

**The Meaning of Muslim Identity in Princely Hyderabad: From the Telangana
Armed Struggle to the Police Action**

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Abstract:

In this MA thesis, I examine the history of the princely state of Hyderabad from 1927 to 1951. Drawing from memoirs, newspapers, oral histories, and autobiographies, I find that in these years leading up to the forcible accession of Hyderabad to the Indian Union in a police action, communitarian rhetoric was employed in the Indian nationalist and non-nationalist cases so as to mobilize religious communities for politically expedient ends. However, in the case of a peasant revolt in the state, the Telangana Armed Struggle, communitarianism as a phenomenon did not play a role as the movement was multi-faith in character. Furthermore, during this struggle, religious identity, particularly Muslim identity, was articulated and framed in class terms.

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Chapter 1: Introduction – Hyderabad in Princely State Scholarship

Princely State Historiography:

Scholarship on Indian princely states has transformed over the past three decades. The early 1990's saw the introduction of the "hollowing of the crown" argument with historian and anthropologist Nicholas Dirks' work on the small princely state of Pudukkottai. Dirks' main intervention in princely state scholarship was to argue that in the case of Pudukkottai between the fourteenth and the twentieth centuries, there was a "hollowing of the crown" that saw Indian princes as mere pawns with little political power and control over their territories¹. However, Dirks' work focused on a small state that was geographically far removed from other Indian princely states, making it difficult for general analysis of a "hollowing of the crown" to apply to the other Indian princely states².

With an argument that is diametrically opposed to Nicholas Dirks, Mridu Rai argues in favor of a more expansive analysis with her specific focus on Kashmir. Rai argues that in fact, as in the case of Kashmir, princes were not actually politically emasculated³.

Eric Beverley uses these diametrically opposed trends of scholarship as a jumping off point to discuss sovereignty in Hyderabad as he characterizes Hyderabad not as a theatrical client state nor a highly centralized autocracy⁴. Beverley argues that Hyderabad, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, should be characterized as having layered sovereignty. Layered sovereignty holds state authority as a "negotiated" domain in which political authority was

¹ Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), introduction.

² Ian Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917-1947*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 33.

³ Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights, and the History of Kashmir*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), introduction.

⁴ Eric Beverley, "Muslim Modern: Hyderabad State, 1883-1948" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2007), 8.

expanded by incorporating smaller political agents under the umbrella of their sovereignty⁵. While Beverley cites such a theoretical framework as applicable to pre-colonial South Asia, he applies layered sovereignty to Hyderabad during the aforementioned time period because his argument about Hyderabad city as an imperial though not quite colonial space is contingent upon employing layered sovereignty as an analytical framework. Beverley examines ideology, institutions of governance, and urban history through the lens of layered sovereignty.

In his book on princely North India, Ian Copland argues that princes should be brought to the fore in analysis of the states and not merely seen as lacking agency, as promulgated by Nicholas Dirks' hollow crown argument. Critiques of his work cite his focus on the "high politics" of princely states in colonial India⁶. Copland contends that there is little evidence to show that the princes were brought down by revolutionary popular pressure "from below". In this thesis, I disagree with Copland's contention and instead argue that revolutionary popular pressure in the Hyderabad case in the form of the Telangana Armed Struggle contributed to bringing down Nizam Osman Ali Khan and forcibly integrating the erstwhile princely state into India.

I will further nuance this argument by drawing upon Dick Kooiman's work as related to "communalism" in the princely states. Kooiman attributes the rise of "communalism" in Hyderabad state to the activities of the Hindu reformist Arya Samaj organization's *shuddhi* drive in the 1930's. Kooiman defines "communalism" as a "harnessing of religious differences between groups of people for secular ends⁷." In chapter two, I will engage with Kooiman's main claim related to "communalism" in Hyderabad that states "communalism" was not transferred

⁵ Beverley, "Muslim Modern", 10.

⁶ Manu Bhagavan, "Princely States and the Making of Modern India: Internationalism, Constitutionalism, and the Postcolonial Moment." *Indian Economic Social History Review* (2009): 428.

⁷ Kooiman, *Communalism*, 4.

from British India to the states. Instead, forces of “communalism” grew in both British as well as Princely India and such forces could become interconnected and in many cases, reinforced each other⁸.

My Main Intervention:

In this thesis, I will use Chitralkha Zutshi’s observation that princely state historiography is divided into two subfields – those arguments that address the political and constitutional developments in the states and those that address subaltern, women, and peoples’ movements in the states. She makes the significant point that princely state scholarship no longer exists marginal to South Asian history⁹. In my argument, I will examine Hyderabad during the late colonial period and I will illustrate how the Telangana Armed Struggle did not operate marginally to South Asian history, but rather played a central role in the integration of Hyderabad into the Indian Union – a significant fact in the more recent history of South Asia. This is a novel intervention because much of the literature on the struggle treat it as strictly a people’s movement. As few of these sources address the issue of Muslim identity and class consciousness, I will delve into this topic in this thesis. Specifically, I ask how do identities get articulated and framed? I find that such articulation and framing was done through communitarian discourse that painted the majority and minority community – Hindu and Muslim – as largely antagonistic communities that shared a relatively harmonious past in the state but have since the late 1930’s become increasingly oppositional to one another. Also, what were the other roles of communitarianism? I find that communitarian rhetoric was employed in the Indian nationalist and non-nationalist cases so as to mobilize religious communities for politically

⁸ Dick Kooiman, *Communalism and Indian Princely States: Travancore, Baroda, and Hyderabad in the 1930’s*, (New Delhi: Manohar Publications), 226.

⁹ Chitralkha Zutshi, “Re-Visioning Princely States in South Asian Historiography: A Review,” *Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 301.

expedient ends. Furthermore, I ask, what does Telangana tell us about what has gone on with Muslims in Hyderabad? And, was Muslim identity instrumentally invoked or was this religious identity intrinsic to class identity? Lastly, what is the Telangana take on the Police Action? I find that in the case of a peasant revolt in the state, the Telangana Armed Struggle, communitarianism as a phenomenon did not play a role as the movement was multi-faith in character.

In this thesis, through an analysis of letters, autobiographies, memoirs, newspapers, and poetry, I find that the Telangana Armed Struggle played a key role in Hyderabad's forced accession to India and religious identity, particularly Muslim identity, was intrinsic to class identity. Lastly, religious identity was also articulated and framed in class terms.

Background on the History of Hyderabad State and Its Key Political Players:

Revisionist scholarship on the nature of the Mughal Empire argues for the decentralization of the polity and the emergence of regional successor states such as Bengal and Awadh. In addition to Bengal and Awadh, Hyderabad Deccan was among these successor states. Founded in 1724 by Nizam Asaf Jah I, Hyderabad occupied a special position in the Deccan Plateau in south-central India, as it was buttressed by various kingdoms that were antagonistic to it. In his *Modern Asian Studies* article, historian Munis D. Faruqi argues that it is necessary to distinguish the early history of Hyderabad from its later nineteenth century counterpart because while the former was “dynamic, innovative, and strong enough to hold off a range of regional enemies”, the latter is seen as a “ramshackle state with weak political, social, and military institutions¹⁰.”

¹⁰ Munis D. Faruqi, “At Empire’s End: The Nizam, Hyderabad, and Eighteenth-Century India,” *Modern Asian Studies* (2009): 5.

My narrative covers the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was during this period that the Muslim character of the state's ruling structure became intensified and political and communitarian conflict grew as a result of internal political events. Hyderabad was a large princely state second in size to Kashmir in the north, and with a majority of Hindu subjects ruled over by a nizam belonging to the minority Muslim community.

The Indian subcontinent during the phase of the late colonial period was administered both directly and indirectly, the latter through the six hundred-odd princely states. It was during this phase that the British were on their way out of India. Paramountcy was the legal doctrine that allowed the system of British residents at the imperial courts, the regulation of successions, and British control over the states' foreign affairs¹¹. It is in the case of paramountcy that sovereignty becomes interesting to analyze. Specifically, in Hyderabad, sovereignty did indeed lie with the personality of the prince, Nizam Osman Ali Khan, the last ruler of the state, but this fact soon came to change as a result of the state-allied ruling party, the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen's policies.

The Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen

My narrative begins in 1927 with the founding of the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen¹² goes through 1948 with the forced integration of Hyderabad into the Indian Union, and ends in 1951 with the conclusion of the Telangana Armed Struggle that contributed to the state's integration. As for the Majlis, historian Narendra Luther describes it as a "cultural-religious organization" that soon started "developing on the lines of the Muslim League in British India reflecting a similar Muslim communalism within the state¹³." Such an analysis of the character of the Majlis and its association with the "communal" Muslim League suggests an applicability and

¹¹ Copland, *The Prince of India in the Endgame of Empire*, 15.

¹² Henceforth, the Majlis.

¹³ Narendra Luther, *Hyderabad: A Biography* (Oxford, 2006), 221.

association of religiously informed politics of identity with the pejorative other of Indian nationalism. This is a theme that continues in the literature on Hyderabad's history. Returning to the characterization of the Majlis, Dick Kooiman in his book on "communalism" in princely India calls the Majlis a "socio-religious organization of local Muslims intended to bring together all Muslims without regard to sect¹⁴." In fact, the Majlis is more accurately described as a Muslim cultural-religious organization allied with the Nizam's government that became increasingly chauvinistic in character as communitarian conflict amplified in the state in the 1930's. As for its ideals, the organization's founder, Bahadur Yar Jang, had "reduced the Nizam from the personification of sovereignty to its mere symbol," by propagating the view that "power resided not in the person of the ruler but in the community of Muslim believers who allowed him to rule¹⁵." Following this logic, Hyderabad, according to the Majlis, should be declared a Muslim state in which every Muslim "became a participant and a stakeholder in sovereignty¹⁶."

Bahadur Yar Jang died in 1944. One of his most significant successors was Kasim Razvi who formed the Razakars, the paramilitary wing of the Majlis. It was under Razvi that the Majlis became more extreme in character. The Majlis was opposed to accession to India in 1947 and the leader who succeeded Bahadur Yar Jang, Kasim Razvi, advised the Nizam to "enter into relations with Pakistan before it was too late¹⁷," to the effect of acceding to non-contiguous, geographically far-removed Pakistan. Understanding how ludicrous such a suggestion was, the Nizam labeled him as "mad" and a "blackguard¹⁸."

Opposition Political Parties

¹⁴ Dick Kooiman, *Communalism and Indian Princely States: Travancore, Baroda, and Hyderabad in the 1930's*, 183.

¹⁵ Ibid, 183.

¹⁶ Narendra Luther, *Hyderabad: A Biography*, 222.

¹⁷ Z.H. Zaidi, *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Papers – The States: Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Vol. IX*. (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan), xiii.

¹⁸ Z.H. Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, xiv.

A number of political organizations began to be founded with goals of bettering the economic and social plight of the majority Hindu community in the state. The Andhra Mahasabha was formed in 1936. This organization became the cover organization of the banned Communist Party of India (CPI) who was the vanguard of the peasant Telangana Armed Struggle.

While the Arya Samaj was established as early as 1892, in 1938 it came under attack by the Nizam's government as it issued orders that the Arya Samaj could not set up *kunds* – fireplaces for prayers – without the express permission of the government¹⁹. Following this policy, the famous 1938 Satyagraha was launched that saw an increasing polarization between the Hindu and Muslim communities in the state.

The Hyderabad State Congress was founded in September 1938 with the goal of responsible government under the aegis of the Nizam and the Asaf Jahi dynasty²⁰.”

The object of the Hyderabad State Congress is attainment by the people of Responsible Government under the aegis of H.E.H. the Nizam and the Asaf Jahi dynasty. This object is to be achieved by all peaceful and legitimate means and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organizing the intellectual, moral, economic, and industrial resources of the country²¹.

As for the term “Congress” in this secular, nationalist political party's name, it had been adopted to distinguish the party from the “communal or provincial movements” and to align itself with the “constructive programme of the Indian National Congress²².” In the manifesto of the Hyderabad State Congress, it state to “call [the Hyderabad State Congress] “communal” is

¹⁹ Luther, *Hyderabad: A Biography*, 225.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad, Vol. IV: (1921-1947)*, (Andhra Pradesh: The Andhra Pradesh State Committee Appointed for the Compilation of a History of the Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh, 1966), 133.

²² N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad, Vol. IV*, 137.

therefore a travesty of facts and truth²³.” This portion of the manifesto indicates an understanding as an association of illegitimacy with communalism. There is an immediate association of nationalism with non-communalism as in the Hyderabad State Congress literature; it states that it is a “purely non-communal political organization having nationalist as its very basis²⁴.” So while the goal of the Hyderabad State Congress as its outset was responsible government under the Nizam, the organization became banned by the Nizam at its founding and the group soon began to advocate Hyderabad merging with the Indian union.

As a part of the ban and in order to make illegitimate the goals of the Hyderabad State Congress, the Nizam issued a statement: “His Exalted Highness’s Government has no objection to the establishment of political organization in the state provided these are on a strictly non-communal basis and have no affiliation outside the state²⁵.” This quotation illustrates the immediate loss of legitimacy of the Hyderabad State Congress and indicates an understanding that the Nizam believed that this secular nationalist party inside the state was associated with the Indian National Congress of British India.

Editor of the volume *The People’s Movement in Hyderabad*, Achyut Khodwe was an adherent to the nationalist Hyderabad State Congress that advocated the state’s accession to India. He affirms the general perception of this secular nationalist party about the “feudal, reactionary” nature of speaking about the other states – “But so far the Indian States have been centers of feudal reaction and autocracy²⁶.”

In this volume, Khodwe makes the astute observation about the Nizam’s government and its agenda to take away legitimacy from the opposition Hyderabad State Congress. He writes

²³ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, Vol. IV, 146.

²⁴ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, Vol. IV, 150.

²⁵ Achyut Khodwe, *The People’s Movement in Hyderabad*, (Poona: J.S. Ltd.’s Press, 1947), 34.

²⁶ Achyut Khodwe, *The People’s Movement in Hyderabad*, 1.

that, “the word ‘communal’ was deliberately used for ‘political’ and the government was bent upon following the political suppression²⁷.”

Chapter 2: Indian Nationalist Narratives and Hyderabad – “Communalism” within the State

Indian nationalist narratives argued for the integration of Hyderabad into the Indian union due to the feudal and exploitative nature of the state’s last nizam, Osman Ali Khan. For example, an account about the nationalist “freedom struggle” of the state explains that, “Logically speaking, the freedom movement in Hyderabad was a fight against the feudal-reactionary regime which was out to destroy the unity and integrity of Free India with the active connivance of British Imperialism²⁸.” So polarized had discourse developed surrounding the accession of Hyderabad to India that most Indian nationalist accounts of the events leading up to the accession term the accession itself Hyderabad’s “independence”. Descriptions like “the people [of Hyderabad State] yearned to fall in line with British India,” were not uncommon²⁹. Politics surrounding the accession soon became to be framed as majority Hindu community versus minority Muslim community or “communal” in character. So in this chapter, I ask what were the goals of such communitarian framing and rhetoric? This framing and rhetoric soon came to be used out of political expediency and to justify, in the case of Indian nationalists, Hyderabad acceding to India.

“Communalism” in Hyderabad:

The term “communal” is highly charged in the post-colonial environment. Its invocation evokes a sense of immutable religious and cultural differences. While a “communal” can be

²⁷ Achyut Khodwe, *The People’s Movement in Hyderabad*, 33.

²⁸ V.H. Desai, *From Vandemataram to Jana Gana Mana: Saga of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) 1990, 23.

²⁹ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad, Vol. IV*, v.

broadly defined as an individual pushing the interests of one religious or linguistic group, the term in its employment in the South Asian context too often becomes construed as a specifically Muslim. The term has been criticized as the “pejorative other of Indian nationalism,” and there is an opposition of the “illegitimacy of communalism” versus the “legitimacy of nationalism³⁰”. The term also tends to essentialize any sort of religiously-informed cultural differences, while also immediately conflating such differences with bigotry³¹.

While there are seemingly strong grounds for thinking that the minority Muslim community benefitted from their advantageous positions in the ruling structure of the state, in fact this was not the case. In 1931, Hindus made up more than 84% of Hyderabadi subjects, while Muslims were just 20%, yet they dominated in the government and ruling structure of the state. However, it is vital to note that the Hindu and Muslim communities were not “solid, monolithic blocs³²,” but in fact they were deeply divided by caste and sect. Furthermore, it is fallacious to classify the Hindu community as a “deprived proletariat” because, despite their relative absence in the bureaucratic apparatus, Hindus enjoyed commercial hegemony and they dominated the agricultural sector with 86.2% of cultivators of all kinds being Hindu³³.

Now that the communitarian characteristics in the state has been accurately illustrated, it becomes necessary to analyze the discourse surrounding “communal” relations in the state to get a picture of the polarization. As I will argue, communitarian rhetoric was employed in the Indian nationalist case so as to mobilize religious communities for politically expedient ends.

³⁰ Ayesha Jalal, “Exploding Communalism: The Politics of Muslim Identity in South Asia,” in *Nationalism, Democracy, and Development: State and Politics in India*, ed. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998-1999)

³¹ Ibid

³² Ian Copland, “‘Communalism’ in Princely India: The Case of Hyderabad, 1930-1940,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (1998)

³³ Ibid.

To get a sense of the intensity of such rhetoric, it is helpful to analyze memoirs and newspapers of the period leading up to the Police Action in Hyderabad. V.H. Desai, in his 1990 book *Vande Mataram to Jana Gana Mana: Saga of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, dedicates it to Swami Ramananda Tirtha, president of the nationalist Hyderabad State Congress. Such a dedication makes it abundantly clear that the volume will have a nationalist bias. The book covers the period from the early 1930's to the Police Action in September 1948.

In Desai's later book published in 1998, *The Democrat: Saga of a Jail Journal of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle (1947-1948) (The Untold Story)*, he dedicates it to those who have "spontaneously sacrificed to free MOTHER INDIA from bondage; foreign and native."

The Democrat was an English bi-weekly of about twelve pages. Reflecting the "troubled decade"³⁴ the paper's editorials "breathed fire and brimstone"³⁵. "The most disruptive element however, is that the communist enthusiasts ... make deep raids into Hyderabad territory, carry on propoganda and often loot wealthy citizens before they return to the Madras Presidency"³⁶.

In an editorial in *The Democrat*, the various parties involved in the "freedom struggle" of Hyderabad are compared. The Hyderabad state's "non-violent struggle" along with the Communists' "violent struggle" has kept the government at bay³⁷.

In the forward to the volume, the author speaks in high flown rhetoric to describe the state of affairs of the rulers of Hyderabad. He writes, "With the Nizam's connivance, his alter-ego, the megalomaniac, Kasim Razvi, had set up the Ittehad-ul-Mussulmeen (Ittehad, for short) with a large band of fanatic storm-troopers, known as the Razakars, to terrorize and demoralize

³⁴ Luther, *Hyderabad: A Biography*, 224.

³⁵ V.H. Desai, *From Vandemataram to Jana Gana Mana: Saga of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, 21.

³⁶ V.H. Desai, *From Vandemataram to Jana Gana Mana: Saga of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, 29.

³⁷ V.H. Desai, *The Democrat: The Saga of a Jail Journal of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle, 1947-1948*, (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan), 1998, 48.

the patriotic people of Hyderabad³⁸.” The Razakars would attack any village suspected of “Congress or Communist sympathy³⁹.” Here, the Congress and Communists are linked to one another. There is also a link between the Hyderabad State Congress and the Communist Party of India in the struggle for their individual aims – the Hyderabad State Congress with its desire for accession to India and the Communist Party of India for its desire of land reclamation and economic justice in the Telangana region. *The Democrat* highlights these goals in an editorial:

The Nizam of Hyderabad, the ruler of a vast principality with a population of over sixteen million, has refused to join the Union though, it is stated negotiations are still proceeding. A powerful people’s struggle by the State Congress and backed by the resurgent peasantry of Telangana and the other parts, fighting to break the chains of feudal slavery, is raging in the State. The Nizam, relying upon the support of Sardars, big Zamindars and the bureaucracy the bulk of whom are Muslims, is seeking to crush the movements by repression and to disrupt it by instigating communal riots⁴⁰.

It is pieces of journalism such as this ultra-Indian nationalist publication that attempted to portray the work of the Hyderabad State Congress and Communist Party of India, as communal in nature, even though the Communist Party’s work in Telangana was done by individuals belonging to different faith groups. Such a portrayal was done so as to discredit each of the parties and the movement.

Expanding upon the role of the communists in the region, Desai wrote about the plunder the Majlis indulged in and that “the Communist activity on the Madras frontier is welcomed by many villages because the Communists offer the only protection against Razvi’s marauding bands⁴¹.”

³⁸ V.H. Desai, *The Democrat: The Saga of a Jail Journal of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle, 1947-1948*, xi.

³⁹ V.H. Desai, *The Democrat: The Saga of a Jail Journal of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle, 1947-1948*, xii.

⁴⁰ V.H. Desai, *The Democrat: The Saga of a Jail Journal of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle, 1947-1948*, 68.

⁴¹ V.H. Desai, *The Democrat: The Saga of a Jail Journal of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle, 1947-1948*, 64.

Desai portrays it as left up to fate that Hyderabad State Congress leader Swami Ramananda Tirtha would have to lead the organization and fight for freedom of Hyderabad and integration into India:

At a very critical moment in the history of the Indian people, the responsibility of leading a freedom struggle of an all-India character fell on the Swamiji. He had to rally all the democratic forces to assert the will of the people. He had innumerable difficulties in his way. But despite all this, he rapidly mobilized the masses for the freedom fight, and received tremendous response from all sections cutting across all barriers of caste, creed, religion, region and language⁴².

This quotation, particularly the last line that delineates the response from all sections cutting across all different types of barriers suggests an association of Swami Ramananda Tirtha with secular nationalism that cuts across all these different barriers.

Further polarizing the already fractured communitarian atmosphere leading up to the Police Action, journalist Jagannath Rao Chandraki wrote a piece called “A Word to Muslims.” In the piece, Chandraki writes that the Muslims of Hyderabad, especially those whom ardently follow the Majlis, are “living in a dreamland.” He goes on to make an association between the militant Majlis leader, Kasim Razvi, and the constitutional lawyer and Pakistan founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah in their related aspirations for “Muslim supremacy⁴³.”

The Standstill Agreement and Accession:

The Standstill Agreement was the legal doctrine that mandated that Hyderabad State surrender powers of defense, foreign affairs, and communications to the Indian Union, though the Majlis’ paramilitary wing, the Razakars, were allowed to operate with abandon. Desai writes, “The Razakar-menace had reached its peak. Under the pressure from his advisers, the Nizam entered into a ‘Standstill Agreement’ on 29th November 1947, with the Government of India⁴⁴.”

⁴² V.H. Desai, *From Vandemataram to Jana Gana Mana: Saga of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, 101.

⁴³ V.H. Desai, *The Democrat: The Saga of a Jail Journal of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle, 1947-1948*, 69.

⁴⁴ V.H. Desai, *From Vandemataram to Jana Gana Mana: Saga of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, 19.

In the fourth volume of *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, topics covered range from the Khilafat agitation to the emergence of institutions like the Hyderabad State Congress and the Arya Samaj. In the book's final chapter, author N. Ramesan emphasizes the point that, "the freedom struggle in Hyderabad formed an integral part of the freedom struggle in India⁴⁵." This connection of princely India to British India is significant to understand as similar discourse lauding secular nationalism in British India came to infiltrate Hyderabad as well.

As for the Hyderabad State Congress, there is an immediate association of that specific body with a freedom struggle in the state. Ramesan argues that, "the lifting of the ban [on the Hyderabad State Congress] imposed eight years ago was the first victory of the freedom struggle in Hyderabad⁴⁶."

Ramesan identifies the main "political problem" in Hyderabad as one related mainly to the "justification of the minority rule over the majority⁴⁷."

1938 Satyagraha:

The 1930's saw an increasing shift toward fractures along communitarian lines in the state. Former Hyderabad government official Fareed Mirza, in his memoir on the Police Action, states that he "did not like the Satyagraha movement" that the Arya Samaj and Hyderabad State Congress launched in 1938. He describes that a change soon overtook him following his reading of Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography and his "Glimpses of World history"⁴⁸, describes that year as having "special significance in the political struggle for the attainment of democracy in the history of the Hyderabad State⁴⁹." He goes onto discuss how the Hyderabad State Congress, even

⁴⁵ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, Vol. IV, 279.

⁴⁶ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, Vol. IV, 280.

⁴⁷ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, Vol. IV, 87.

⁴⁸ Fareed Mirza, *Pre- and Post-Police Action Days in the Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt, and Did*, (Hyderabad: Unknown Publisher, 1976), 1.

⁴⁹ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad*, Vol. IV, 50-51.

before its founding in the state, was condemned by the Government as a communal body as it was seen to be under the “foreign influence” of the Indian National Congress. As a result, a *satyagraha* was launched. Editor N. Ramesan describes such repression of issues that “lay latent to receive some igniting force and grow into a sort of conflagration on the proper occasion⁵⁰.”

“October 1938 must be immortalized in the memory of the Hyderabadis, as the month in which the smouldering embers of agitation in the minds of the people burst out, in a flame and the intensity of Mahatma Gandhiji’s personality was felt keenly by the Nizam’s Government⁵¹.”

In its statement of aims dated September 5, 1938, the Hyderabad State Congress manifesto said, “The name ‘Congress’ has been adopted merely to emphasize the nationalist basis underlying this movement as distinguished from that of communal or provincial movements and also because most of other items of the constructed programme of the Indian National Congress will have also to form part of the constructive programme of the State Congress⁵².”

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the Police Action:

N. Ramesan writes that the police action “ended the internal troubles in Hyderabad in 1948⁵³.” This was the classic Indian nationalist aim of the period, as accession to India was the primarily goal the Hyderabad State Congress was working toward.

Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was the official that oversaw the integration of the various Indian princely states into the Indian Union and it was him that was praised for being that integrator among Indian nationalist, and him who was reviled amongst wishers of Hyderabad independence, for doing this same task of integration.

⁵⁰ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad, Vol. IV*, 52.

⁵¹ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad, Vol. IV*, 103.

⁵² N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad, Vol. IV*, 136-137.

⁵³ N. Ramesan, *The Freedom Struggle in Hyderabad, Vol. IV*, 290.

N. Ramesan, in his Indian nationalist account of the “freedom struggle” in Hyderabad writes that “Sardar Patel has been unjustly compared to Bismark. Sardar was of peasant stock. Bismark belonged to the ruling aristocracy of Prussia⁵⁴.” Ramesan’s disassociation of Patel from Otto von Bismarck is to give the former individual greater legitimacy in a “peoples’ or freedom struggle”, as does Ramesan’s pointing out that Patel was from a peasant background.

He goes on to write that when this “Titan” passed away on December 15, 1950:

By many of us he will perhaps be remembered as a great captain of our forces in the struggle for freedom and as one who gave us sound advice both in times of trouble and in moments of victory; a friend and colleague and comrade on whom one could invariably rely, as a tower of strength which revived wavering hearts when we were in trouble⁵⁵.

Indeed Vallabhbhai Patel was lauded because he was seen as the master integrator of all of the princely states and the one individual who united India. In a letter to Lord Louis

Mountbatten dated August 24, 1947, Vallabhbhai Patel wrote:

I have authentic information that the recent activities of the Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen are designed almost to create a feeling of terror amongst the non-Muslim population, so that its agitation in favour of the independence of Hyderabad with possible alliance with Pakistan should flourish. It is a militant organization with an intensely communal appeal and there are indications that it receives active support from responsible Muslims, both inside and outside the Government⁵⁶.

Journalist V.H. Desai notes that on the eve of the Police Action, the CPI changed its strategy vis-à-vis the accession of Hyderabad to India. Communist activist Puchalapalli

Sundarayya describes this switch in his book *Telangana People’s Struggle and its Lessons*:

So, on the eve of the ‘police action’, the [Communist] Party instructed all the areas and guerilla squads not to come into clash with the Indian Army as long as they were attacking the Razakars and Nizam’s armed forces, but to launch independent attacks against Razakar and Nizam’s police camps, destroy them, seize weapons, re-equip the squads with modern weapons and retrain them, wait for a few weeks, by which time the attacks on the Telangana peasantry by the Indian armed forces and their landlord-

⁵⁴ V.H. Desai, *The Democrat: The Saga of a Jail Journal of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle, 1947-1948*, xiii.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Z.H. Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, 40.

deshmukh gangs would shatter the illusions and hopes roused among the masses⁵⁷. Actually, within a week after the entry of the Indian Army, the attacks [by the Communist Party] began.

Initially, the armed peasantry of Telangana attacked both the Indian nationalist forces who wanted to liquidate them so as to prevent a British India-wide communist movement, as well as the Razakar forces, however; as mentioned above, the new instructions to stay away from the Indian Army caused Communist Party goals to change to accession.

Fareed Mirza is the rare case of a Muslim in the historical record that calls out the “mischief” the Razakars began to play⁵⁸. In describing his decision to leave his government job, Fareed Mirza wrote:

Almost the whole Muslim community had been led astray by the Ithahadul Muslimeen. They read or took news only from the Urdu press which mostly gave a one-sided exaggerated picture. Communal passions which were already running high were being further flared up. It was apparent that the Muslim community and the State Government were heading towards disaster. Much bloodshed seemed to lie in store. So I felt it was the duty of those Muslims who were conscious of the situation to raise their voice however feeble and whatever might be the risk⁵⁹.

Chapter 3: Pakistan and Hyderabad – Muslim Identity and Differing Narratives of Events in Hyderabad Leading up to the Police Action

In the case of narratives that were published by Hyderabad expatriates to Pakistan following the Police Action, identities got articulated in framed in the language of communitarianism that fueled an increasingly acrimonious discourse on the role of Hindus and Muslims in the state. Pakistani supported narratives took on an increasingly Muslim chauvinistic tone that justified the Majlis’ paramilitary wing, the Razakars’, actions. What were the aims in employing such framing and rhetoric? I argue that similar to the Indian nationalist case, such

⁵⁷ V.H. Desai, *From Vandemataram to Jana Gana Mana: Saga of Hyderabad Freedom Struggle*, 131.

⁵⁸ Fareed Mirza, *Pre- and Post-Police Action Days in the Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt, and Did*, 2-3.

⁵⁹ Fareed Mirza, *Pre- and Post-Police Action Days in the Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt, and Did*, 16.

communitarian framing and rhetoric were employed for political expediency. Furthermore, this communitarianism was employed for politically expedient ends.

Hyderabad and Pakistan-Supported Narratives:

Princely Hyderabad's sovereignty, as mentioned before, envisioned by the state-allied Muslim ruling party, the Majlis, as unitary and "Muslim nationalist" in character.

The Majlis head, Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang, became the president of the All India States' Muslim League which he founded in 1939 and in the following year, the All India States' Muslim League sessions would be held alongside the All India Muslim League sessions.

Hyderabad Prime Minister during the time of the Police Action, Mir Laik Ali's (1903-1971) memoir *Tragedy of Hyderabad* was published in 1962 in Pakistan, but it was banned in India until just recently – 2012. Mir Laik Ali was considered a Prime Minister sympathetic to the cause of the Majlis and as an industrialist, gave funds to the Bahadur Yar Jang when he was the head of the organization⁶⁰.

In the opening to his book, Laik Ali dedicated it to "those tens of thousands dead and many more still silently suffering for their struggle in 'the Cause of Hyderabad.'" The majority of the book was written during Mir Laik Ali's imprisonment following the "fall of Hyderabad", as he calls the accession.

In his book's introduction, Laik Ali's identifies the problem he saw with the state of politics in India. He calls the All-India Congress a "majority Hindu community" party that saw itself as the only rightful successor to the outgoing British colonials⁶¹. He goes on to describe the majority-minority relations within the Indian union as a whole in that "even a hundred million Muslims were considered by the Hindus as a mere minority to be engulfed and absorbed

⁶⁰ Narendra Luther, *Hyderabad: A Biography* (Oxford, 2006), 223.

⁶¹ Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, (Karachi: Pakistan Co-Operative Book Society Ltd, 1962, i.

progressively into the Hindu cult⁶².” This sort of language that emphasizes the communitarian challenges of the Indian Union supports my claim that language and communitarian relations in Hyderabad state realized itself in increasingly antagonistic language.

Laik Ali continues with this language in his description of Pakistan’s founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah by describing Jinnah’s Pakistan as the “inspired genius of one man.” He precedes the sentence by describing how Muslims may have fallen prey to the “skillful machinations of the Congress and other Hindu political organizations...had it not been kept united and politically conscious,” by Jinnah⁶³.

The then prime minister of Hyderabad discusses the “overnight growth of the much publicized Razakar movement⁶⁴.” Following the Standstill Agreement, Laik Ali attributes this event to further “embitter[ing] the communal feelings in the State and upset the communal harmony to a degree that had never been experienced before⁶⁵.” He proceeds to discuss the “believers in Marxism”, the Communist Party of India vanguard of the Telangana Armed Struggle in Hyderabad, as taking advantage of the “resulting confusion” to “spread discontent and disorder⁶⁶.”

In a chapter that addresses the combined objectives of the Hyderabad State Congress, the Hindus Mahasabha, “& Others”, Mir Laik Ali exaggerates the economic advantages of the Hindu community. He writes, “here the Hindus as a whole enjoyed very overwhelming majority; the land, commerce and industry were almost entirely in their hands⁶⁷.” The former prime minister, however fairly points out the aforementioned fact regarding Hindu individuals’ relative absence

⁶² Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, i.

⁶³ Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, ii.

⁶⁴ Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, 129.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, 30.

in the bureaucracy. He writes that “their representation in higher ranks of public services was very inadequate and the high-caste Hindus particularly felt bitter over it⁶⁸.”

In describing the activities of the Razakars and their chief Kasim Razvi, Mir Laik Ali writes that the “ill-equipped” Razakars were no match for the Indian army, a true statement, and that, “excepting a few sporadic Communist outburst, the situation on the whole remained peaceful⁶⁹.” This description is a gross downplay of events, particularly as related to Telangana, as they unfolded in the year leading up to the Police Action.

In his Chapter 15: “India and the Problems of Hyderabad”, the former prime minister returns to Hyderabad’s pre-colonial history by explaining that Hyderabad had remained a relatively independent kingdom, whether under the Hindu or the Muslim rulers – once in the time of Ashoka and many years later, under the Mughals, and then finally under the British⁷⁰. He continues that it is his belief that the Hindu community of the state would benefit the utmost in a political merger with the Indian Union as it would “subject them all to the the predominating and powerful political, financial, and economic interests of India⁷¹.”

In speaking about the inevitable partition of India, Mir Laik Ali does not believe it would have been so until the middle of 1947 where he says that few Muslims and certainly no Hindus believed that India would be divided. He describes the fear of the Hindu majority that with the newly established Pakistan, there was a genuine fear on the part of the Congress leaders that Hyderabad could constitute a southern wing of Pakistan. Furthermore, in the minds of Congress members, Laik Ali argues, an independent Hyderabad would be just as dangerous because those remaining forty-five million Muslims in India could “constitute a very material and serious

⁶⁸ Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, 30.

⁶⁹ Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, 81.

⁷⁰ Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, 123.

⁷¹ Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, 124.

source of inspiration to those Muslims [in Hyderabad] and would perpetuate the Muslim culture and defy all plans of progressively absorbing the Indian Muslims in the social and cultural fold of the Hindus⁷².”

Jinnah was on his death bed and Laik Ali could not meet him and no one else could give an authoritative reply to Laik Ali’s query about what support Pakistan could lend to Hyderabad in case of an attack by India⁷³. Mir Laik Ali escaped on March 7, 1950⁷⁴.

While the account of former prime minister Mir Laik Ali takes on a rather polarized approach to describe the conflict in Hyderabad, Fareed Mirza’s account is seemingly more “balanced.”

In *Pre and Post Police Action Days in the Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt and Did*, Fareed Mirza describes himself as “one of the seven Muslims who had openly advised the nizam to accede to the Indian Union.” He ascribes to the view that the impetus for marching into Hyderabad was Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s death – as the Indian Army’s Police Action occurred only two days later. Mirza identifies himself as a government servant at the time of pre- and post-Police Action Hyderabad, however he does not specify what specific post he held under than that he resigned “protesting against the subversive activities of the Ithadadulmuslimeen Razakars and the then Government’s one-sided policy⁷⁵.”

Mirza describes that at a meeting he presided over of some “respectable Muslims and Hindus,” it was clear during that meeting in discussion about various political problems that not all of the Hindus were satisfied. Mirza describes that these Hindus were in fact afraid of openly complaining against any Muslims as the chauvinistic activities of the Majlis set the tone for

⁷² Mir Laik Ali, *Tragedy of Hyderabad*, 125.

⁷³ Narendra Luther, *Hyderabad: A Biography* (Oxford, 2006), 276.

⁷⁴ Narendra Luther, *Hyderabad: A Biography* (Oxford, 2006), 302.

⁷⁵ Fareed Mirza, *Pre- and Post-Police Action Days in the Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt, and Did*, 1.

communitarian relations in the state. At the meeting, the local Majlis president inquired whether any Hindus present harbored any complaint against the Razakars. No Hindu came forward to voice their complaint, and finding matter troubling, Fareed Mirza came forward to speak. He says that, “Among the Muslims, I was notorious as being pro-Hindu⁷⁶.” In order to erase any presuppositions about Mirza’s political allegiances and background, he introduced his remarks by describing his religious background as a Muslim, as well as the actual reality of the state being an 85% majority Hindu state. He put it bluntly, “without [Hindus’] co-operation, no administration could run⁷⁷, and that they were entitled and must be given their due share in the state setup. The following two days, Mirza describes his disappointment, anger, and sadness, upon learning about the Razakars’ looting and arson activities in a nearby district as well as the police and constables’ turning a blind eye to such criminal activities. He says that the idea of resigning his government post entered his mind following these events.

Mirza describes the Majlis as leading astray the whole Muslim community in the state and his fellow Muslims read or took news only from the Urdu press which tended to give a “one-sided and grossly exaggerated picture⁷⁸.” He attributes the intensification of communalism to the activities of the Razakars by saying that the “communal passions which were already running high were being further flared up⁷⁹.” Consequently, he felt it was his duty as a Muslim, as well as that of other Muslims in his similar position, to raise their voice against the Razakars and following his resignation out of protest, he was “now...free to take part in any activity [he] liked⁸⁰.”

⁷⁶ Fareed Mirza, *Pre- and Post-Police Action Days in the Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt, and Did*, 7.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Fareed Mirza, *Pre- and Post-Police Action Days in the Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt, and Did*, 16.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Now that Fareed Mirza was in such a position, he approached a government official friend of his and told him about the nefarious activities of the Razakars, especially that they were indulging in loot and arson. However, Fareed Mirza's main claim in his memoir is not to bring all negative light on the Razakars' activities. He also sheds light on the brutal treatment meted out to ordinary Muslims following the Police Action. In a letter dated May 13, 1949, Fareed Mirza addresses Inspector General of the Police, Hyderabad State, Mr. Jatley to bring forward the complaint about the "most regrettable and serious thing [that] happened on 23rd October 1948," just a month or so following the Police Action. In the letter, Mirza writes about how some twenty-six young Muslims were "dragged from their houses and kept under the custody of military men." In the evening, only three Muslims were left, while the remaining twenty-three were taken into the jungle at night and shot dead⁸¹.

Expanding on the carnage that ordinary Muslims faced in the days and months following the Indian Police Action in the state, Qutubuddin Aziz, journalist and former diplomat as well as Minister at the Pakistan Embassy in London, 1978-1986 writes about the horrors inflicted upon that community. *The Murder of a State: a graphic account of India's military invasion of the Muslim-ruled State of Hyderabad in September, 1948, the heated debates in the British Parliament and the UN Security Council and the post-invasion holocaust in which over 200,000 Muslims died.* Aziz writes that: "I have deemed it my duty to record my memories of the now faded glories of that magnificent Muslim-ruled Kingdom and the brutality with which newly-independent Hindu India's military Juggernaut murdered it in September 1948⁸²." Aziz bases the majority of his narrative on the eye-witness accounts of Hyderabadis who were at the time of the

⁸¹ Fareed Mirza, *Pre- and Post-Police Action Days in the Erstwhile Hyderabad State: What I Saw, Felt, and Did*, 15.

⁸² Qutubuddin Aziz, *The Murder of a State*, (Karachi: The Islamic Media Corporation, 1993), 1.

book's writing, settled in Pakistan. They account the "murderous events" between September 13 and 20, 1948 when such a "holocaust" took place⁸³.

In his book, Aziz come to some major conclusions – that the ruling Hyderabad "troika" – the Nizam Osman Ali Khan, Prime Minister Laik Ali, and Majlis president Kasim Razvi – "naively" pinned their hopes on the UN Security Council for them to rescue Hyderabad in the event of India's invasion into the state. These three individuals, according to Aziz, also seriously overestimated the military capability of the nascent State of Pakistan to deter India's invasion. Lastly, a main point Aziz desires to make in his book is that the "real murderer of Hyderabad's independence was Muslim-baiting Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel whose ambition, since the 1930's, as to destroy the Nizam and his Muslim-dominated Dominions as a surviving remnant of the demised Mughal Empire⁸⁴."

In this same introduction to his book, Aziz takes out lessons for those citizens of Pakistan from the invasion of Hyderabad experience. He says that Pakistanis should realize that a powerful section of "the Hindu polity in India has never been reconciled to the 1947 Partition," and that a united India – Akhand Bharat – under only Hindu rule continues to live as its cherished goal⁸⁵. Aziz is graphic in his negative description of Police Action days deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as he said that "Patel had tasted Muslim blood in Junagarh, Hyderabad and Kashmir and had he lived beyond 1950k, Pakistan would have been his next target⁸⁶." Following this vivid characterization of Patel, Aziz warns about then present-day (1993) India's increased militarization and the danger Patel's political heirs, the BJP and the RSS, could be to Pakistan if India's nuclear capabilities fall into their hands. Consequently,

⁸³ Qutubuddin Aziz, *The Murder of a State*, 3.

⁸⁴ Qutubuddin Aziz, *The Murder of a State*, 6.

⁸⁵ Qutubuddin Aziz, *The Murder of a State*, 8.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Aziz's policy prescription is a strong suggestion to build up Pakistan's armed forces and nuclear capabilities⁸⁷.

Aziz does not betray any sense of being impartial whatsoever. In the ending of this same introduction, he makes it clear that he has "no pretensions to the objectivity of the impartial historian," because him and his parents were too "deeply committed to the cause of Hyderabad's independence" and thus they are deeply and unapologetically partisan⁸⁸.

In his narrative, Qutubuddin Aziz describes the Majlis and its first president Nawab Bahadur Yar Jang favorably. Specifically, he cites the organization's founding as the "Muslims' reaction to the subversive activities fomented against the Nizam's Government by hawkish and chauvinistic Hindu political and religious parties based in India⁸⁹."

In a letter to All-India Muslim League president Muhammad Ali Jinnah, head of the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimin, Bahadur Yar Jang underscores the idea that the Hindu organizations of the Hyderabad state received funding and support from British India⁹⁰.

The All-India Hindu Mahasabha, the Arya Sabha of Delhi, the All-India National Congress – are all supporting them wholeheartedly. The policies for Hyderabad Hindus are framed in British India and their programmers are worked out there; they receive instructions and advice from the eminent thinkers of the whole of Hindu India, and the Hindu Press all over India is at their disposal... In the meanwhile, they are determined to augment communal tension, embitter their community against the Muslims and prepare it for an organized and wide-spread opposition and defiance of the government⁹¹.

Here, Bahadur Yar Jang explained to Jinnah the danger of "Hindu desire to dominate" in Hyderabad and referred to Hindu political party actions as communal in attempts to delegitimize the goals of the groups.

⁸⁷ Qutubuddin Aziz, *The Murder of a State*, 8.

⁸⁸ Qutubuddin Aziz, *The Murder of a State*, 9.

⁸⁹ Qutubuddin Aziz, *The Murder of a State*, 37.

⁹⁰ Bahadur Yar Jang letter to MAJ, June 12, 1938.

⁹¹ BYJ letter to MAJ, June 12, 1938.

Going further in depth to matters surrounding communalism, the role of Pakistan as related to Hyderabad, and other matters, is editor Z.H. Zaidi of the Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Papers, specifically volume nine that covers the states – Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir. Mountbatten believed and voiced the opinion that accession of a princely state to either India or Pakistan was a “matter of free choice” but he ruled out the option of the states’ to declare independence. He writes in the introduction that “Admittedly, Pakistan had no political ambitions as far as Hyderabad was concerned, except for a strong desire to maintain the centuries-old cultural and religious bonds that had existed between the Muslims of India and Hyderabad⁹².” Referring to the Police Action itself in a “Chronology of Important Events: 11 June 1947 to 19 September 1948,” Z.H. Zaidi uses an execution metaphor stating that from January-May 1948, “India tightens the noose around Hyderabad to dragoon it into accession⁹³.”

Interestingly, in a letter dated 18 June 1947, the Nizam of Hyderabad made no qualms about openly declaring who exactly he considered to be “enemies” of the state – Hindus. The Nizam wrote to Mr. Jinnah that, “I considered that it was not advisable for you to come here at a time when our enemies (I mean the Hindus) were bent on making all kinds of mischief for this or that in order to gain their own ends...⁹⁴” This statement illustrated the extent to which polarized discourse infiltrated, or was perhaps set by, the top most echelons of the government.

Chapter 4: Muslim “Solidarity”: The Case of Hyderabad India during the 1946-1951

Telangana Armed Struggle

Historiography:

In his seminal book on peasant insurgency that contributed to the founding of the subaltern studies school, historian Ranajit Guha argues that we must understand “insurgency” as

⁹² Z.H. Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, ix.

⁹³ Z.H. Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, xxxv.

⁹⁴ Z.H. Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, 11.

the name of peasant consciousness in which the peasant himself is the maker of his own rebellion. This task requires a look at the peasant as the subject of his own history. In such an attempt, Guha's goal is rather abstract and he also criticizes seeing peasant movements as pre-history of socialist and communist movements in the subcontinent⁹⁵. While he might label it elitist in nature, in fact the Telangana Armed Struggle, as a peasant movement, very significantly impacted the course of future Communist Party of India strategies and actions.

In this chapter, I will illustrate how Muslim identity is intrinsic to class identity, and also that religious identities were often articulated in class terms.

In 1853, Karl Marx called the native princes of India "the strongholds of the present abominable English system and the greatest obstacles to Indian progress"⁹⁶. Despite this accusation of India's princes as collaborationist, it is important to focus on resistance to one such prince, the Nizam of Hyderabad during the Telangana Armed Struggle of 1946-1951, as well as to the British overlords. The Communist Party of India was one organization that comprised the resistance, in addition to the Comrades Association, and the Andhra Mahasabha. These organizations had Muslim members who identified as both political radicals, in that they sought to change the state structured *deshmukh*⁹⁷-system through revolutionary means, as well as identifying as Muslims, and what it meant to be a "revolutionary Muslim" will be engaged with in this chapter. The state-sympathizing ruling party, the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen⁹⁸ ("Council for the Unity of Muslims" or "Muslim Unity Party"), however, was interested in maintaining the status quo that privileged feudal lords in state administration, to uphold the chauvinistic aims of Muslims in power in the state. The aforementioned radical political organizations were opposed

⁹⁵ Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, (Durham: Duke University Press), 1999, introduction.

⁹⁶ Raj Bahadur Gour, *Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle*, (New Delhi: Communist Party Publication, 1973), 1.

⁹⁷ Hereditary collector of revenue for groups of villages

⁹⁸ The *Majlis* from here on.

to the *Majlis* and it is fallacious to assume that all Muslims of Hyderabad state allied with the Nizam simply because they were minority coreligionists, a portion of whom dominated state institutions that ruled over a majority Hindu populace. In other words, “solidarity”, was not strictly along religious lines and being Muslim as well as politically radical were not two wholly separate identities during this time in Hyderabad. In fact, Muslim religious identity was articulated in class terms. Furthermore, I argue that speaking up and speaking out left the Muslim, whether as a CPI or *Majlis* member, in a compromised position as it meant running the risk of being labeled a *kafir* (unbeliever) on one side, or a “communal” on the other. An event that illuminates these points is the Telangana armed struggle of 1946-1951 in the princely state of Hyderabad.

Background on British India, Hyderabad, and Telangana:

At the advent of independence from Britain and the partition of India into the Indian and Pakistani nation-states in 1947, the former British India had experienced nearly two hundred years of some form of subservience to British commercial interests⁹⁹ or the Crown. With 565-odd princely states in the British dominion, Hyderabad was the second largest next to Kashmir in the north.

The *jagirdari* system of state patronage evolved from the time of the Delhi Sultanate of the thirteenth century to a system of British imperial support up until the twentieth century. This system involved a *jagir*, or landholder in the state receiving revenue from the land and submitting it in taxes to the greater ruler of the state in a pledge of economic and political loyalty. As for Hyderabad’s specific system of land tenure, it had this *jagirdari* system as well as the *diwani* system which was similar to the *ryotwari* system. With the *diwani* system, the landholders were not owners, but were treated as registered occupants of the land.

⁹⁹ The British East India Company

Hyderabad in the twentieth century was composed of three subsidiary regions – Marathwada, Karnataka, and Telangana. The first region was primarily Marathi speaking, the second Kannada speaking, and Telangana having a majority of Telugu speakers and formed fifty percent of the area, however; it was not until 1956 that the linguistic reorganization of the states occurred and these demarcations were made official by the central government. Despite having a majority of Telugu speakers, Urdu was the language of the state and its administration.

The Telangana Armed Struggle – Response to the Land Tenure System:

The Telangana Armed Struggle, the Telangana People’s Struggle, or the Telangana Revolution was led in the rural areas by the vanguard Communist Party of India members operating largely from Hyderabad city. The oppressive land tenure system as well as a number of major events on the agrarian scene in Telangana in the 1930s contributed to the actual struggle. For one, the cultivation of commercial crops transformed subsistence agriculture and introduction of the market economy had occurred. Secondly, there was large-scale eviction of the tenants by landholders during the 1930s and 1940s. Lastly, the number of agricultural laborers dramatically increased and these laborers received very little compensation for their work¹⁰⁰. The Andhra Mahasabha formed in 1930 was the largely Telugu speaking dominated party that raised awareness about agricultural oppression in the countryside. Furthermore, it was also a cover organization for the Communist Party of India that had been banned in the state at the start of the Second World War in 1939. This organization, in 1945, resolved to overthrow the Nizam and engage in an armed struggle to remove the *jagirdari* system of land ownership. The Armed Struggle formally commenced in July 1946. The Communist Party of India recruited peasant women to participate in the struggle and there were many women who were created into heroines of the movement.

¹⁰⁰ Singharoy, 71.

With the Partition of India into the sovereign countries India and Pakistan, Hyderabad was expected to accede to the Indian Union as it was contiguous with it; however, the Nizam refused to accede. In response to this refusal, as well as what the Indian army saw as increasing chaos incited by the Communist Party of India, invaded on September 13, 1948 in a “Police Action” just two days following Jinnah’s death. From 1947 to 1948, the village councils achieved increasing success over landlords as the Nizam’s “administrative machinery came to a standstill in nearly 4000 villages¹⁰¹.” However, it was too difficult for the peasant armed struggle to withstand the awesome force of the Indian army and in 1951, the Communist Party of India politburo called off the struggle.

A lasting legacy of the struggle was the abolition of *vetti* or bonded labor and land was redistributed. Tenants were given full tenancy rights and armed women successfully defended themselves and fought back against the *Razakars*.

Puchalapalli Sundarayya, or Comrade PS as he was popularly known, a chief leader of the Telangana armed struggle, describes in his account of the struggle that the Indian Union army invaded Hyderabad on September 13, 1948 with the express purpose of “curbing Razakar violence on the people and making the Nizam accede to the Indian Union” while also intending to suppress “Communist violence (114).” Comrade PS notes that “ordinary Muslim people” not those of the likes of the Razakaar leader Kasim Razvi or other *deshmukhs*, who actually stood against the Nizam’s atrocious actions, “were pounced upon and untold miseries were inflicted on them.” It was their Hindu neighbors in the villages that rescued such ordinary Muslims from the “campaign of rape and murder indulged in by the Union armies.” He ends this section of his account by extolling the movement and saying that “it can take pride of this important achievement, namely, Hindu-Muslim unity in the villages just at a time when Hindu-Muslim

¹⁰¹ Sanghatana, 14.

riots could have been sparked off and could have spread like wildfire.” Lastly, he states that where the democratic Telangana movement was weak, hatred against and attacks on Muslims were widespread¹⁰².

Muslim Representation in the State:

A pro-Nizam party was the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. They advocated that every Muslims should raise the slogan ‘*An-al Malik*’, meaning “We are the rulers”. Kasim Razvi undertook the leadership of the Majlis in 1946, and it was his Razakars, or para-military wing of the Majlis, that inflicted notorious crimes upon the people of Hyderabad including looting, rapes, and killings.

The Comrades Association opposed the rule of the Nizam and many progressive minded Muslims joined the Association. When the Communist Party was banned from 1939 (the start of the War) to 1942, the Comrades Association functioned as a platform for communists¹⁰³.

The Comrades Association was the organization representing the CPI in Hyderabad city. Gulam Hyder, Raj Bahadur Gour, and Makhdoom Mohiuddin were its chief members.

Connecting the rural to the urban, documents by the Communist Party of India’s politbureau said that Telangana and other such struggles are only partial struggles in that they can only be fully realized when “the working class in the cities is able to capture power” and only then can “agrarian struggles [...] develop up to the point of liberation¹⁰⁴.”

To get at this issue of Muslim identity, representation, and solidarity, I will analyze a pair of Muslim sisters, Jamalunnisa Begum and Razia Baja involved in the Communist Party of India during the struggle as well as Makhdoom Mohiuddin, the revolutionary poet and activist – also a

¹⁰² PS, 189.

¹⁰³ Sanghatana, 9.

¹⁰⁴ CPI docs, 306.

communist. I have chosen these three figures due to ease of these sources to express the religious identity of the figures that I am focusing on.

Jamalunnisa Baji and Razia Begum – Communist Party of India Sisters:

Jamalunnisa Baji (1911-2012) or “Baji”, and Razia Begum were two Muslim sisters that pledged loyalty to the Communist Party of India. Their interview is documented in a collection of oral histories called *'We Were Making History...': Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle*. They are significant as their home was “practically a center of radical activity in the city at that time¹⁰⁵.” The sisters’ oral history selection can be divided into two main parts – one that focuses on Muslim social culture revolving around the issue of *purdah* and one that focuses on the leftist culture of political activism in Hyderabad during their lives.

Baji declared, “We were labeled *kaffirs* very early. In 1928 we were 12 or 13 years old. We bought *Nigar* and read it. It influenced all of us. The *swadeshi* movement also influenced us¹⁰⁶.” Baji's statement regarding her and her sister being labeled *kaffirs*, presumably by fellow Muslims, is illuminating as it sets up the context in how Muslim membership to the Communist Party of India is viewed by other Muslims. Clearly, there was an impression of CPI members as atheists due to the opposition to religion as a part of Communist beliefs. Jamalunnisa Baji goes on to describe how a Brahmin boy used to come to the house to teach Razia English and she remarks that “very few girls were educated in those days¹⁰⁷.” Interestingly, while Razia Begum describes the lively literary activities flourishing in her and her sister's home, she mentions that the two of them did not read much of Marxist literature. Regarding religious rituals, Razia stated:

¹⁰⁵ Sanghatana, 278.

¹⁰⁶ Sanghatana, 172.

¹⁰⁷ Sanghatana, 172.

“Yes, I prayed from my seventh class. I learnt to recite the Quran. I kept the fasts and performed *Namaz*¹⁰⁸. When I came to college I slowly gave up everything – all these rituals. I felt God and rituals were different. That was the influence of the articles and the discussion in *Nigar*¹⁰⁹ .

Here, Razia Begum explicitly states that she went from being more concerned with daily Muslim rituals to becoming more apathetic when it came to such rituals as her level of formal education advanced. Jamalunnisa Baji goes on to say that during a religious function, she and her sister would propagate their new found beliefs that the “content of religion did not lie in these rituals¹¹⁰.” Furthermore, Baji stated, “we referred to *Seerat-un-Nabi*¹¹¹ which had been written after the time of the Prophet and offered different interpretations.” Returning to the issue of defining what a “Muslim” is in the context of this historical event, the Telangana Armed Struggle, these two sisters' stories illustrate the tension between the ritualistic and rationalistic articulations of the religion as exemplified by the daily prayers and the *Nigar* publication for examples. So in this case, Razia Begum shows that Muslim can mean one that adheres to the ritualistic aspects of the faith as well as what she transformed later to – someone who discards the ritualistic aspects of the faith to focus more on “rationalistic” aspects as delineated in the *Nigar* publication, while still retaining a belief in God and a commitment to his Prophet.

As for the sisters’ roles in the Telangana Armed Struggle and CPI politics in Hyderabad at this time, Jamalunnisa Baji said that “right from the beginning we were close to the left front.” She then goes on to talk about the Progressive Writers’ Association founded in 1941 that Makhdoom, the poet and activist I will soon discuss, used to visit regularly. In addition to the sisters’ attendance at these meetings, Jamalunnisa Baji’s mother attended as well and some would keep up the *purdah* practice by sitting behind collapsible room dividers.

¹⁰⁸ The ritual Muslim five daily prayers.

¹⁰⁹ Sanghatana, 173.

¹¹⁰ Sanghatahana, 173.

¹¹¹ Biography of the Prophet of Islam.

Jamalunnisa Baji became a CPI member in 1946. She describes that she and her family and friends talked of the 1942 Quit India Movement, did not work for it, but had sympathies and from the very beginning, were with the nationalist movement. Describing the black flag demonstration Muslim League leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah called for in protest of the largely Hindu dominated first Indian national government created in 1946, Jamalunnisa Baji states that her family did not follow while instead, her brothers put up a red cloth representing the CPI. The family's neighbors questioned this action.

Razia Begum had an advanced level of education. She did her MA in 1944 and became a lecturer in Women's College. In 1966 she joined the University Arts College and did her doctorate in Persian in Iran. She notes that she had to support the family as her father had retired and the others, most probably her brothers, were working in the CPI. She laments, "In spite of that, we did not feel fully equal to men (178)." Baji complained, "We have a double responsibility. Men have to do only one type of work. Whereas we do both."

As for women involved in the revolt, there are two extremes in which their involvement is depicted. Those are on the one hand the supportive, passive, secondary role and on the other hand, the role of heroine of the struggle¹¹². Many women took part in the struggle with hopes of greater equality for their sex.

In relation to the issue of women's oppression, Sangari and Vaid discuss the purdah or seclusion of upper class Muslim women or Brahmin women as invisible and structural violence¹¹³. Baji recalls that some of the issues discussed in the newly formed Women's Democratic Association were issues like purdah. Speakers such as Progressive Writers' Association members Razia, Sajjad Zaheer and Ismat Chughtai came to speak on the issue.

¹¹² Sangari and Vaid, 181.

¹¹³ Sangari and Vaid, 182.

In 1949, her husband died after which point she was asked to go underground by the Party leadership. The CPI was banned in 1939 and after that action, party members would start coming to her home for meetings. In 1951, A.K. Gopalan, Jyoti Basu, and Muzaffar Ahmed, prominent CPI members from all over India, came to stay at the house opposite the sisters' house. Their father helped them get the house and it was there where they used to hold meetings and long discussions at night dealing with whether or not the Armed Struggle should be called off. After that date, Baji says that she and her comrades started forming women's groups in which they read stories and discussed Maxim Gorky.

Lastly, a year following the end of the Armed Struggle – 1952 – Makhdoom asked Baji to work among women by forming women's social and economic advancement groups¹¹⁴.”

To sum up, Jamalunnisa Baji and Razia Begum's political activity and commentary on Muslim female social life in Hyderabad suggest a commitment to progressive ideals as embodied by their chapter of the Communist Party of India and the women's associations, as well as identification as being Muslim as exhibited by their critical engagement with their faith.

Makhdoom Mohiuddin – Revolutionary Urdu Poet and Activist:

Makhdoom Mohiuddin (1908-1969), popularly known as Makhdoom, and the family friend of the Communist Party of India sisters, was a revolutionary Urdu poet and activist who took part in the Telangana Armed Struggle and led the Comrades Association in Hyderabad city. Makhdoom Mohiuddin, as well as other Comrades Association members, joined the CPI in 1940. Makhdoom was its first secretary in Hyderabad city, and Raj Bahadur Gour was its assistant secretary. Unlike Jamalunnisa Baji and Razia Begum, Makhdoom was well-acquainted with Marxist thought and he started a Marxist study circle with some fellow revolutionaries¹¹⁵. He

¹¹⁴ Source, 176.

¹¹⁵ Alam, 6.

was one of the signatories on the CPI agenda calling for the start of an armed struggle. Scholar John Roosa calls Makhdoom the “most prominent Muslim antagonist to the *Majlis*¹¹⁶.” Raj Bahadur Gour, a close comrade of Makhdoom focuses Makhdoom's memoir on describing Makhdoom's marrying his romantic poetry to his life of labor organizing and Communist leadership. It is this memoir, as well as Makhdoom's poetry, that I will use to analyze Makhdoom as a Muslim as well as a political radical.

Raj Bahadur Gour describes Makhdoom as being raised in a religious environment, “He had to offer prayers regularly and also had to serve the faithful by sweeping the mosque and by fetching water and so on¹¹⁷.” According to a biographer named Mughni Tabassum, Makhdoom was educated in both Arabic and Persian in addition to Hadith and the rudiments of Islamic law. He completed lessons of the Holy Qur’an at a young age and would say his prayers regularly. He regularly fasted during the holy month of Ramadan, he swept the floor of the mosque, and gave the call to prayer there as well¹¹⁸. Such a description suggests his strong commitment to Muslim religious rituals and practice. There is little data on the status of Makhdoom's commitment to religious rituals later on in his life during his political organizing days, however; we can draw some conclusions regarding his outlook on Islam from his poetry immediate directly preceding, during, and after the Armed Struggle.

Haveli – The Palace (1944)

A moribund society in its death-throes is taking tribute from the dead.
There is agony, darkness and ruin all around.
How frightful and dark are these cracks in the wall!
The abode of snakes and scorpions –
Which shelter the rich and the mahajan, the obscurantist Brahmin and the hypocritical mullah¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁶ Roosa, 549.

¹¹⁷ Raj Bahadur Gour, *Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle*, 3.

¹¹⁸ Tabassum in Alam, 2.

¹¹⁹ Raj Bahadur Gour, *Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle*, 5.

Ek nayi dunia naya Adam banaayaa jayega
Surkh parcham aur uncha ho, baghaavant zindaabad (Alam 131)

A new world, a new humanity will be fashioned
And the red flag held aloft, long live the rebellion (Alam xvii)

This poem invokes the first creation of God and the first prophet of the faith – Prophet
Adam – as the new humanity that will be made as a result of a revolution.

Dayare hind ka wo rahbar Telangana
Bana rahaa hai nai ek sehar Telangana.
Bula raha hai ba simt-e-degar Telangana
Wo inqilaab ka paighaamber Telangana.

Telangana, the one that leads India
Telangana, the creator of a new dawn
Telangana, calls for a new direction
Telangana, the herald (prophet) of revolution (Alam 130)

Makhdoom continues with the theme of a prophet, this time using that imagery to
compare Telangana as a new herald or prophet of the revolution.

Oh God of heaven and earth, the one in every heart
Behold, the sad state of your masterpiece
Leprous bodies that robes of faith cannot hide
And flames of hunger that the Prophet cannot douse¹²⁰ - 1939

Here, Makhdoom tells God that while He is indeed everywhere, his ever presence is may
not matter so much as his creation is in a “sad state”. Moazzam argues that it may not have been
of Islam that Makhdoom was critical, but rather the political environment in Hyderabad and
specifically the polarized environment created by the *Majlis*. Moazzam further bolsters his
statement by noting that there was no evidence of any anti-Islamic sentiment in the emerging

¹²⁰ Alam, 96.

Progressive Movement; nor did it exist in the compositions of the Progressive Writers¹²¹. (Alam 96).

The Progressive Writers Movement originated in 1936 in Lucknow and according to its first manifesto it sought to: Rescue literature and other arts from the priestly, academic and decadent classes in whose hands they have degenerated so long; to bring the arts into the closest touch with the people; and to make them the vital organ which will register the actualities of life, as well as lead us to the future¹²².” It was Makhdoom who formed the Hyderabad unit of the Progressive Writers’ Association in 1940¹²³. To reiterate the above point, it was not Islam per se that Makhdoom was so virulently lashing out against, but the very appropriation of the faith by the chauvinistic *Majlis* organization that Makhdoom criticized.

Following the end of the Telangana Armed Struggle in 1951, Makhdoom remained committed to Muslim imagery in his poems. For example, upon hearing about Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination, Makhdoom wrote:

This is not the murder of one man
This is the murder of truth, equality, nobility,
...
The murder of nature’s masterpiece is the murder of God
This dusk is the “dusk of the dispossessed”
This dawn, the “dawn of Hunayn”
This is the murder of the Messiah, this if the murder of Husain¹²⁴.

Using the imagery from a historic battle the Prophet of Islam took part in as well as alluding to the martyrdom of the Prophet’s grandson, Husain, Makhdoom shows a commitment to religious imagery.

¹²¹ Alam, 96.

¹²² Hyder, 183.

¹²³ Raj Bahadur Gour, *Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle*.

¹²⁴ Hyder, 162.

Furthermore, Anwar Moazzam draws a distinction between the spiritual and the religious as embodied by the Islamic metaphysical concept. Some analyses of Makhdoom's poetry identify his words evoking a spiritual longing, rather than affiliation to any Islamic metaphysical concept¹²⁵. However, I do not subscribe to the notion of divorcing the "spiritual" from the "religious" in the context of defining Muslim identity. To me, Muslim identity in the context of politics in Hyderabad during this time, particularly during the Telangana Armed Struggle, could mean an adherence to ritualistic Muslim practice, in the case of *Majlis* members or it could mean giving up religious rituals as one grew older in favor of Marxism, speaking of the "spiritual" in one's poetry, and still organizing fellow Muslims and identifying with that community in the case of the CPI sisters and Makhdoom Mohiuddin.

Conclusion:

So what does it mean to be Muslim? And, what were the implications of being labeled a *kafir* or a communal?

Muslim identity in the context of politics in Hyderabad during this time, particularly during the Telangana Armed Struggle, could mean an adherence to ritualistic Muslim practice, in the case of *Majlis* members. Muslim identity could also mean giving up religious rituals as one grew older in favor of Marxism, speaking of the "spiritual" in one's poetry, and still organizing fellow Muslims and identifying with that community in the case of the CPI sisters and Makhdoom Mohiuddin.

Muslim solidarity between the *Majlis* and Muslims in the CPI did not exist. In fact, the Comrades Association was a majority Muslim political organization that was anti-Nizam and progressive in character.

¹²⁵ Alam, 92.

The intersection between religion, class, and politics as examined in this paper points to several issues that have yet to remain addressed for further research. \

“Naturally, both the Hindu and Muslim communalists divided the poor Hindus and Muslims, between them ranged them each against the other, forgot the main enemy, the feudal aristocracy which continued to rule the roost¹²⁶.”

Chapter 5: Conclusions

In the case of Pakistan-associated narratives, identities got articulated and framed in the language of communitarianism that fueled an increasingly acrimonious discourse on the role of Hindus and Muslims in the state. Indian nationalist-associated narratives followed a similar case. This type of rhetoric was employed for politically expedient ends. In the case of Telangana, however, it was that Muslim identity was articulated in class language and framed as intrinsic to a class identity. While presentations of the nature of the land tenure system as Hindu peasant versus Muslim overlord existed, the struggle itself was not communitarian in nature. In fact, a prominent Muslim poet, Makhdoom Mohiuddin, led the struggle from the city and the Communist Party of India was multifaith in character.

Discourse surrounding being “communal” or the phenomenon of “communalism” is important to analyze because it can deprive legitimacy to a particular cause or organization. In the case of Hyderabad, Indian nationalist supported narratives as well as Pakistan supported narratives differed but also had one important thing in common – they polarized discourse to such an extent to reinforce an antagonism among the different faith groups, Hindus and Muslims, in Hyderabad.

The first question I posed was, “What does Telangana tell us about what has gone on with Muslims in Hyderabad?” Telangana is significant to understand in an analysis of

¹²⁶ Raj Bahadur Gour, *Glorious Telengana Armed Struggle*, 9.

Hyderabad's history because the armed struggle in that region contributed to the forced accession of Hyderabad to the Indian Union as communist guerilla squads attacked the Razakars and essentially fought on the side of the Indian Union forces.

I also asked, "Was Muslim identity instrumentally invoked or was this religious identity intrinsic to class identity?" This specific religious identity was not instrumentally invoked, but rather it was intrinsic to class identity.

Lastly, "What is the Telangana take on the Police Action?" To an extent, this question runs into the previous question asked about what Telangana tells us about what went on with Muslims in Hyderabad. The Telangana Armed Struggle participants viewed the accession as a necessary evil to rid the state of the Majlis' paramilitary wing, the Razakars, that were committing loot, arson, and other egregious crimes with the tacit and sometimes not so tacit support of Hyderabad's nizam.

To return to the extant literature on princely India, in the case of Hyderabad, a "hollowing of the crown" that argues for a lack of agency among princes in India is not well-suited for the Hyderabad case, in particular the nizam played a major role in affairs that went on in the state, particularly as related to his allied political party, the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen.

As for analysis surrounding sovereignty during this time period, I examine the period – the Police Action – Eric Beverley's focus. While Eric Beverley argues for a situation of layered sovereignty, I examine the unitary nature of sovereignty as vested in the personality of the nizam. It was, however, with the founding of the state-allied Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen that the organization's founder, Bahadur Yar Jang, argued for sovereignty to lay not with the personality of the nizam, but with the Muslim community in Hyderabad as a whole. This argument had implications for communitarian relations in the state because an increasingly

privileged in the state bureaucracy, though not completely dominant due to their religion, Muslim community came to be identified as superior to other faith communities in the state. As a result, calls rallying for Hyderabad's independence as a sovereign Muslim state were put forward.

There are implications for this research and analysis as I have laid it out. For instance, what is the intersection between religious and class based identity and how does such an intersection play a role in social movements? What happens if the opposite from this case study happens – that religious identity is instrumental to class identity rather than intrinsic? These are relevant questions that further research can address.

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