

The emergence of Lucknow as a major political centre 1899 to
the early 1920s

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The second half of the nineteenth century saw a steady decline in the political fortunes of Lucknow. The annexation of Awadh in 1856 ended its position as the seat of India's most powerful native rule. The Mutiny uprising of 1857 and its aftermath saw the brutal imposition of British power and British preferences on the face and folkways of the city. The amalgamation of the old lands of Avadh with the North-West Provinces in 1877 saw further subordination as the office of Chief Commissioner for Avadh was merged with that of Lieutenant-governor based in Allahabad to which city also moved the province's High Court and administration. For the remainder of the century the citizens of Lucknow lived in fear that their one remaining special symbol of authority, the Judicial Commissioner's Court, would in the name of cost-cutting and commonsense also be removed to Allahabad. In consequence their city, which had by far the largest population in the combined provinces, and arguably the most glorious history, would be reduced to no better than a divisional capital, a Bareilly or a Meerut.

By the early 1920s the political fortunes of Lucknow had been transformed. It was acknowledged, even by the citizens of Allahabad, as the effective capital of the UP; here was the usual residence of the Governor, here was the purpose-built chamber of the Legislative Council. It formed the headquarters of the most important political organisation in India after the Congress, the All-India Muslim League. Its leading family of Sunni ulama, that of

Farangi Mahall, was the driving force behind the early stages of Khilafat movement, the most important mass political movement which India had experienced since the Mutiny uprising. As in the first two decades of the twentieth century the focus of all-India politics moved from the seaboard to the Indo-gangetic heartland, Lucknow emerged, for a moment at least, as the political centre of upper India.

The reasons for this transformation lie in part in the history and position of Lucknow, in part in British policy and the vision of one British officer, and in part in the emergence of organised Muslim politics alongside those of the Congress, led first by Muslims of western education and then by the ulama.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Lucknow, despite its demotion by the British, still retained much potential as a city of major political significance. It remained the centre of remarkable landed power and wealth. It was, too, the focus of a large concentration of Muslim service families, whose distinction could be traced back through several centuries and whose members had often spread over much of India. The former capital of the Kings of Avadh was still a great centre of Muslim high culture. Muslims from all over the subcontinent, and beyond, looked to its Sunni and Shia scholars for guidance; they also followed the lead of its citizens in art and fashion – in music, dance, poetry and other courtly attainments. At the same time the city was to be linked more and more closely to India's modern systems of communication.

That Lucknow was a great centre of landed power resulted directly from British policy.

During the Mutiny uprising the British had noted the power of the taluqdars, landholders who usually ruled great dependencies wielding social, revenue, judicial and military powers. In consequence they made these 'barons' the basis of their settlement of the region. They were given rights of ownership and revenue collection. Many were given minor jurisdiction in criminal, civil and revenue matters. Their strength as landlords was sustained by the introduction of primogeniture, which protected them against the divisive effects of the Hindu and Muslim laws of inheritance, and by the Oudh Encumbered Estates Act, which helped to preserve them from the results of their own extravagance. Their strength as a group was sustained by their organisation, the British Indian Association, and by their shared enjoyment of the culture of Lucknow, where many had been to school at the Colvin Taluqdars College, where many had apartments in the old Qaisarbagh palace, and where they met in the Qaisarbagh Baradari.

In 1900 the taluqdars numbered well over 250, controlled two-thirds of the territory of Avadh and realised one-sixth of the total revenues of the UP.(1) Some were relatively poor but others were of enormous wealth: Balrampur controlled 1153 villages, Ajodhia 635, Kapurthala 544, Nanpara 439, Mahmudabad 362, Partabgarh 301. All of these had shares in many other villages, and there were in addition twelve talqudars who controlled estates of over 100 villages. Throughout the last forty years of the nineteenth century, British policy was bound up with taluqdari interests. It was known as 'Oudh Policy'. W.C. Bennett was the author of the canonical exposition in the 1877 Gazetteer. Harcourt Butler was its valiant champion from the 1890s onwards. The wealth of the taluqdars made them key allies in any attempt to raise money, whether for some political purpose or for the further development of Lucknow. Their political importance meant that government trod carefully

where their interests were concerned; taluqdari objections were the reason why the Judicial Commissioner's Court was never moved from Lucknow to Allahabad and the ultimate rationalisation of the provincial system of justice was not achieved. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to suggest that taluqdari concerns and 'Oudh policy' kept alive Lucknow's chances of becoming provincial capital in the grim days when the fates seemed to favour Allahabad.(2)

Lucknow was also the centre of a remarkable concentration of Muslim zamindari and service families. Some lived in the city itself like the Qidvai families of Gadia and Bara Gaon, the family of Chaudhuri Khaliq uz Zaman and that of Farangi Mahall. Others dwelt in the qasbas and towns which encircled the city, some of which dated back to the early years of the Muslim presence in the region. The names of these settlements, many of which had become part of the names of their most distinguished sons,(3) are redolent of Muslim achievement in the arts, learning and public affairs. Among them were Amethi, Kakori, and Nagram in Lucknow district, Dewa, Daryabad, Kursi, Rudauli and Satrikh in Bara Banki district, Sandila, Bilgram and Gopa Mau in Hardoi district, Mohan, Muradabad and Safipur in Unao district, and Dalmau and Jais in Rae Bareli district. The old Muslim families of these towns had often produced men of distinction under the Mughals, the Nawabs of Avadh and the British. Typical of such families were the Sayyids of Bilgram, whose most notable representative in our period was Imad ul Mulk Sayyid Husayn Bilgrami, scholar, leading Hyderabad civil servant, part-formulator of the 1906 Muslim address to the Viceroy, and member of the Secretary of State's Council from 1907. No less typical were the Sayyids of Mohan, whose most prominent representative in our period was Hasrat Mohani, poet, journalist and radical politician. More often than not these families had come to spread

throughout India in search of work. Such was the case for the Chaudhuri and Maulvi branches of the Sayyids of Gopa Mau; such too was the case of the Abbasis and Alvis of Kakori. Indeed, of Kakori Sleeman wrote in 1849 that it had 'more educated men, filling high and lucrative offices in our civil establishments, than any other town in India except Calcutta'.(4) Most remarkable of families were the Qidvais, Bara Banki district's most prominent clan, landowners as well as professional men, they counted three leading taluqdars amongst their number: Tassaduq Rasul Khan of Jahangirabad, Naushad Ali Khan of Mailaraiganj and Shaykh Shahid Husayn of Gadia, as well as a host of others who were to be prominent in public life, for instance, Mushir Husayn and Rafi Ahmad Qidvai.(5) Here was a remarkable stock of Muslim talents. The city was their natural meeting place, as was demonstrated when political life began to develop.

Muslims, not just from Avadh but from all over India, looked to Lucknow for leadership in Islamic scholarship. 'As regards learning,' declared Abd ul Halim Sharar in his nostalgic reminiscence of the city and its culture in Dil Gudaz 'Lucknow was the Baghdad and Cordova of India and the Nishapur and Bokhara of the East.'(6) Under the Nawabs of Avadh it had become the centre of Ithna Ashari Shia scholarship. Paramount among the Shia learned men had been Sayyid Dildar Ali Ghufrani Maab (1753– 1820), his family and pupils.

Ithna Ashari Shias from throughout India took their lead from the Shia mujtahids of Lucknow.(7) From the time of Aurangzeb Lucknow had also held the leading position in Sunni scholarship. The Farangi Mahall family of learned and holy men, who lived in the Chowk had devised and developed the Dars-e Nizami curriculum which drew together the remarkable achievements in logic and philosophy of seventeenth- and early-eighteenth Avadhi scholars. This curriculum had come to be used in madrasas all over India. Many

traditionally-educated Muslims would have studied the books and commentaries of the Farangi Mahallis and some would have travelled to Lucknow to sit at their feet; many ulama, too, would have noted the names of Farangi Mahallis in their ijazas, or licences to teach a particular book. For, as the great eighteenth-century scholar, Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami, noted, most of the chains of learning in India stretched back to Mulla Qutb ud Din Siharvi, the founder of the Farangi Mahall family.(8) By the late-nineteenth century, however, many felt that Farangi Mahall, although its ulama commanded enormous respect, had failed satisfactorily to meet the challenges of modernisation under British rule. They founded the Nadwat ul Ulama in which the learned were to take the lead in coordinating the education of Muslims and their representation to government. In 1898 the organisation had founded a school in Lucknow. This became the prime focus of its efforts, which culminated in attempts at educational rather than political leadership.(9) No other town or city was as well-placed as Lucknow to give a religious lead over a broad front to the Muslims of India.

As the host but fifty years before of a rich court and a ruling dynasty which had been generous patrons of the arts, Lucknow remained in Indian eyes the capital of Hindustani high culture whether it was in music, dance, food or fashion. Moreover, after the terrible suppression of the Mutiny uprising in Delhi had dispersed the imperial city's cultivated world, Lucknow also became undisputed mistress of Urdu poetry – the main platform on which the leading exponents of the day, a Nasikh, an Atish or a Mir Anis displayed their talents.(10) Of course, to a visitor from vibrantly commercial Bombay or up-to-date Calcutta, as Sayyid Nabiullah admitted in his welcoming address to the All-India Muslim League sessions of 1916, the Lucknow world, in which poets might sing of gul and bulbul

and their patrons might conceive of life as primarily an opportunity for sensual connoisseurship, offered 'a rich and dainty feast' for their 'sense of the archaic'.(11) Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to imagine that its citizens ignored the modern. Indeed, the 'modern' had been harnessed to project their culture to a wider world. For much of the late-nineteenth century, for instance, Lucknow was the UP's leading producer of Urdu newspapers, the most important of which were Newal Kishore's Oudh Akbar and Sajjad Husain's much-loved satirical journal, Oudh Punch. By the early-twentieth century these had been joined by two important English language newspapers, the Advocate and the Indian Daily Telegraph. Lucknow had also become, thanks largely to the energy and initiative of Newal Kishore, by far the most important centre of book publishing in northern India. Sharar credited Kishore with reviving eastern Islamic literature:

Lucknow benefited in that it was able to meet all the literary demands of Central Asia, including those of Kashgar, Bukhara, Afghanistan and Persia. Consequently the Newal Kishore Press is the key to the literary trade. Without using it no one can enter the world of learning.(12)

Evidently, there were many aspects of Lucknow's history, culture and recent development which gave it the basis for being a city of more than merely Avadhi significance. To these should be added first-class communications. The city had excellent connections with its immediate hinterland; the British continued the road-building activities of the Nawabs and metalled highways radiated from it in every direction. Lucknow had, moreover, what the 1904 Gazetteer describes as 'a very perfect railway system which affords easy communication with every part of India'.(13) It should be noted, however, that the perfection had only recently been achieved when in October 1893 a direct railway link was opened with Calcutta and Lucknow became much more accessible from the

political heart of India.

Crucial to the emergence of Lucknow as the main political centre in the UP was the outcome of the struggle with Allahabad to be the capital city. That the battle had been won de facto in Lucknow's favour by 1921 was in large part due to Harcourt Butler, one of the most successful civil servants of his day. Indeed, he was regarded highly enough to be considered, along with Austen Chamberlain, Winston Churchill and Lord Reading as the Viceroy to succeed Chelmsford. Butler was infatuated with Lucknow. Listen to part of his valedictory speech to the municipal board and his autobiographical comment:

"To me Lucknow has been an inspiration of youth, a support in late years, the abiding city beautiful, my Indian home." It was thirty-one years since I first saw the Residency and heard the frogs croaking in the Gumti; since I first gazed from the iron bridge on that wonderful eastern Oxford view of domes and minarets and cupolas, standing out against the golden glory of the setting sun. All that was best in me, and perhaps something more, I gave to Lucknow.(14)

In paying tribute to Butler on his death in 1938 Sir Sita Ram, former president of the provincial legislative council, echoed the theme: 'Lucknow was "His favourite Queen" and he could do anything to please his Queen and to give her good gifts....'(15)

A personal preference for the city apart, Butler's concern to defend and promote the interests of Lucknow was the necessary concomitant of his identification with Oudh policy. Indeed, the second of his two pamphlets on the subject, Oudh Policy: The Policy of Sympathy, culminated with a peroration on Lucknow as the very focus of what he was

trying to achieve in encouraging harmony between ruler and ruled.(16) More generally the defence of taluqdari interests required that the landholders should have their own court of justice using Urdu in Lucknow rather than to be absorbed into the workings of the High Court using English in Allahabad. The most effective use of this talqudari 'aristocracy' as allies in the governance of the UP required that the political centre should be in Lucknow where their conservative weight would be most acutely felt. Throughout the late-nineteenth century it was the UP government's policy to complete the transfer of government from Lucknow to Allahabad by shifting the Judicial Commissioner's court. The matter was several times brought to a head by revelations of inefficiencies in the Avadh court. It was raised in 1884, 1892 and 1896 but each time either the Secretary of State or the Government of India vetoed change.(17) Sir Antony Macdonnell, lieutenant-governor 1895-1901, remained dedicated to the policy and told his Viceroy so in no uncertain terms.(18) Butler, working by informal means, as he so often did, actively opposed his boss. Through Curzon's private secretary, Walter Lawrence, he succeeded, or so he claimed, in insinuating many of his Oudh policy ideas into the Viceroy's speech to the Lucknow Durbar of December 1899.(19)

A few year's later Butler went onto the attack. He was determined to have the capital of the UP transferred to Lucknow. Allahabad with its Bengalis, Maharashtrians and close associations with Indian nationalism was too dangerous a location for the official political centre of the province.(20) In February 1905 he announced his plans and his methods to his brother-in-law:

Public opinion in Agra is already working up to demand Lucknow as a capital ... He that believeth shall not make haste. I shall not cease to work for it - it is the one object I shall work for till I go. But many converging courses have to be set in motion. Fortunately most of the work has to be done on lines that fall in my department

and I can work without disclosing my ulterior objective, until the time is propitious to strike.(21)

Butler had, in fact, already begun to work his object by raising the suggestion that the High Court should be moved from Allahabad to Lucknow. For two years he worked assiduously for the idea until in the summer of 1906 his Lieutenant-governor, LaTouche (1901-07), doubtless concerned at the way in which opposition to the idea from Allahabad might encourage the growth of political extremism in the province, told him to stop.(22)

By this time, however, Butler had other irons in the fire. He had breathed fresh life into the scheme to establish a Medical College whose siting at Lucknow he saw as an important step on the city's road to becoming capital.(23) Moreover, in 1906 he had become District Commissioner for Lucknow which enabled him, in harness with Ganga Prasad Varma the editor of the Advocate and a most active city father, to launch a great campaign for the development and beautification of the city 'long thought out'.(24) He created gardens, restored monuments, improved roads, installed street-lighting. When the new Lieutenant-governor, Hewett (1907-12) showed his enthusiasm for improving the area around Government House, he was delighted: 'it will all be for the glory of Lucknow. The better Govt House is made the longer L.Gs will stay there.'(25) Certainly, when more than a decade later the citizens of Allahabad petitioned the Viceroy over the provincial government's failure to site the new Council chamber in Allahabad, they pointed to the unfair advantages gained by Lucknow as a result of the large sums from the provincial revenues spent on its beautification.(26)

In effect Butler's second term of duty in Lucknow as Lieutenant-governor and Governor from 1918 to 1922 decided the issue. Soon after his return, he ordered comprehensive plans to be drawn up for the development of the city over the next fifty

years, he reassured the taluqdars that the Judicial Commissioner's Court would not be moved to Allahabad, and he announced to the municipal board that he was determined Lucknow should have its own teaching university. By the time he left, the Lucknow Improvement Trust had been established, a fine new building for the Judicial Commissioner's Court (now the Avadh Chief Court) was under construction and he had driven the legislation establishing the university of Lucknow through both the Senate of Allahabad university and the UP Legislative Council. Moreover, ₹250,000 had been raised for the last project in large part from the taluqdars, Sir Edwin Lutyens had designed the building, and the foundation stone had been laid. Thus Butler continued his earlier policies of building up Lucknow's claims to be the premier city of the province.(27)

The devolution of power in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, much of which he disapproved, gave Butler the chance to play a decisive card in bringing the capital to Lucknow. The larger and much more active Legislative Council would need a new chamber; Butler determined that this should be in Lucknow. Admittedly, in the decade before Butler returned to the UP the Council had met fifty-eight days in Lucknow as opposed to just eighteen in Allahabad. The greater activity of the new Council, however, would have a decisive impact on the positioning of the whole central machinery of government. By dint of determination and bare-faced cheek Butler got his Council chamber built in Lucknow, seeing off in the process both the protests of Allahabad and the doubts of the Government of India. Continuing to dissemble regarding his real aim, as he had told his brother-in-law in 1905 he would, he replied to petitioners from Allahabad 'that there is not and has not been question of transferring the capital'.(28) The Government of India was given precisely the same message. Nevertheless, that this had remained his purpose he confirmed in his

autobiography. At the time he was overjoyed: 'I have exalted Lucknow and depressed Allahabad', he told his mother, 'that will never be forgotten.'(29)

Crucial to the rise of Lucknow as a major political centre was the emergence of Muslim political activism. Up to the turn of the century north Indian Muslims followed the policies laid down by Sayyid Ahmad Khan: they were to steer clear of nationalist politics, to concentrate on educational development and to place their trust in the colonial government. From 1900 UP Muslims found it increasingly hard to believe that such policies could adequately protect their interests. They began to protest in public more frequently and more loudly. They began to organise politically to press forward their cause. Such developments drew increasingly on the large concentration of Muslim talent and wealth that lay in and around Lucknow. By doing so they brought the city to the centre of all-India politics.

Arguably the beginning of Lucknow's emergence as an all-India centre can be dated to the annual sessions of the Congress which were held there from the first time in 1899. It was a meeting notable only for its academic presidential address from Romesh Chandra Dutt and the decision to define the organisation's primary objective as 'to promote by constitutional means the interests and the well-being of the people of the Indian Empire'. Moderate though this might seem to be, Muslims found the presence of the Congress in the city extremely provocative. They were furious that the government had allowed it to be there at all,(30) and took the fact of its presence as an indication that they must mobilise:

the conviction was being forced upon them [they protested to government] that the activity of the Congress agitators cannot be adequately counteracted by following the lines of least resistance and that it is their duty as loyal citizens no longer to sit with folded hands, while agitators gain influence over the unthinking masses by monopolising Government appointments, and by getting themselves elected to Municipal Boards, the Legislative Councils and other public bodies.(31)

Muslims responded thus because they had come to feel that under the rule of Sir Antony Macdonnell, and they were right, the aim was to shift the whole basis of government support in the UP more towards the Hindus.(32) The Muslim service classes had had plenty of evidence of the shift of emphasis; Persian had been removed from the curriculum of Allahabad university; a list of candidates for tahsildar and deputy collectorships had been rejected because it had too many Muslims; government had investigated why there were more Muslims than Hindus in the Police; orders had been issued that no more than three Muslims should be appointed for every five Hindus in all branches of the administration. When, on 18 April 1900, their protest to government of the previous year was followed by the Nagri resolution, which required all government documents to be in Nagri as well as the Persian script, Muslims realised that they must become politically active.(33) As they sought to find the best response to government, Lucknow swiftly emerged as the natural political centre; the process was helped, moreover, by government bullying of Aligarh leaders to keep them quiet. It was in Lucknow at a conference of August 1900 that a whole series of protests throughout northern India came to a head. It was here in October 1901 that Viqar ul Mulk called the first informal meeting to discuss political organisation in the house of the barrister, Hamid Ali Khan. It was here that Viqar ul Mulk's initiative reached its conclusion when delegates came on 22 October 1902 from Bihar and the Punjab as well

as the UP to form a Central Muhammadan Political Association. The Association was still-born; a more emollient Lieutenant-governor seemed to make it less necessary. But the central role of Lucknow had been demonstrated.(34)

The centrality of Lucknow was revealed again during the next phase of political activism from 1906 to 1909. Here, as the Morley-Minto council reforms were formulated, Muslims pressured government for separate electorates and special privileges in the light of their political importance. It was to the Qaisarbagh Baradari that delegates came from all over India on 15 and 16 September 1906 to draw up the Muslim Memorial to the Viceroy in which they set out their claims, the drafting being done, as Harcourt Butler's papers reveal, by Imad ul Mulk Sayyid Husayn, whose family came from the local town of Bilgram.(35)

Admittedly, Lucknow seemed to lose its central role when Nawwab Salimullah, furious at the way in which Bengali issues had been ignored in the memorial, led the move to establish the All-India Muslim League from Dacca. Moreover, even though a significant group of Lucknavis(36) travelled to East Bengal for the founding of the League, effective control of this Muslim political organisation was first won by the Aligarh interest, Muhsin ul Mulk and Viqar ul Mulk sharing the secretaryship. It was a control, furthermore, which was reinforced in the Aligarh session of the League in March 1908. But Lucknow came back into the picture when pressure was needed to achieve the objects of the memorial. Protest generated in Lucknow and its surrounding districts played a large part in April and May 1909, and again in July, in forcing the League leadership, most notably Ali Imam, not to compromise with the Government of India and its demand for exclusive separate electors and numbers of seats on legislative councils in excess of their numerical strength.(37)

The key development in the emergence of Lucknow was the shift to it of the headquarters of the League. The drive behind this shift came from the Lieutenant-governor, Hewett. As patron of MAO College he had been humiliated when asked to intervene in one of the interminable squabbles between the European staff and the Aligarh trustees. From that moment he determined to have the League offices moved and achieved his object through the influence of the Aga Khan at the Delhi sessions of the organisation in 1910. Hewett's aim had been to move the League away from what he considered a centre of Muslim protest. Ironically, by being moved to Lucknow it became linked to a veritable hotbed of Muslim political activism.

This outcome was not apparent in the spring of 1910 when, under secretary Aziz Mirza, the League offices opened in a bungalow on the Lal Bagh Road. But it quickly became apparent when, after Mirza's death, Sayyid Wazir Hasan became secretary in February 1912. Wazir Hasan, aged thirty-eight at the time, was a formidable organiser and one of the most gifted lawyers of his generation; he ended his career as Chief Justice of the High Court. He was a central figure in what came to be known as the 'Young Party', a loose grouping of lawyers, journalists and political aspirants from largely petty zamindari backgrounds who differentiated themselves from the 'Old Party' an equally loose grouping of large landholders and successful men whose interests were often tied to government.(38) Nearly half of of the 'Young Party' lived or worked in Lucknow(39) and for some at least the Raja of Mahmudabad was an important patron.(40) They were part of a world in which Muslims were often confident and successful; politics were less anti-Hindu than those of Muslims elsewhere in the province, for instance, Allahabad. Wazir Hasan was to lead this group in moulding League policy in their image; such was his dominance that the organisation came

to be nick-named the 'Waziri League'.(41) He and his followers made possible the Congress-League pact of 1916 and the appearance of Lucknow at the forefront of national politics.

The context in which Wazir Hasan launched his campaign was propitious for a man seeking to transform League policy. The period 1911-16 was one in which Muslims received a series of severe blows: the repartition of Bengal in 1911, the rejection of their Muslim University scheme in 1912 and the Cawnpore mosque affair in 1913 all betokened a loss of sympathy from government in India; Britain's failure to support the Ottomans against Italian aggression in Tripoli in 1911, her support for those Balkan states which invaded the Ottoman heartland in 1912 and her involvement in war against the Ottoman empire in 1914 all betokened a loss of sympathy for Muslims in the world at large. Viqar ul Muluk's response to the repartition of Bengal voiced the thoughts of many through these years:

It is now manifest like the midday sun that after seeing what has happened lately, it is futile to ask the Muslims to place their reliance on Government. The days for such reliances are over. What we should rely on, after the Grace of God, is the strength of our right arm'(42)

Wazir Hasan set out to make use of this feeling and to build up a 'strong right arm'. When the outbreak of World War One put constitutional reform on the agenda once more, he had a clear use for this 'strong right arm'.

The first step for Wazir Hasan and his Lucknow followers was to take effective control of the League. Their opportunity came when the Calcutta session, which met in the aftermath of the repartition of Bengal, instructed Hasan to re-examine the League's constitution. He produced a draft constitution, apparently after consultation with branch Muslim Leagues, which by reducing the annual subscription to Rs.6, by lowering the

educational qualification for membership to 'literate', and by increasing the size of the Council to 300, would enable the consolidation of 'Young Party' control over the organisation. The draft constitution also gave the League the aim of working with other groups for 'a system of self-government suitable to India'; thus it was to be stamped with the political objective of the 'Young Party'. This new constitution was to be approved at the Lucknow session of the League in December 1912. Discovering what was afoot, Ameer Ali, President-elect of the session, and the Aga Khan, President of the League, had the meeting postponed. Wazir Hasan fought back by getting the League's Council to approve the new constitution in December 1912 and having it ratified in a full session of the organisation at Lucknow in March 1913. Hasan had brought the 'Young Party' to power. That he had done so was demonstrated through 1913 and 1914 as the 'Old Party' set out both to form an alternative political organisation and to discredit the young leaders of the League. Wazir Hasan, wrote one critic, is the source of all evils and the man 'on whom is also primarily fixed the responsibility of formulating an ideal, which from the very nature of its being, is not only impossible of attainment but positively dangerous and ruinous to the cause of Islam.'(43)

Having seized control of the League and brought its aims into line with those of the Congress, Wazir Hasan's next move was to bring about joint political action. He worked at the local level with the Congress which was itself resolved to see rapprochement with the League wherever possible. He was quick, moreover, to see the opportunity provided by the World War; from February 1915 he set about preparing a scheme of political demands for the League to adopt. For these to succeed, as had become clear from the rejection of the Government of India's proposal for an Executive Council for the UP by the House of Lords

in March 1915, it was crucial that League and Congress were seen to be working together. To this end Wazir Hasan strove throughout 1915, in the face of bitter 'Old Party' opposition, by fighting for the League session to be held in Bombay alongside that of the Congress. The Bombay League session resolved to frame a reform scheme and to confer with other organisations where necessary; the new political order was symbolised by the election of the Raja of Mahmudabad as president in place of the Aga Khan. All this had been arranged by the 'Lucknow gang', the Lieutenant-governor of the UP told the viceroy, 'the small clique, which Wazir Hassan [sic] organises and Mahmudabad feeds....'(44)

Throughout 1916 Wazir Hasan steered his political strategy towards its climax. His 'gang' played a major role in the Reception Committee for the Congress which was to meet at Lucknow. He drafted the League's reforms scheme which was similar in all respects to that of the Congress except for the introduction of separate representation. His 'gang' dominated the League Council meeting at Mahmudabad House on 21 May which allowed his draft to go forward. They dominated the Council meeting of 12 October which decided that the League should meet at Lucknow alongside the Congress. They played a key part in creating the circumstances in which League and Congress could agree upon a joint scheme of council reforms at Lucknow and Mrs. Besant, Bhupendranath Basu, Tilak and Jinnah could broker the final details of the compromise over separate representation for Muslims in the reforms which was to seal the 'Lucknow Pact'.(45)

It is still possible from some of the descriptions which remain to sense the flavour of this great Lucknow political occasion. Enthusiasts cut the tyres of Tilak's car on his arrival so that he could be drawn into the city in an open carriage. On coming to the Congress pandal he was borne on the shoulders of the delegates from the floor to the platform.(46)

Swami Shraddhanand, who was also on the platform, speaks of the nature of the Muslim presence at the Congress session and how it was received:

The majority of Moslem delegates had donned gold, silver and silk embroidered chogas ... Of some 433 Moslem delegates only some thirty had come from outside, the rest belonging to Lucknow City. And of these the majority were admitted free to delegate seats, board and lodging... A show was being made of the Moslem delegates. Moslem delegate gets up to second a resolution in Urdu, He begins: Hozarat, I am a Mahomedan delegate. Some Hindu delegate gets up and calls for three cheers for Mahomedan delegates and the response is so enthusiastic as to be beyond description.
(47)

By comparison, as a government reporter noted, the League meeting was 'attended by comparatively small numbers and ... the delegates were carefully selected'.(48) There were few from the Punjab, Bombay, Madras and Bengal; 'Old Party' men from the UP were not present. Lieutenant-governor Meston, who visited the League meeting when 'the Home Rule Resolution was in full blast', told the Viceroy that 'there were many empty benches. Very few of the audience were men of over 40, and I could see nobody of any position except the handful on the platform.'(49) These descriptions underline the extent to which the Congress-League rapprochement and the Lucknow Pact were the creation of Wazir Hasan and his small group of followers.

From the point of view of Lucknow the achievement was remarkable. The name of the city had been given to one of the great icons of Indian nationalism. It had hosted what were arguably the most important sessions of the Congress since its foundation, in which not only had Hindus and Muslims come together in the cause of political progress but also the 'extremist' and 'moderate' wings of the organisation, that had been estranged since 1907, had come to be reconciled. Present at the occasion, moreover, were many of the

great figures of the nationalist era of Indian politics: Tilak, Khaparde, Rash Behari Ghosh, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi, Surendranath Banerjea, Mrs. Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Jinnah, Mahmudabad, Mazhar ul Haq, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari. December 1916 in Lucknow was the moment when the focus of Indian politics began to swing decisively away from the maritime provinces towards the Hindustani heartland.

After the Lucknow Pact the political initiative moved away from Wazir Hasan. His main aim was to ensure that political reforms were carried out. The 'Young Party' turned on him. He was attacked for his refusal to campaign for the release of the Ali Brothers, for his support for the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, for his lack of interest in the fate of Turkey, and for his dictatorial style. At the Delhi session of the Muslim League in December 1918 he and his patron, the Raja of Mahmudabad, found themselves under such bitter attack that they had no course but to resign. The political initiative, however, did not move away from Lucknow. The fate of the Turkish Khilafat now became the great cause of Indian politics. Maulana Abd ul Bari and the Farangi Mahall family came to have something of the leading role in shaping the development of events that Wazir Hasan had done. Lucknow remained a major political centre. It was just that India's great political leaders, when they came to the city, were as likely to visit the Farangi Mahall tucked away in Pacha Wali Gali off the Chowk as they were to visit Mahmudabad House in the Qaisarbagh.

As Wazir Hasan and Mahmudabad left the forefront of Muslim politics at the Delhi session, the ulama arrived. For the first time the ulama were on the platform; Abd ul Bari

was at their head. The maulana was a man of immense potential influence. Not only did he have the connections of his family all over India and their reputation built up since the early-eighteenth century, he was also the spiritual guide of major political figures, among them Muhammad and Shaukat Ali, Hasrat Mohani and Mushir Husayn Qidvai. Indeed, such was his influence that in 1921 he was considered, along with Abul Kalam Azad, for the position of Shaikh ul Islam for the subcontinent. He and his family had a notable record in fighting for pan-Islamic causes. His grandfather had toured India in 1878 to raise funds for the defence of the Ottoman empire. He, himself, founded the Anjuman-e Khuddam-e Kaaba in 1913 for the protection of the Holy Places. As World War One developed he became more and more anxious about the fate of the Ottoman empire and the Khilafat.(50)

Throughout 1919 Abd ul Bari was concerned to provoke India into action over the Khilafat. Early in the year he issued a fatwa enjoining jihad if there was any danger of infidels controlling the Khalifa or the Holy Places, tried to drum up support in the UP countryside and set up a newspaper to focus on pan-Islamic issues, Akhuwat. In March Gandhi came to stay in Farangi Mahall and Abd ul Bari set out on a campaign to win him for the Khilafat cause. This had succeeded by the autumn; 'I have made Mahatma Gandhi to follow us in the Khilafat question', he boasted later.(51) In April 1919 the maulana was fizzing with ideas: a delegation to other Muslim countries, a deputation to the Viceroy, an All-India Muslim conference. The last-mentioned was realised. It was held under the auspices of the All-India Muslim League in the grounds of Lucknow's Rifah-i Am club in September. Over 300 Muslims came from outside the city; the atmosphere was highly emotional. The most important resolution of the occasion, and one in which the Farangi Mahallis were involved, aimed to establish an All-India Central Khilafat Committee in

Bombay with branches throughout India. The Farangi Mahallis, with the help of Chaudhuri Khaliq uz Zaman, drew up the Committee's constitution. Lucknow had seized the initiative once again.(52)

In 1920 Abd ul Bari was at the heart of the process which drew the Khilafat movement to adopt a policy of non-co-operation and then to capture the Congress. As matters unfolded he was helped most notably by Shaukat Ali, who had just been released from internment and to whom, along with Shaukat's brother Muhummad, he had given the title of maulana. He was also helped by better organised and better mobilised ulama; in December 1919 he had taken the initiative in founding the Jamiyat ul-Ulama-e Hind. Abd ul Bari's first problem was to persuade the Central Khilafat Committee, which was dominated by Bombay merchants who paid for its activities and were unwilling to risk the wrath of government, to adopt non-co-operation. The first half of the year saw him in frenetic activity to this end: touring Sind twice, playing a leading role in Khilafat conferences at Bombay Calcutta, Meerut and Madras, putting pressure on the president of the Central Khilafat Committee, M.M. Chotani, who was his disciple, using all his influence to ensure that the right people attended the Allahabad meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee in June which voted on non-co-operation, and then using all his weight in the meeting, along with Shaukat Ali, to ensure that the resolution on non-co-operation was not watered down. Subsequently he used his influence to help to ensure that Muslims attended the Special Congress at Calcutta in September which voted to support Gandhi's non-co-operation resolution.(53) Abd ul Bari's influence in 1919 and 1920 has come to be forgotten; the lives of the ulama have not been the favourite topics of the modern historical establishment. In 1929, however, his biographer asserted that the great quantity

of Abd ul Bari's correspondence from this period had to be studied to understand his significance. Consultation of these papers proves him right.(54)

After September 1920 Abd ul Bari's political fortunes declined. His own influence was partially eclipsed by the rising star of Maulana Azad; that of Farangi Mahall by the entry of Deoband into the Khilafat movement. In 1921 and 1922 Abd ul Bari and his followers drew apart from the political aims of the Khilafat protest because they did not see why they should not have recourse to violence. In 1922 and 1923 they drew further apart as Hindu-Muslim communalism replaced cooperation.(55) No new political or religious figure came forward to keep Lucknow right at the leading edge of Indian politics. The city returned to being one of several major centres of political activity.

Thus the political fortunes of Lucknow were re-established. Many of her distinctive attributes had played their part in bringing about the change: the wealth of the taluqdars, the beauty of the city, the concentration of Muslim talent, the longstanding leadership in Islamic learning, the 'very perfect railway system'. Now she was set on the road to becoming the capital of the UP and ruling an extent of territory that she had not ruled since the days of Asaf ud Daulah. Moreover, her Muslim citizens had served notice of their ability to make a political contribution of all-India significance. For a moment between 1916 and 1920 Lucknow had been the capital of India's political movement against colonialism. Many felt, according to Harcourt Butler, that she deserved to be the capital of India in every respect.(56)

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Naushad Ali Khan, Sayyid Karamat Husayn, Sayyid Nabiullah, Sayyid Zahur Ahmad,
Ghulam us

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37. Robinson, Separatism, pp. 175–94. {plus details re.
Lucknow and protests?}

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Ali, Vilayat Ali, Sakhawat Ali Alvi, Zafar ul–Mulk Alvi,
Abd ul Aziz Ansari, Dr. M.N. Ansari, Mirza Samiullah Beg,
Ghulam us Saqlain, Dr. Nazir ud Din Hasan, Sayyid Shabbir
Hasan, Sayyid Wazir Hasan, Sayyid Mir Jan, Chaudhuri

Khaliq uz Zaman, Shaykh Yusuf Husayn Khan, Rafi Ahmad Qidvai, Mushir

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