if the evils were recognized, as also the desire of various communities to eradicate them, and to place their endow-
ments on a sure and honest basis, it was the duty of Government to find ways and means to meet this pressing demand.

As this proposal was not likely to affect the issue of the Shahidgunj mosque, it was indeed a courageous move on the part of Fazl-i-Husain to adopt a line of action contrary to popular feelings. He wanted a change of law rather than pursue a futile controversy by defying the existing law. All that could be done by mutual agreement with Sikhs was to prevent the site from being desecrated or built upon by them. His appeal to the people was criticized but on the whole it had a sobering effect on Muslim enthusiasts and made them think. When the situation eased a little, he formulated his proposal in the form of a Bill. In order to secure public approval and to convince the people that the proposed Bill was in their best interests, throughout June he held consultations with various Muslim leaders and newspaper editors.

As regards the Shahidgunj mosque he also formulated a plan of action. Processions and meetings were to be voluntarily stopped, and display of force was to be discontinued. The Muslim Press was to impose a self-denying ordinance upon itself and cease to agitate the public mind. The Governor in return was to declare that the Sikhs could build on the site of the mosque but in view of the matter being sub-judice Government would not recognize the building as legal. Pending the decision of the Court both communities were to bury the hatchet and proceed in the matter only after obtaining a legal decision in support of the action they contemplated. This experience, he said, should teach the Muslims to be vigilant in future about their Auqaf and to safeguard them by legislation.

Two weeks later Fazl-i-Husain died, and the Shahidgunj dispute remained unsettled till 1940. Four long years of strife caused untold harm to the Muslim community, which suffered in prestige and self-respect and lost money in litigation; while hundreds of young Muslims received injuries, languished in prisons, or died facing lathi charges and firing. And eventually nothing was achieved as far as Shahidgunj was concerned, and Auqaf legislation was forgotten by the successors of Fazl-i-Husain.
CHAPTER XIX

REORGANIZATION OF THE UNIONIST PARTY

WHEN the term of Fazl-i-Husain as Executive Councillor was drawing to a close, people wondered what he was going to do next. The officials asked why he had refused to accept an extension of his term as Executive Councillor. His health of course was bad, but it had always been so, and no one believed that he would be a mere spectator and watch the political game played around him without participating in it himself. Sir Sikander Hyat suggested that he might take his place as Revenue Member in the Punjab, but he replied: “You ask me whether there is any objection to your mentioning the possibility of my taking your place...this is just the same as asking for my appointment...neither directly nor indirectly should my name be suggested in this connection...The usual attraction of power, prestige and authority do not appeal to me. Probably, what has been attracting me has been work, and therefore, in abstaining from entering upon a venture like this, I will not be denying myself anything for which my soul may be craving.” Writing to his son in England, he dismissed the current speculations about himself by saying: “As to what I am going to do, there is no lack of conjectures in the Indian Press and in the minds of my friends and foes. The beauty of it is that none

1 Fazl-i-Husain wrote to his wife: “You have asked me about the truth in the various rumours about me. The truth is that for fourteen years I have occupied high offices. Now in different circles various opinions are growing. Some want that I should again occupy some high office while others wish that some relation or friend of theirs should have a chance. But the fact is that on 1st April, 1935, I shall be relieved of my duties and considering my health an energy, I have decided not to practise as a lawyer, but if after some time I recover my strength and health I shall give legal consultations at home and for the rest I shall spend my time in prayer. One should try to free oneself from worldly affairs.” (Letter dated January 17, 1935—Urdu.)

2 Letter dated November 8, 1934.
of them can be right because they are making conjectures about a thing which does not exist. I have no programme, my mind is absolutely blank. It is probably due to low vitality, feeling of tiredness, weariness and exhaustion. I simply feel that I cannot be bothered as to the programme. I drift after a very strenuous life. I am devoid of any holiday and I feel that I have a right to it. I am getting along drifting but soon when that stage is reached there will be no difficulty in framing a programme. My friends and foes are busy making programmes for me but none of the programmes so far suggested in the Press attract me. I was asked to join the Punjab Government as Revenue Member, but on enquiry the offer was found to involve certain happenings which rendered my acceptance difficult, if not impossible, and I had to express my regret that I could not accept the offer. At times I feel that I have done enough and I should retire from public life. I am, therefore, content to leave matters to luck and to enjoy drifting. Yes, it is curious that even such clever and shrewd men like Sir Shadi Lal and others should refuse to believe that I am in need of rest and cannot work any more. These people attribute to me superhuman qualities. As to Sir Shadi Lal saying that we should come to an understanding, he is quite right, but unfortunately the Hindus in the Punjab have no leader and do not place confidence in any one. Sir Shadi Lal was the only man in whose ability and capacity they had faith and confidence. Therefore, coming to a settlement is more difficult than ever. Still, every effort should be made to arrive at a settlement. I wonder whether Sir Shadi Lal feels amused that some time back a movement was started in the Punjab to the effect that Sir Shadi Lal wanted to take part in the public life of the province and to take a hand in the politics under the Reforms, but that I being a very clever man made His Majesty's Government appoint him a Privy Councillor and thus he was taken away from the Punjab so that he may not stand against me in becoming the Chief Minister, and the Hindu Press has been doing a great deal of propaganda on these lines, attributing to me great in-
fluence and spiritual powers which enable me to spirit away all clever men who are likely to be my rivals.”

On the eve of Fazl-i-Husain’s retirement, Khwaja Hasan Nizami of Delhi issued an appeal to Muslims to observe March 29, 1935, as “Fazl-i-Husain Day”, and after Juma prayers to offer prayers for his health. The Ahmadiya Jamat issued a similar appeal to its followers all over India. Practically all Muslim newspapers wrote about his services to his community in highly appreciative terms. The Muslim members of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly entertained him to a farewell lunch party. The only dissident voice was that of the Ahrars.

He handed over charge of his office, and reached Lahore on the morning of the April 1. He alighted at Lahore the veriest shadow of a human figure, an old man, weak and emaciated, with dark rings round his eyes, and thin worn-out face. At the railway station he was publicly received with an enthusiasm never shown by the Punjabis to any leader before or since. The Municipality offered an address of civic welcome at the Town Hall; in reply to which he said: “You have asked me to bring the controversy relating to the communal question to a close. We did succeed twenty years or so ago in settling the matter. Since then misunderstandings, misrepresentations, misapprehensions, and also mistakes have undone the good that national effort had achieved. Some political organisations pursued methods which were not quite orthodox and confusion and discord prevailed. The last few years have shown how national effort has been sapped of its energy and strength. It is not, it cannot be impossible to restore mutual confidence and trust without which no settlement can work. If in rendering this service to the country the very last ounce of energy is needed, I shall gladly consecrate it and deem it a privilege.”

Fazl-i-Husain had barely time to settle down in Lahore when the Muslim Press began to clamour for his return to politics. Under the caption “An Appeal to Mian Fazl-i-Husain,” a newspaper wrote: “The condition of the Punjab Muslims is weak and the community is unfairly treated....

2 Letter dated March 18, 1935, to Azim Husain.
2 March 30, 1935.
ordinary circumstances. You know perfectly well that the Punjab is the key of the Indian Muslim politics because of the strong attitude we have taken. Sind is following in our footsteps, the North-West Frontier Province is doing the same and to a minor extent Bengal and U. P. are also coming into line. Thus Jinnah’s Parliamentary Board is already broken up. The Bihar minister has already resigned. In Madras Muslims have become vocal and challenge the representative character of the two or three Congress Muslims Jinnah had put on his board. The way it is proposed to utilize funds is to give monthly subsidies to vernacular papers, which definitely are or would become Party papers. In the subsidy being monthly full value is thus necessarily assured. The second way in which money is to be utilized is to have a few very good well-informed journalists—English and vernacular—writing for the Press and the organization will see that their contributions are accepted. Thirdly, publication of pamphlets and leaflets, and lastly, communications in the nature of summaries of local news to be sent to England.”¹ In reply the Aga Khan promised to send Rs. 20,000 and sent half at once.² The Muslim League was effectively counteracted. Several urban League groups were captured one after the other. The League was urged to define its creed and to put forward its manifesto, both of which were examined critically and criticized in the Press.

A week before his death in July 1936, Fazl-i-Husain was able to say: “Jinnah’s Central Parliamentary Board is finished and this was to be expected. In the Punjab, not only did the Unionists frankly inform him that his move was wrong and detrimental to the best interests of Muslim provinces, but the withdrawal of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and the Ittehad-i-Millat left the Board practically with Ahrars and they are in opposition to all other parties in the Punjab. Will the Ahrars lose their identity and merge themselves into the League? Very unlikely. Thus the Central Parlia-

¹ Letter dated June 22, 1936.
² On July 6, 1936, the Aga Khan wrote to Fazl-i-Husain: “My agents have sent you the first part of my grant, (i.e. Rs. 10,000), due to my horse Mahmud winning the Derby, otherwise I should not have been able financially to so help you. The second part I will send at the end of August or early September from my Bombay office.”
mentary Board, so far as the Punjab is concerned, does not exist. N.W.F. Province and Sind have definitely decided to constitute Unionist Parties after the pattern of the Punjab Unionist Party and Bengal, specially Eastern Bengal, has also decided to follow them. One might have thought that the minority provinces would follow Jinnah’s League, but in the United Provinces we find the old cleavage—Muslim U. P. versus Unity Board of Pandit Malaviya alliance fame and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema of Delhi of the Congress fame. Men who count are not in it. However, no harm is done. Mr. Jinnah is wiser by the experience gained. The Punjab has learnt a lesson not to be gushing to anyone in future and not to let its heart run away with its head.” Fazl-i-Husain predicted correctly, the League and the Ahrars soon parted company.

As the Ahrars were the chief opponents of Fazl-i-Husain, they deserve closer examination. In 1931 a small section of Muslims led by Chaudhri Afzal Haq, most of them remnants of the Khalafatists, along with some urban Muslims who resented the predominance of rural influence, and some former Muslim Congressmen, returned to the political field by organizing the Majlis-i-Ahrar. They had no programme, no organization and no policy, and lived from day to day. The first occasion for their prominence was the alleged grievances of Muslim students against the Principal of Mac-Lagan Engineering College of Lahore and the second occasion was provided by the Quetta Earthquake of 1932. Next came the Muslim agitation against the State of Kashmir. With the publication of the Kashmir Government’s proposals for constitutional reforms the agitation subsided and a new war cry had to be discovered.

Throughout 1933-4 the Ahrars were in financial difficulties and tried to agitate against the military operations in the N.W.F.P., but failed miserably. Finally, in 1934, in order to win favour with some orthodox Muslims, they became extreme sectarians, and started an agitation against the Ahmadis. The occasion for a fierce anti-Ahmadi agitation was provided by the appointment of Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan as Member of the Viceroy’s Executive Council on the retirement of Fazl-i-Husain. Since Fazl-i-Husain was known
to have been instrumental in securing the officiating vacancy for Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan in 1932, it was believed that he was responsible for getting him nominated as his successor as well. The virulent attacks of Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari and Maulana Zafar Ali in the Zamindar, Weekly Mail and Mujahid were, therefore, directed as much against Fazl-i-Husain as against Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan. He was strongly criticized for creating an Ahmadi imperium in imperio, and at the same time it was asked why Dr. Iqbal was not appointed member of the Viceroy's Council. Dr. Iqbal himself joined the chorus and said that the Ahmadiya movement weakened Muslim solidarity, which was already imperilled by the rural-urban cleavage. Fazl-i-Husain refuted the charge that he was disrupting the unity of Muslims, and in fact ensured by constant consultations with the head of the Ahmadiya community that during the forthcoming elections no candidate would be put up on the basis of an Ahmadiya political party, and that elections would be run on strictly non-sectarian party lines. The Ahmadis as a community could, of course, come to an understanding with the particular party to which they were to give their support through the Nazir Amur-i-Ama at Qadian. Thus Pir Akbar Ali and Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan, and later Chaudhri Asadulla Khan, were members of the Unionist Party and were elected as such.

1 Fazl-i-Husain was not unmindful of the likely dangers of the appointment of Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan and wrote to him: "It (agitation) is based on what you call the score of religious doctrine, but the moving spirit is that this unity of doctrine with other Ahmadis makes one partial to them and helps them against non-Ahmadi Muslims. They actually stated firstly that a number of such men were appointed in 1932, though temporarily. Secondly, that the position is abused by Ahmadi preacherm in doing propaganda amongst Muslims for converting Muslims to Ahmadi creed on account of this position; thirdly, that it gives a general prestige to a sect which one should try to suppress rather than encourage, i.e. for instance, your visit to Qadian in 1932. In fact, they have turned their attention to me saying that having been for a long time in office has made me irresponsible to Muslim opinion and that I have assumed dictatorial attitude. However, I believe decision (about your appointment) has been arrived at, but I am, by no means, sure that the opposition will die down on the announcement being made. It will revive a bit. I will see what can be done to counteract that revival. Later it will be for you to consider what steps are necessary to reassure the Muslims on the points mentioned above and on some others." (Letter dated September 24, 1934.)

2 The Weekly Mail, dated September 17, 1934.

3 The Weekly Mail, dated May 27, 1935.
The Ahrars, however, declared that they would oppose Fazl-i-Husain in every possible way in the forthcoming elections, and decided to co-operate with Mr. Jinnah’s Parliamentary Board provided the Ahmadis were excluded from the League. The Ahzar-League combination was likely to prove embarrassing to the Unionist Party and it was repeatedly suggested to Fazl-i-Husain that he should take a stand against the Ahmadis, and thereby avoid popular criticism and take the wind out of the sails of the Ahrar agitation against him. But Fazl-i-Husain refused to give up his principles for the sake of immediate political advantage, and taking a long term view of Muslim politics said: “If by partiality to Mirzais is meant that I give preference to a Mirzai over a non-Mirzai merely because he is a Mirzai, then this is not only incorrect but a gross misrepresentation. I, however, consider that to deprive any man of his rights or not to give him a chance to render some service which he is capable of discharging well merely because he is a Mirzai is to be unjust. I am strongly opposed to importing sectarian considerations to exclude any one from being considered for an appointment. This is fatal to the solidarity of Islam and is likely to have a very disruptive effect. It is a thing to be discouraged... If we start these controversies once more, we will lose all that we have gained in the political field.”1

It was generally given out by interested persons that Fazl-i-Husain did not give fair opportunities to urban Muslims, lest the more capable among them became his rivals in leadership,2 and, therefore, the only alternative for urban Muslims was to join rival organisations. They complained

1 Letter dated August 31, 1934, to Maulvi Mazhar-ud-Din.
2 In 1935, Dr. Iqbal, in his speech at the anniversary of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, said: “It is really unfortunate that this rural-urban question should have received the support of Sir Fazl-i-Husain who obtained power in the first instance, not as a rural leader but as a Muslim leader of the province, but unfortunately clung to his power by accentuating rural-urban differences. In this way, he secured as his colleagues some third-class men with no title to Government power and the prestige and authority which the possession of such offices as ministerships secure, but who on that very account, viz. their mediocrity, look up to him as a superman. Some of the authorities also encouraged this policy as in this way they were able to break the force of the Reforms of 1919. The result of these tendencies has been that so far as the Muslims are concerned, real leadership has stood at a distance while the thoroughly incompetent ‘political adventurer’ has come into the limelight.”
in the words of Malik Barkat Ali as follows: “You said that the province had lost a great deal in its self-respect and that the first question confronting any public man was how to restore to the province the self-respect it has lost. No bitter truth could be so beautifully and aptly expressed. May I venture to add that the guilt of this crime against the province rests on the shoulders of the Unionist Party that you left to take charge of the affairs of the province after you had gone to Delhi. They were the Party in power and the grave responsibility of playing with and bartering away the self-respect of the province, rests solely with them and them alone. You have chosen the same Party as your instrument. It may be that you can control the situation, but for how long? After you, who will carry out your work? Will it be the Noons and the Sikanders? It is a pain to us that some of these creatures of yours should actually be conspiring against you and plotting and and cajoling with Hindus to overthrow you. The Eastern Times announces that Sir Sikander has accepted your leadership. But the Tribune tells another tale. Who is this Sir Sikander? Mian Sahib, you should open your eyes and rally to yourself the talent of the province, those whom you cast out and who have been passing their time in the wilderness. It is only the talent of the province that can face an Imperialist Governor. You belonged to that circle of Talent. The province gained in self-respect while you were at the helm. But what of your successors, and yet you have been full of praises for their ‘magnificent work’? We expect of you to help Talent coming back into its own. These Sikanders and Noons must disappear, the sooner they are relegated to the back places they deserve, the better. The responsibility for this situation is yours. . . . The Sikanders and the Noons and the rural leaders—the favourites of the bureaucracy—can be washed away in no time; you are their prop and mainstay. This is the grievance of the Muslims against you. Are you aware of it? If not, I have taken the liberty of appraising you with it so that it may not be said that no friend opened his heart to you. You have not been fair to us. We have kept up our regard and
esteem for you, and have virtually retired from the field of public service. But what youthful heart is there which does not pine at the meagerness of the opportunity to serve and advance his province under the awful conditions that your leadership have brought about? Iqbal is finished; poor Shah Nawaz is past time; Shuja gone; the only ones that thrive are the Sikanders and the Firozes and Sir Shahab; who else can aspire at all under the conditions and under the terrible handicaps that exist today. Thanks to your Unionist Party and its cult, despite all creeds and programmes.”

The truth was that Fazl-i-Husain was anxious that every capable Muslim should have an opportunity to take his rightful place among the leaders of his community, and those who possessed merit, irrespective of whether they were urban or rural Muslims, had his full support. Thus Sir Abdul Qadir, a non-agriculturist and an urbanite, was elected President of the Council in 1924 with the support of Fazl-i-Husain, who also secured his appointment as an officiating minister in 1925 and as a Member of the Council of the Secretary of State in 1934. In the same way, he supported Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din for appointment as Assistant Legal Remembrancer in spite of the strong requests of his so-called 'rural friends,' who wanted one of their relations to be appointed, and later secured his nomination to the Joint Select Committee. If Khalifa Shuja-ud-Din did not achieve more it was on account of his own limitations. Dr. Muhamad Alam, Malik Barkat Ali and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan had their own shortcomings which stood in the way of their progress in the official and the political world.

The aim of Fazl-i-Husain was that there should be no one ruling class, but that leaders should arise from among the common people and not be confined to the aristocracy, the upper middle and the middle classes. The critics of Fazl-i-Husain, on the other hand, said that not only was his choice of men poor but he also ensured that no capable Muslim should be allowed to rise for fear that he may become a rival to him. Fazl-i-Husain argued that he chose

^2 Letter dated April 4, 1936.
the best, not from one but from every point of view, and if the persons he chose did not turn out to be front rank men, it was not his error of judgment but the fault lay in the material at his disposal. To this extent Fazl-i-Husain was right, because he had sufficient confidence in himself not to be afraid of rivals in the Punjab. There is, however, this to be admitted that in spite of the existence of the Unionist Party for over twelve years Fazl-i-Husain found the Party towards the end destitute of first rate Muslim leaders. This was due not to any lack of consistent efforts on the part of Fazl-i-Husain to train younger men, because he was constantly trying to do so, but to the fact that the existing franchise narrowed the scope of the legislature to the landed gentry, and the landlords proved themselves devoid of talent and capacity for leadership. The Unionist Party, before its reorganization in 1935, was not a mass organization of the small peasant proprietor (though it did a great deal for him)—who is the dominant feature of the economic life of the Punjab—it was a Party of the landed gentry, who sat in the legislature and who dominated the political life of the districts. They were all conservative, most of them educationally backward, and practically all of them without any political tradition or aptitude. The Unionist Party was not a party of the masses, though its ultimate appeal rested with them; there was no scope for leaders to rise from among the common people. Fazl-i-Husain was acutely conscious of this weakness and in 1936, while reorganizing the Party, took pains to make it a mass organization which would bring forth in time talent to the top. After Fazl-i-Husain’s death the Party did not develop as he had envisaged it, and its leadership continued to suffer from the same weakness which characterized its past.

As the criticism against Fazl-i-Husain largely arose on account of Dr. Iqbal the latter’s career deserves special mention, because in fact Fazl-i-Husain repeatedly tried to help him, but Dr. Iqbal failed to utilize the opportunities offered to him. In 1924 Fazl-i-Husain urged Sir Malcolm Hailey to raise Dr. Iqbal to the Bench, but while the case was under consideration Dr. Iqbal alienated the sympathies
of officials by unrestrained criticism of Government. In 1927 it was proposed to send a Muslim Deputation to England to place before the Secretary of State the Muslim demands for the forthcoming Reforms. Fazl-i-Husain asked Dr. Iqbal to lead the Deputation, and collected Rs. 3,000 for the purpose. This would have assured a first class political career for Dr. Iqbal, but he refused to go as it would have involved an expenditure of an extra few thousand rupees. Instead Chaudhri Zafrulla Khan agreed to go, and assured a bright future for himself. This did not deter Fazl-i-Husain from making further efforts to help Dr. Iqbal and he proposed that on the termination of the term of Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din as President of the Council, Dr. Iqbal should be elected President with the support of the Unionist Party. Dr. Iqbal, however, alienated the sympathies of the Party by criticising their policy and attacking them severely in the Press, with the result that the majority of the Unionists refused to accept him as a candidate and Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din was re-elected as President. In 1931, at the instance of Fazl-i-Husain, the Viceroy nominated Dr. Iqbal to the second Round Table Conference. While attending the Conference Dr. Iqbal quarrelled with Sir Akbar Hydari, a prominent member of the Muslim Delegation, and this stood in the way of his success as a member of the Delegation. On his return to India he severely criticised the work of the Muslim Delegation, a criticism greatly resented by the Secretary of State because it belittled the proceedings of the Conference. The following year Fazl-i-Husain urged that Dr. Iqbal be sent again to the Round Table Conference, or alternatively should serve on the Federal Structure Committee or be sent as a member of the Indian Delegation to the League of Nations. In view of the previous year's experience it was reluctantly agreed to send Dr. Iqbal to the Round Table Conference. While the Conference was in progress he resigned and returned to India, and denounced the British Government in the strongest possible terms in his address to the Muslim League at Allahabad. It was, therefore, not surprising that in spite of the repeated requests from Fazl-i-
i-Husain the Viceroy refused to appoint Dr. Iqbal as a member of the Public Services Commission. But nothing could deter Fazl-i-Husain from trying to help Dr. Iqbal again, and he recommended that he might be considered for appointment as Agent to South Africa.

Having failed to secure a Government appointment for Dr. Iqbal Fazl-i-Husain approached the Nizam of Hyderabad to help Dr. Iqbal. In reply Sir Akbar Hydari wrote: “In reply to a wire to Iqbal asking him to wire definite extent and form of help, he has replied: ‘Five months work press platform interviews party of five rough estimate sixty thousand.’ Do you think that I can ask my Committee and Government to shoulder such heavy expenditure?” Fazl-i-Husain thereupon while suggesting some modification as to the amount to be paid wrote: “I think any assistance given to Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal to take two or three good men with him and to give interviews and lectures, etc. will be most beneficial to the State as well as to Indian Muslims. I should like Hyderabad to accept the suggestion.” Dr. Iqbal, however, insisted on his expensive proposal and it failed. A similar effort was made three years later, when Fazl-i-Husain wrote to Mian Amir-ud-Din: “How is Iqbal? Sometime ago I heard he was not keeping well and that he was in some financial difficulties. I shall be glad if you will let me know very confidentially the exact position. I have been a great admirer of his since college days. I once more like to make an effort to help him if I knew exactly how he stood at present in the matter of health and finances and the real practice, if any, he has at present.”

Mian Amir-ud-Din replied that Dr. Iqbal had ceased to practise in 1931. His health was poor and so were his finances and he was rapidly losing his voice. He suggested that if a series of lectures could be arranged at Hyderabad and a substantial fee fixed, it would help him considerably. Fazl-i-Husain prepared a scheme for the delivery of six

1 Diary—November 25, 1931.
2 Letter dated June 25, 1931.
3 Letter dated July 2, 1931, to Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah.
4 Letter dated May 2, 1934.
5 Letter dated June 23, 1934.
lectures on 'Modern Islamic Thought' for a sum of Rs. 10,000 but the Nizam's Government refused to agree to the terms proposed by Dr. Iqbal and negotiations failed again. The truth of the matter was that Dr. Iqbal was not a politician; he was a political philosopher. He was an idealist, and could not understand that politics was a game of compromise. He failed to get office or to become a leader because he was more of a poet and a thinker than a man of affairs.