THE KHAKSAR MOVEMENT

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Mr. Talbot gives an excellent exposition of how the Khaksar Movement, which started as a religious reform and social service association, became a military organization and menaced peace and order in the country.

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More than a year has passed since the Khaksars, the "belcha brigade" that preaches humility and service to mankind, sprung into public notice by defying with arms for three months and three days the government of the capital of the Punjab and premier city of northern India. Their emergence came on March 19, 1940, when Khaksar soldiers armed with sharpened spades and the symbolic kafan (a soldier's shroud which he wraps around his head as a turban) marched through Lahore streets in open challenge to the Punjab government rules forbidding military formations. Details of police, ordered to stop them, were caught unawares when the Khaksars charged instead of yielding. Spades smashed some heads; the police guns replied without delay. When the fight was over, a deputy superintendent of police had been mortally wounded, two policemen had been killed and a number of others injured, and thirty Khaksars lay dead (according to official figures; in a later enquiry Khaksar witnesses charged that upwards of 200 bodies of their fellows had been spirited away).

The revolt never threatened the existence of the government; it never even necessitated action by the military, although army detachments were moved into ready position. Yet it was sufficiently widespread and it lasted long enough so that from that March day until the first of the following December in Lahore alone 901 persons were arrested or prosecuted for participation in illegal activities with the Khaksars. Throughout the Punjab 1,710 persons were arrested, of them 547 were released by the government before the expiry of their terms and 122 more distinguished themselves in prison by assaulting jail guards. \(^1\) In Lahore there were 58 arrested but released without being charged with a crime, 35 discharged by the court for lack of sufficient evidence, 168 acquitted of the crimes charged against them, 412 fined and imprisoned, 19 ordered to furnish security to keep the peace, 25 released when they had rendered apologies that were accepted, and 184 still pending cases. In all the under-trial cases the use of violence is charged; bookings are on

Answer to question in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, February 27, 1941.
accusations of murder, attempted murder, attempt to commit hurt, and membership in an unlawful assembly.

At the end firm action by the government reduced the Khaksars to a state of lethargy from which they have not so far arisen. But still important are the social causes that gave such smashing impetus to a philosophy that teaches simultaneously the brotherhood of man and the battle tactics of infantry.

The Lahore incident was not the inaugural public conflict of the nine-year-old movement. Though not in the early days considered a menace to law and order, it never shrank from shouting "murder" or naming intended victims. The first blood was spattered at Bulandshahr, United Provinces, in August, 1939. It was Khaksar blood (shed while resisting arrest), and hardly was it dry before it became martyrs' blood. The six martyrs were Punjabis on their way to settle in their own manner a Shia-Sunni dispute that was rending the Muslims of Lucknow, the capital city of the United Provinces. The Khaksars' Supreme Ruler, Allama Innayatullah Khan, called Al Mashriqi ("Sage of the East"), had ordered them there after he had conducted a long war of nerves in his official Khaksar organ, Al Islah, that had exceeded all conceivable bounds of diplomatic usage. On June 12, 1939, he had written bluntly about the Shia-Sunni dispute that those who took part in it deserved death according to the Quran, and that if they reached no compromise in a fortnight three from each sect would be executed by the Khaksars. On June 30, after Ahrar Muslims and the Muslim Youth League had offered to protect the leaders against the Khaksars, Al Islah announced that three Janbaz Khaksars (Janbazes pledge themselves to give up their lives fighting for the cause) were prepared to go to Lucknow to do the job. On July 21, the periodical predicted an Armageddon in the United Provinces, the reddening of the streets of Lucknow with blood, the extinguishing of the "satanic Government" (the Indian National Congress party ministry), and even the coming of an earthquake. On August 7, Inayatullah sent this telegram to the government of the United Provinces: "Orders 3,000 Khaksars issuing, forcible settlement Lucknow dispute. Ready co-operation Government provided reasonable conditions acceptable Shia-Sunni offered. Please wire intention." Naturally the government did not reply, although to a reminder in gentler tone it answered that it itself was desirous of ending the dispute, and that but for

Since the writing of this article by the author, the Khaksar Organization again became active. Learning that the Khaksars had decided to embark upon organised defiance of the law, the Government of India took steps early last June to declare the organization to be an unlawful association and advised the Provincial Governments to take all the action that they consider necessary to dispel the menace.—Editor.
the interference of Punjabis that would have been done. Al Islah replied with a threat to smash the United Provinces government and to use force against the Shia and Sunni leaders. Allama Mashriqi then ordered Khaksars to march to Lucknow. Some were arrested on the way; those six were killed. Others arrived successfully in Lucknow, but government immediately forbade all public assemblies. Wahiduddin Haidar, the local captain, was later publicly flogged by command of Al Mashriqi on the charge of having obeyed these orders of the civil authorities. The leader himself arrived on August 25, and in a speech to his followers told them "to take lives, to beat and kill these men and drive them away." A young hawker was in fact beaten; some Muslims were attacked with spades, and an editor's life was threatened. Said the Leader: "We do believe in violence. Nonviolent people must be stamped out from the face of the world. Nonviolence is unnatural."

The situation worsened, and Inayatullah was arrested on the night of September 1. Argument still goes on as to what happened after that. The government released him the next day on the basis of an agreement, it says, he wrote out and presented in the presence of jail officials, Khan Bahadur Hafiz Ahmad Hussain, a member of the Legislative Council, and others. This is the published text:

'I hereby give an undertaking that for a year after the date of the withdrawal of the notice under section 107, I will neither enter the United Provinces nor permit or order batches of Khaksars from any other province to enter the United Provinces. Khaksars of the United Provinces will be instructed not to interfere in the Lucknow Shia-Sunni dispute. I give this letter to the Chief Secretary to Government for his assurance.

(Sd.) INAYATULLAH."

Inayatullah left the jail and took a train to Delhi. Before reaching Delhi, however, he got off and wanted to start back to Lucknow. But after a transfer he changed his mind again, and finally arrived in Delhi as he had planned. There, according to the government story, he found that his prestige had suffered painfully from his backing down, and that his counsellors felt he had retreated. Inayatullah's own testimony was that the undertaking was a complete forgery, and that not only had he not given it but he had not learned of it until he reached Delhi. Again with great publicity, he started for Lucknow. But on the way he was arrested and eventually sentenced to a month's imprisonment and a fine of fifty rupees or a further week in confinement.

This incident has been recited at some length to bring out several features of Khaksarism. First, there is the incitement to battle and even to death that had been induced within the ranks. Secondly, there is the clear
application of leadership principle. Thirdly, there is the highly developed
name-calling, with the choice of horrible names at that. Fourthly, one sees
a brutal, regimented internal discipline which (as in the case of Wahiduddin
Haidar) tended to cast contumely on the established government. Fifthly,
there is the curious weakness evidenced at a crucial moment by the presumably
iron leader of iron men.

The same elements show themselves in the Lahore warfare. For weeks
before March 19, Al Islah played its role of "softening up" the legal
government. In Lahore the Khaksars' quarrel was with a Punjab government
order of March, 1940, banning private military organizations, activities,
processions and demonstrations. The government held that this decree,
issued under the Defence of India Act, was not aimed exclusively at the
Khaksars but at all the private military bodies, mostly communal, that had
sprung up in the Punjab in the days of war tension, and that the order did
not interfere with the social and religious activities of the Khaksars. The
Khaksars did not agree with the restrictions. Al Islah shouted: "If
the Punjab government declares war, the provincial leaders of fifteen
provinces of India will send 30,000 Khaksar soldiers to Lahore within one
week." In case this threat might be construed as too impersonal, the orders
became more specific. Again Al Islah trumpeted: "In case war is
declared they (Khaksars) should reach the bed of Sir Sikandar [Sikandar
Hyat Khan, the Muslim premier of the Punjab] from every part of India
within five days and surround it with corpses."

Sure enough, the Khaksars came from the Punjab and from other
provinces, particularly the Northwest Frontier. They appeared suddenly on
March 19, marching through the streets in military formation, each man
carrying a spade with sharpened edges, their symbolic belcha. The police
tried ordinary crowd-dispersal tactics. Almost before they knew it, the face of
Mr. Gainsford, the Senior Superintendent of Police, had been smashed out of
recognition with a spade. Soon Deputy Superintendent Beatty fell, to die
later, of spade and knife wound. Two other policemen were killed. Rifle fire
rattled through narrow Tibbi Bazaar until by official count thirty Khaksars lay
dead. Khaksars were pulled out of surrounding houses and shops; Khaksars
themselves assert that the bodies of at least 170 more of their numbers were
secretly carried away by the police that day. Yet even a general roundup of
Khaksars after those first hours of battle did not break the defiance. Allama
Mashriqi hastily moved from his headquarters in the Lahore suburb of Ichhra
to Delhi, outside of the Punjab. Before he was arrested there later, bank
accounts in his name totalling Rs. 100,000 were forfeited.

Even without the services of a leader who again had run away, the
Khaksars in Lahore kept fighting. Bands of them installed themselves in mosques in all parts of the city. Sympathisers fed them, and the police refrained from going into the mosques after them. Only on their frequent defiant sorties out into the streets and bazaars did the authorities clash with them. Tear gas was used against a party of Khaksars once, the first time that tear gas had been seen in Lahore. The situation grew still more complicated when woman Khaksars appeared in *burqas*; finally temporary policewomen were appointed to penetrate the *purdah*. So many mosques were held that the police could not organize themselves to guard each one, and rarely were they quick enough to catch a foray from any one of them. Not until June 10 did a senior police official finally take the responsibility of sending his forces inside the mosques (which are no more sanctuaries for criminals than are Protestant churches) to arrest the lot. Raiding parties had their fights, and the Khaksars even then were not all cleared out in one day. On June 22 it was announced that the defiance was broken, and that no more Khaksars remained in open challenge of police authority.

In Lahore again, as in the United Provinces, Khaksars had resorted to public flogging, a favourite form of punishment, for discipline. As we have seen they had also followed their leaders (despite the disappearance of the Supreme Leader); they had fought to death; they had thrown a preliminary barrage of threats. How, what and why are these Khaksars who operate according to their own tenets?

First, as to numbers. At their peak during the Lahore incident, a half million members were claimed for them, although no authoritative figures have been published. Their treasury, subleaders said, contained about Rs. 170,000. An Indian periodical, *The Illustrated Weekly*, estimated that 800 local units were functioning and that one donor alone, Mir Nur Hussain of Tanda-Bago, Sind, had contributed some Rs. 800,000. In addition to cash members have pledged to the treasury supplies of rents, horses and other equipment.

Secondly, as to the leader, Allama Mashriqi. He is a curious man who has had a curious career. Fifty-three years old (on August 25, 1941), he was born in Amritsar in Central Punjab. After a brilliant academic career, he took his degree from Cambridge University when he was 19 years old, having been in Christ College and read the mechanical science tripos as well as Arabic and mathematics. He joined the Indian Educational Service. During the last war he was raised to the Assistant Secretaryship of the Government of India, Education Department. Later he became Director of Public Instruction in the Northwest Frontier Province. But then he began to fall into eclipse; it has been suggested that the Government, with growing reason, considered
him a nuisance. First he was transferred to the Islamic College, Peshawar, where he was made Professor of Mathematics. Finally he was reduced to the headmastership of the Government High School in Peshawar. Dissatisfied, he resigned from the service in 1930.

In the meantime he had been developing ideas about personal discipline and the need for hardiness in life. It is a fact that he met and conferred with Adolf Hitler in the days of the German republic. Allama Mashriqi has even claimed to have introduced to Hitler the leadership principle. They both advocate it, at any rate, and both in their respective organizations demand complete, unquestioning obedience. Inayatullah's later foreign connections are still not publicly known. The Punjab premier, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, has, however, declared that "Government are satisfied that there are definite indications of a real connection between the Khaksar movement and the enemies of this country."

Hitler gathered the youth of Germany around him with a message of hope, action and purpose at a time when a weak republic had left them frustrated, confused, and uncertain of the future. Khaksars decry facile, or what they call superficial, comparisons of themselves and the Nazis. Yet in India too there has been a youthful generation, particularly among the educated and the Muslims, who have felt the same despair. A university graduate, if not one of the lucky few to win a government post, may sell his talents for Rs. 35 a month. In Madras, graduates join the police force for even less. In the United Provinces they go into the post office. The bachelor of arts' training teaches the young Indian to be a clerk, and little else. His university cultural stimulations make him dissatisfied with an empty life. Yet he knows India well enough to feel the futility of trying to rise above his father, and no friend appears who seems able to make life satisfying.

Allama Mashriqi saw and recognized this state of affairs. In a call to the people issued sometime later he has listed the "seven principal tribulations" of Mussalmans and the way in which the Khaksars overcome them. They are these:

1. Religious sectarianism. In Khaksars there are no debates, only action.
2. Lack of equality. In Khaksars everyone wears one uniform and stands in one line.
3. Loss of sense of obedience. Obedience is the essence of the Khaksars.
4. Lack of leadership ability. From neighbourhood leaders up, Khaksars give dictatorial power coupled with complete responsibility.
5. Absence of public support for reforms. The Khaksars give this support.
6. Physical unfitness. The Khaksars build fitness.
7. Lack of firmness. The Khaksars are instilling this in a nation that "after many unsuccessful movements now . . . is overtaxed and infirm like an old man after a copulation."

Having left the government service, Inayatullah found these ideas growing within him. Building on the rock of the warrior religion of Islam, he evolved the outlines of an organization that should be compact, perfectly disciplined, humble and offering service to mankind, and yet firm, military, strong, courageous and ambitious only to serve the commands of officers. It would help the weak and the women, it would serve the community, it would right social injustice, it would brook no opposition to its programme and, above all, it would follow the commands of Allama Mashriqi implicitly.

He chose the name Khaksar because that means earth-like, or more freely, humble. He wrote, and he spoke, and he agitated. And he found the people coming to him. More and more, marching men were seen in towns and villages carrying their spades, or belchas, at the slope arms position of the British rifle. Each khaki-clad, turban-wearing unit was headed by a flag-bearer carrying the standard whose device is a modification of the Islamic star and crescent. The men behind customarily marched proudly with chins up, chests out, cadence sharp.

Military in their attitude, they also marched under military officers. The Khaksar commander is called a salar. For every neighbourhood (mohalla) in which the Khaksars were organized a salar was appointed. A salar of the next grade commanded five mohallas, and above him is the town salar. Superior commanders are the district salar, the divisional salar, and the provincial salar. The last-named official is an important personage, ranking as "Hakim Allah," or "His Excellency." He merits a salute of 27 guns and is responsible to the Allama Mashriqi for all Khaksar activities within his province. Besides the commanders there are organizing officers for each district and province (the chief organizer of a province ranks a 22-gun salute), special representatives of the central organization in each district and province, and a secret information service of the central executive that operates everywhere as a check on the provincial authorities. Such is the framework of the Khaksar organization.

"It is a movement for men, lions, soldiers and belligerents, and never the movement for women, wives, eunuchs and boys," wrote Al Mashriqi in his influential pamphlet, *The Final Word*, published in 1935. The people believed him.

"When nations are in the throes of death and decline," he argued, "everybody is helpless in finding out the exact source of the mischief, or where the shoe really pinches . . . The one and only way to revivify, to rejuvenate,
to recharge a nation and to set it going is to put action and activity into it... If once the individuals of a nation are infused with courage, power, energy, aspiration, will, and if action is instilled in their limbs—action in hands, feet, body, soul and determination—in short, action and only action, then nothing on earth can stop that nation from its onward march. We are inspiring that preliminary lesson of action and glory, power and determination, kingdom and sovereignty—aye! resistance and war, without which even the slightest progress is impossible in a nation."

Action and glory! Those are the true motive forces. But now having found the mainspring, we can go on to the broad outlines of the movement set forth in the creed which Inayatullah published on October 15, 1937. Here it is:

"1. We, Khaksars, stand for the establishment of an order that will be equal, non-communal and tolerant, yet non-subservient, by the crushing of all communal sentiment and religious prejudices of mankind by our good and serviceful conduct; an order which will afford proper treatment and protection to all communities and will be founded on eternal justice, goodness and goodwill.

"2. The true Islam is the practice of the 'Qurn-i-Awwal' (i.e. the earliest period in Islamic history). The Khaksar soldier does not recognize anything as true Islam other than the practice of the prophet.

"3. The creed preached by the Maulvi today is quite wrong. The Khaksar soldier considers it his duty to stamp out this false creed from the surface of this earth and to propagate once again the true Islamic creed of the prophet.

"4. The Maulvi group did not exist in the 'Qurn-i-Awwal'. Therefore, the Khaksar soldier aims at establishing in its place the order of the Imams who will rule over the nation according to the Islamic Law.

"5. The Khaksar soldier will not interfere with the belief of any section of Muslims, for he considers the freedom of belief as the religious right of every Mussalman; but he stands for unity among all these sections.

"6. The Khaksar soldier considers it the religious right of every Mussalman to follow every bit of the word of the Holy Quran, whether prevalent or non-prevalent; and he is prepared for all sacrifices in order to free such practice from the hold of legal and political regulation of the Government.

"7. The Khaksar soldier stands for (a) regard for the religious and social sentiments of all communities, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, Jew, Untouchable etc., (b) maintenance of their particular culture and customs, and (c) general tolerance; and believes this policy to be the secret of Muslim rule in India for a thousand years.
"8. The Khaksar soldier considers it his first duty of his organization to secure for every community its proper civic rights and to guard its internal and external interests. In order to maintain cordial relations amongst the various communities, the Khaksar soldier is prepared to recognize each community as its ally and comrade, and invites them to be so.

"9. The aim of the Khaksar soldier is to establish sovereignty over the whole world and to secure social and political supremacy through their fine conduct.

"10. The aim of the Khaksar soldier is to establish one Treasury, which has already been set up by the Indian High Command, for the whole of India. He will oppose the establishment of separate exchequers, at whatever cost. The object of this Treasury would for several years to come be to collect funds without spending anything.

"11. The Khaksar soldier believes that he can win over every community and every individual in the world by his goodness and integrity alone. These moral virtues form common property of more or less all religious scriptures.

"12. To ameliorate the economic condition of the community, every Khaksar thinks it his duty to spare no pains in promoting the business of a fellow Khaksar. He believes that he cannot attain his object except by pursuing this course.

"13. Henceforth, the definition of a Muavin or subscribing Khaksar will be as follows: that he will directly subscribe to the Treasury of the Indian High Command at the rate of six pice a month or one rupee a year, and that he will obey any general command issued by the High Command irrespective of all sacrifices involved therein. A Khaksar soldier is positive that one who fails to do this cannot help the Movement to its goal of supremacy, and is consequently of no use to the Movement.

"14. We, Khaksars, are sworn enemies of, and shall take severe revenge even at extreme personal sacrifice upon, treacherous and dishonest leaders who have harmed the national cause and are exploiting the masses, upon the mercenaries of hostile nations, upon anti-national editors and journalists, upon misleading propagandists, upon betrayers of the country's interests, and upon miscreants, to whatever community they may belong, who have stirred up sectarian animosities among the various communities of India or among the various sections or groups of Muslims."

Half the principles relate to religion. In them tolerance is most curiously intermixed with unbending "original orthodoxy" and anti-clericism. Points 8 and 9 declare (a) that the Khaksar considers it his prime duty to help every nation get its just civic rights, and (b) that the ultimate goal of the
Khaksar soldier is world suzerainty and the attainment of political sway over the nation. These are illustrative of many such paradoxes in Khaksar writings. Some of the other credal points also illustrate the loose untidiness of Inayatullah's prose. The Bait-ul-Mal reference seems a point of procedure rather than creed; perhaps it is included because finance is always important.

The creed also touches upon the hierarchy of Khaksars. The *muavin* mentioned in paragraph 13 is the lowest of the order. Above him in the *mujahid*, the ordinary-rank active Khaksar who attends meetings, takes part in Khaksar social and military activities, and pledges himself to obey any order whatsoever. The third rank in the *janbaz*, or life-sacrifice volunteer, who promises to be the first to die at any opportunity, pledges all his possessions to the movement, and signs his vow with his own blood. Some 800 *janbaz*, it is said, formed a sort of "praetorian guard" for the leader. At the top of the pyramid is the *pakbaz* Khaksar. *Pak* means holy, and the *pakbaz* is one who has given up his life and property and has renounced the rest of the world in order to devote himself completely to the Khaksar cause. Broadly the creed shows that the movement is religious, social, and military. Claiming humility, it is ambitious for power. Boasting goodness and integrity, it sets itself up to judge—and execute its judgments by force on—the whole of the rest of the world. Such virtues and such ambitions can be concocted into a heady wine.

Nevertheless, the earlier ideals of physical fitness, social service, inter-communal harmony and the like did attract many. That was the case at the Aligarh Muslim University, which credits itself with preparing India's Muslim leaders of tomorrow. Khaksarism was advancing strongly there in 1939-40, and from December to April the membership doubled from 125 to 250 students. A botany instructor was chief of the unit; several other staff members held provincial posts of leadership. The University Pro-Vice Chancellor demonstrated active sympathy. As the body grew, every new member seemed to feel the urge of a sharper pace of life. Each one picked up the popular round condemnation of the "easy vices" of smoking, the "petty frivolities" of chess and the "lulling cozy comforts" of armchairs. Each one was consciously proud of strengthening himself in neatness, promptness and complete honesty. Indeed, it became a pleasure to deal with students who were Khaksars. Always remembering their new military dignity, they would come up, look me straight in the eye, and say "We'll bring that book to you at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning." And—oh, rare event in India!—their arrival the next day would be neither two minutes late nor minus the desired volume. The half-hour indulgence that one counts in making appointments in India was forgotten. Those lads were straight-forward, confident of themselves, and uninferior. Such
qualities spread through the population would change the face of the country. That attitude did not develop by chance. With his customary pomposity the Allama wrote in *The Final Word* : "The day the (Khaksar) salute becomes rampant among the Khaksars and the day every Mussalman meets the Britisher upon equal footing, fearless of him and of everything except God, and talks to him frankly and boldly, disregarding traditional awe, and brings him down to the earth from the sky—that very day the imposing edifice of the surface grandeur of the British will be lost to human ken."

So much for the effect of the Khaksar doctrines upon the youths who imbibe them. There remains for consideration the attitudes that are bred among the membership regarding religion and social service, and then the means through which such an emotional pitch is employed, *i.e.*, the substitution of dictatorship for democracy and the reliance upon military methods.

As always, the official attitude toward religion was introduced with a sweeping gesture. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and others were invited to become Khaksars. Tolerance was the rule. But a prerequisite to membership was a belief in God and the Day of Judgment. In practice the whole emphasis was on Islam, and none but a Mussalman would be comfortable in the labyrinth of Khaksar doctrines. Within Islam the Khaksars declared themselves to be nonsectarians (witness their interference in a Shia-Sunni dispute with threats to both sides). They were committed to strip away all accretions to the original religion of Muhammad. They demanded the resurrection of the old crusading Islamic religion of fire and sword. "The Khaksar movement has again after 1350 years reiterated the truth that the true fitting example of the Prophet of the True Islam—the original religion of God—means one and only one thing, viz., a soldierly life!" wrote the Allama.

Modern Muslims have not held to that ideal, he declared. The faith has been perverted, softened, made effeminate, and weakened by the professional holy men, the *maulvis* and *maulanas*. Regarding these Arabic-reading men who live in mosques on the contributions of those who come to pray, he wrote: "These ill-fated, villainous leaders have bartered this Islam of movement, unity, equality and kingship for the Islam of stagnancy, sectarianism and slavery. Therefore why should we be duped by them? It (Islam) is not the property of the broad-pated mugwumps wallowing and fattening in the sweat of others' labour. . . . Whatever else this ignorant, decrepit, oblivious, downtrodden, humiliated, helpless, stagnant and filthy wretch in rags may be, at least and verily he is not the leader of the nation."  

The obvious solution for the present unfortunate situation (and others

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3 Allama Mashriqi is not reserved in expressing his opinion of a *maulvi*. These are his words: "A *mulla* or *maulvi* barely subsisting upon crumbs and stored-up soups in filthy
than Inayatullah Khan have deplored the development of an ill-educated priestly caste in Islam) was in the Allama's eyes a purge of the unwanted elements to be conducted by the Khaksars. The Lucknow fracas was to have been the springboard for action in that direction. But it did not come off.

Alongside its programme for religious reform stands the Khaksar platform for social service. Indeed, for some years after the foundation of the Khaksars outsiders considered them primarily a social service group, with the spade as a graphic symbol of their desire to help others. The 1930's were an age of developing social consciousness in India, and Mr. Gopi Nath Srivastava comments in _When Congress Ruled_: "... when the Muslim League deterred the Muslims from joining the Congress and itself failed to canalize their expectations, the Muslims felt inclined to join a movement that promised some social good ... It must be admitted that in the beginning the Khaksars in the United Provinces did not show themselves as a danger to law and order."

Allama Mashriqi laid emphasis from the start on the voluntary and gratuitous service to the community that every Khaksar is willing to give. ("His first and foremost duty is to serve humanity.") It was in this light, he said, that he made to the government an offer to supply 50,000 Khaksars to be under his command for the defence of India in the present war. On a more local scale Aligarh Muslim University Professors and students who were Khaksars took offence when the municipal board refused to hand over to them the responsibility for maintaining its badly-kept roads.

It is not to be thought that such meritorious social service is beneficial only to the recipient. It was part of the Khaksar program because of its effect on the Khaksar himself. Again quoting _The Final Word_: "The introduction of the programme of humanitarian service in the Khaksars has been designed to make the Khaksar bold and fearless, to wear down his fat soul, to straighten his obstinate and proud self and so to make his self the prize of the world by rendering it obedient. It is to raise the Khaksar to greater heights by imposing upon him the apparently degrading service to humanity—in short, it is to give into the hands of the Khaksar the first and last weapon of kingship, or to make him the leader and the nation his servant."

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gourds, living precariously in the dirty and filthy anterooms of the mosque, deceiving himself into cleaning his teeth by the age-old germ-infested toothbrush, openly flouting all the established laws of health and decency and yet considering himself 'pure,' polluting the House of God, shameless and disgraceful, nay, a _mulla_ who has never read even a page of history throughout his life and at that dishonours the art of which Islam is proud, a _mulla_ who is impervious to the meanings of even a single verse of the Quran and who has learnt it merely by rote, a _mulla_ who is oblivious of the existence of firearms and even more of their use, who remains ignorant of the vast Muslim empires, Constantinople, Damascus and Tripoli—has such a _mulla_ any right to instruct us in our religious affairs?"
Perhaps that explains why the spade was made the symbol. According to Inayatullah, the *belcha* derives its significance from the Battle of the Trenches when the Prophet Muhammad leading weaponless Muslims of Medina took up a spade, struck it on a stone while uttering a mighty prophecy, and defeated the invading infidels of Mecca, who were four times the Medinans’ number. In addition the *belcha* has many unsuspected virtues; one poet is said to have found 105 of them. Al Mashriqi lists its uses in such a garbled sequence as: the creation of equality, the ennoblement of labour, a weapon for the soldier on the battlefield, a shield for protection, a pillow in camp, a cushion to sit upon, a cup for drinking water, a kettle for cooking food, an iron plate for baking bread, a staff to walk with, a guide in danger, a friend in travelling, the hope of the poor, the humility of the rich, a guide in darkness, the Islamic symbol by day, etc., etc. The list is long; but in Lahore the spade was employed just to break heads and knock out eyes.

Que of the curious features of Khaksarism is the frequent juxtaposition, of seemingly unrelated themes. Cheek by jowl with social service, for example, is the emphasis on military efficiency, military tactics, military discipline. At a Khaksar training camp a visitor might have heard lectures on service to humanity at 9 o’clock and at 10 o’clock have watched perspiring members spread over a square mile of terrain working out a tactical problem of attack upon a concealed enemy position.

"Every principle and every action of the Khaksar movement is based on military patterns," the Allama wrote. "The Khaksar soldier is not a showy and toy soldier. He is a perfect military man. The Khaksar commander is not a nominal commander. He is a military commander. The line of Khaksars is not a row of toys glittering in gay attire; it is the line of un-daunted fearless soldiers."

Such a boast was not borne out in Lahore, where Khaksars fought the police vigorously, but hardly with superior tactics. After their first surprise attack they never had the advantage of the police, but used only continued needling tactics, dashing out of mosques when the way looked clear, running back inside when the authorities arrived. Yet the Allama is ambitious for his army: "The Khaksar movement is vitally necessary today because all other Indian movements have failed; their armies and soldiers have dispersed. Now we need a permanent standing army which may be unbreakable and really capable of meeting and solving every issue, and which may be able to withstand the enemy . . . The Khaksar soldier is ready to meet all eventualities and he is ready to protect his nation at any and every moment like the army of the government."

The jumble of the Allama’s concepts are shown in a paragraph that
mixes up all the elements together. This is it: "We have made it absolutely-clear to the government that we will be a law-abiding people and have no concern with the muddle of polities. We shall not take the initiative against the government. But our religion, our Islam, our belief is to become a soldier. We have to overwhelm the world and to become united and firm like the Siegfried or the Maginot Line!" That was written before the latter proved useless. 'The greatest weapons with us in this war are the poison of amiability and the machine gun of humility.'

In that one paragraph we have "law-abiding citizens," "overwhelm the world," "united and firm," "poison of amiability," and "machine gun of humility." Mr. Gandhi might have written the last two phrases, Napoleon or Alexander the two before them. These are touches that give Khaksars reason to complain that outsiders do not understand their movement. Perhaps subordinates' talk is a little clearer. Shortly after the Lahore fracas, when in Khaksar circles there was much discussion of martyrs' blood and the time for revenge, a junior salar put the position this way: "Before the Khaksars marched in Lahore their last orders were, 'If there is a scuffle, don't give up. Don't obey the authorities, but only your leaders.' Clashes are tests of obedience. We mean to exploit fully the present position which has been caused by the war, then we will get what we can. We flatly reject constitutional means."

Although such open defiance is heard less frequently now that a year has passed and the organisation has somewhat decayed, there are still staunch believers in the Allama's doctrines. Perhaps most popular among the Muslims, who fear the constitutional majority of Hindus in a future Indian government, is his clear stand against democracy. With Nietzsche he believes that whenever in history any nation has achieved greatness it has resulted from the efforts of a single individual. Like Hitler he spits upon the mob that follows him. "Beggars cannot be choosers," he wrote. "To give them that right is to inflame their beastly nature." He finds a parliament a fraud, and the system of democracy lacking responsibility. He has discovered that European peoples are "slowly recognizing" that for general success and ennoblement dictatorship is more suitable than democratic government. "After centuries Europe is once again realising that as God is the Supreme Authority in the sky and upon the earth and that as he does not tolerate any partnership, therefore dictatorship is the law of nature."

"A single individual is bound by the pricks of his conscience," the argument in favour of a dictator continued. "His brain, heart and liver are his constant companions. He is ever restless for the results of his labours; therefore every action of his is a step forward to the goal. But societies and
organizations do not possess conscience, heart, brains, liver and restlessness; the majority vote and a respect for the majority cast them adrift at the mercy of the storm wheresoever it may lead them." There was no word for the benefits of every man as having a voice in his own destiny or more control over his national executive. Nor, it is needless to add, were such democratic features found in Khaksarism. Each leader was supreme within his sphere, unaccountable in any way to his subordinates. He was responsible for discipline; how he kept it was his own business.

A favourite disciplinary method, by the way, was public flogging with the *durrah*, a leather whip with a wooden handle. The whipper was the *jallad*, or "executioner." If, as in Aligarh, he occasionally did his work so as to induce more humiliation than real physical pain, still he was called upon to give retribution for seemingly quite ordinary crimes. In a Khaksar camp which I visited men were flogged for smoking without permission, admitting strangers into the camp area, tardiness, and absence without leave. Fasting, rigorous prayers and menial service are other strong arms of discipline.

The Khaksars believed in disciplining not only themselves but others as well. One complaint they had against their nation was that it talks too much. "A silent nation is a powerful nation; the power of the English nation lies in its silence." The German defeat in 1918 was ascribed to the fact that the German people had gossiped so much, both truly and falsely, that the whole war structure collapsed. The Khaksars' foundation was laid upon silence, and it would impose that standard upon the nation also.

The press, too, was to have its voice controlled. A Khaksar censorial department for Islamic papers was ordered to be established in 1939. The duties were to eradicate articles against the movement, absence of support of the movement, mutual wrangling and recriminations, publication of obscene and sensational news, obscene advertisements, and obscene pictures, publication of "meaningless literature and poetry," and publication of "improper and anti-Islamic articles." When the *salar* of censorship had black-listed a paper or journal, it was to be the duty of all Khaksars "to see that the paper or journal is rooted out from the soil, and not to give themselves any rest so long as even one copy is received in the locality." 4

It is undeniable that one of the goals of the Khaksars was to make themselves custodians of the public morality. They felt justified in interfering anywhere where a dispute or weakness was in their opinion worsening the fibre of the Muslim community as a whole. I have seen young Khaksar students walk into a village mosque only to bait a hapless *maulvi* without much mercy. Although a section of the younger reformist *maulvis* and *imams* applauded

4 *Al Islah*, December 16, 1939.
such tactics as a method of cleaning up the profession, many orthodox teachers used to writhe to watch them.

Government, too, got considerably more worried as the Khaksars extended their discipline to outsiders. It has been suggested that at moments the policies of both the United Provinces and the Punjab governments in regard to the Khaksars were dominated more by fear and uncertainty of their opponents than by logic. That is understandable. Ascribing every possible virtue to the Khaksars—and there are a number—they still constituted a private army. If it happened that Allama Mashriqi had no ambitions to use them in greater challenges to legal government, officials could always consider the possibility of a palace revolution that would throw to the top a leader prepared to seek advantage from the conditions existing in India.

India is a divided nation. Her pieces are held together by superior British power. Not even the pressure of an internal war, to which she is officially a party, has united Hindus and Muslims. Should the British control suddenly be withdrawn from the country one of three courses might develop. Parliamentary democracy might take charge under Indian control; but at present even that form of parliamentarianism which operated from 1937 until the outbreak of war is not functioning in the seven provinces where the Indian Congress holds a majority. Conditions would have to be very favourable for parliamentary government to succeed if the change should come during war. The second possibility is that a dictator and his following would seize the reins that drive the Indian bureaucracy, and so repeat the Turkish performance of Kemal Ataturk. The third is internal war. Many people believe that almost inevitably civil war would come between Muslims and Hindus. In this still-not-highly-organized country of four hundred million people, there are many reasons for suspecting that, instead of a clean-cut war between two well-defined opponents, there would be a number of separate, disruptive regional wars. In the Punjab the Sikhs would contest any Muslim attempt at dominance. Tribal forays across the Northwest Frontier might become organized instead of sporadic as at present. In some places socialists and communists might attempt coups. While the authority and existence of smaller native states was challenged, larger states might use their own armies which are now getting campaign training to regain some of the land lost to them during the European conquest of India. Utter confusion similar to that which prevailed during the crumbling of the Mughal regime might ensue, smoothing the path for an eventual strong force from either within the land or across the seas or mountains.

In any such eventuality a fervent, highly-trained private army would be a handy tool for interested parties. At their peak the Khaksars were seen by
some Muslims, I know, as the arm which would some day again raise them to
the position of rulers over the whole of India or a part of it. Hindus have
feared that that in truth was the real motivation of the Khaksars. That is why
Hindu and Sikh private military organizations were also formed. Even
government policy towards the Khaksars in different provinces, it has been
suggested, has been affected by provincial officials' views as to whether the
organization was more a challenge to the government itself or to non-Muslim
religious communities.

At any rate after the clash in Lahore a great many interests became
vitally concerned about the potentials of Khaksarism. The March nineteenth
battle occurred only three days before the important annual session of the
Muslim League (at which the Pakistan scheme was formally adopted) that the
Unionist government of Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan was straining to make
a successful show against the Indian National Congress. The influence of Mr.
M. A. Jinnah, who has pulled the Muslim League up by its anti-Hindu boot­
straps since 1937, was extended to the limit to keep the League from splitting
over the Khaksar shootings. Delegates shouted "Death to Sir Sikandar," and
convinced him it was unwise for him to make a scheduled speech. A
break was averted, but the signs had been clear enough so that the Punjab
government moved cautiously during the next three months while the Khaksar
defiance continued. Finally a European police officer took the responsibility
for ordering policemen to go inside mosques to clean out the hiding Khaksars.

Once that step had been taken the government adopted a firmer policy.
The Khaksar headquarters in Ichhra were kept from reopening. The leader,
Allama Mashriqi, was charged and sentenced, although in another moment of
seeming weakness he stated he had not ordered the attack on the police in
Lahore. Transferred to a jail in the south of India, he was effectively isolated
from the movement. Hundreds of Khaksars were jailed, and all others became
suspects. The moves had their desired results. With surprising rapidity the
movement disintegrated. Secondary leaders who had stepped in when Al
Mashriqi was jailed proved ineffective. Opposing counsels arose as to the
future course of action. Enthusiasts within the movement said "The organi­
zation has gone to pieces; there is nothing in it any more." The Aligarh
membership roll, a fairly good barometer, dropped to half again. Orders
were passed that at least skeleton organizations, if nothing more, were to
be kept up. Individual Khaksars sometimes retained their enthusiasm, but
no longer did they move in large bands. For all practical purposes the
movement became dormant in the autumn and winter of 1940-41.

And so it remains, not now a political force. But two factors must be
considered. One is that the Khaksars have made a name for themselves in
the Muslim community. If the circumstances should be favourable when Al Mashriqi is released from prison, there is no reason to believe that his spirit of action and glory could not sweep the community again. A professor at the Aligarh Muslim University has said, partly in disgust and partly in despair, that all Muslim movements are short-lived. But with an emotional impetus as strong as religious nationalism, the most virile of the movements may surely be born again and again. In the mosques and the colleges many who have left the leaderless Khaksars would go back at once if they thought they could recapture the spiritual uplift that came to them the first time. Already new national offices are being established in Aligarh, and the work of revivification has begun.

The second factor is that even if the Khaksar era is past and does not rise again, the sturdy youths who were its bulwark are already discovering other outlets for their disciplined energy. Marching Khaksars have found their way into the ranks of the supporters of Pakistan, the big, bold Muslim scheme of dividing the country into a Muslim India and a Hindu India, in order to let each culture grow unthwarted. Little attention has yet been paid to aspects of finance economics, and military defence, but of the people who are "no-compromise" Pakistaners, former Khaksars are not far in the rear. In other Muslim League activities too, ex-Khaksars are introducing an element of steel. The imam of one Lahore mosque, for example, left his ardent support of the Khaksars when the leadership collapsed, but has since been training a group of thirty-five religious teachers and missionaries. As part of the discipline of their training he demands complete obedience, promptness, neatness. He flogs those who fall below the standard. And he has found their spirit better and their achievements greater than those of previous groups whom he had trained by less drastic methods.

So Muslim communal bodies get that loyalty, that eagerness for action. Anybody else could capture it if they wanted to badly enough. Even the government has weaned some with the dream of military commissions (and many of these lads can certainly fight). It could gather more to its side if it could provide for them a programme of real action and glory. Those are the essential elements for a man's recuperation from an excess of frustration. But the government has not taken that step. The Khaksar leadership did, and as a result tens of thousands of men drank the stimulant of action without intellect, obedience without thought, sacrifice without reason, and military discipline without an avowed purpose; and marched to action "for God and His Prophet, for the nation and the organization, for sovereignty, for peace and security, for the compliance with commands, for the sacrifice of life and property in the way of God, for the country and for the service of humanity at large."