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## Provocative Politics of AIMIM

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According to a media report the Hyderabad court has admitted a petition against All India Majalis-e-Iteehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi for alleged provocative remarks during his public speech in Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh that “Get the police out of the way for 15 minutes and we will show you who is more powerful”.

If we examine the past records of the AIMIM which is a new incarnation of its parent organisation Majalis-e-Iteehadul Muslimeen(MIM) which had mobilised about 1,50000 Razakars under the leadership of a militant Islamist Qasim Rizavi to resist the accession of the former Hyderabad State to Indian Union, there is nothing to be surprised with the provocative speech of the Owaisi.

The present speech of Owaisi appears to be a part of the party’s political game on the issue of the Islamic monument -Charminar in Hyderabad. The most unfortunate part of the AIMIM like many of the Muslim organisations in India, is that its leaders continue to be suffering from the medieval mindset of the Muslim rulers who gave more importance to monumentalisation of the Indian sub-continent than to the development of the region. It is a historical fact that except Sher Shah who constructed Grand Trunk road from Peshawar to Calcutta no medieval ruler contributed to any development for the public welfare.

After the end of Muslim rule when the British established a department of archaeology for the conservation of the ancient architectural monuments of the country including the monuments of the medieval era it was a big relief for the descendents of the ruling Muslim class as they had apprehended the destruction of the Islamic structures.

The descendents of the medieval ruling class who were the immediate losers of royal privileges after the end of Islamic rule in the sub-

continent adopted a strategy to communalise the native converts who constituted over 90% of Muslim population in the region and instil Jihadi spirit among them in the name of religion.

All the movements in the name of Islamic revivalism launched by various schools of Sunni Islam like Deobandi, Barelvi, Nadavi, Tabliqi and Jamaat-e-Islami which were led by the Muslims of foreign origin focused on convincing the Muslim masses that their security in a non-Islamic government lies in defending the traditional Islamic structure and institutions.

Like many other Muslim organisations, the AIMIM also carried forward the communal legacy of the pre-Independence Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) which was “regarded as remarkably aggressive and a violent face of Muslim militancy as it organized the Razakars to defend the independence of this Muslim State with Indian Union”. Therefore, the AIMIM is also known as “an Islamic, fundamentalist, secessionist, communal political party in India that was founded by the radicals among the Muslim population of Andhra Pradesh and the Muslim dominated areas of Hyderabad though it has units in some parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra” (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia). The sole objective behind this Islamist character of the party is to blackmail the ruling establishment in Andhra Pradesh for the self seeking interest.

To understand the communally provocative character of the AIMIM it may be desirable to have a brief discussion over the pre-Independence role of the MIM, a pro-Nizam organisation which was vehemently opposed to the accession of the Hyderabad State to the Union of India.

Founded in 1927 by a group of Islamists of Hyderabad initially as a socio-religious organization, its successive religio-political activist presidents particularly Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung and Qasim Rizvi, gradually turned it into an Islamic fundamentalist, secessionist, communal organisation which came in hot news in August 1942, the eventful month of Indian History, when it had opposed ‘Quit India’ movement against the colonial British power and mobilized the Muslims of then Hyderabad State for defending the Islamic rule of Nizam.

For MIM “the ruler throne (Nizam) is the symbol of the political and cultural rights of the Muslim community .... (and) this status must continue for ever”. (Party Politics in Andhra Pradesh by Vadakattu Hanumantha Rao, 1983, Page 163). Under the leadership of Bahadur Yar Jung, the party “proclaimed Muslims as the monarchs of Deccan with Nizam as only the symbolic expression of their political sovereignty. It demanded the creation of an independent Hyderabad to synchronise with the lapse of British paramountcy”. (State Government and Politics – Andhra Pradesh by Reddy & Sharma, 1979, page392).

After the death of Bahadur Yar Jung, Qasim Rizvi a militant and powerful Islamist in the establishment of Nizam became the president of the MIM. He organised a large number of Muslim youths as Razakars to fight against the freedom fighters of Congress, Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha and emerged as “champion of Muslims and protector of a Muslim State”. The militancy of the party reached its peak on the eve of independence, when Nizam was virtually put on hold by the MIM and was not allowed to sign the instrument of accession of Hyderabad State with Indian Union. In fact about 150,000 Razakars led by Rizvi created a reign of terror and forced the Nizam to buy time under the

cover of negotiation.

When the talk of the accession of Hyderabad State to Indian Union was in process, Rizvi during one of his talks to V.P.Menon, the then Secretary in Ministry of States threatened “ if Government of India insisted on a plebiscite , the final arbiter could only be the sword” (Integration of the Indian States by V.P.Menon, page 334). His Jihadi speeches in public like “The day is not far off when the waves of the Bay of Bengal will be washing the feet of our sovereign” and that “he would plant the Asaf Jahi flag on the Red Fort in Delhi” (Ibid. page 352) gave an impression that he was virtually the ruler of Hyderabad State. However, the sword of Rizvi failed to protect the end of the autocratic rule of Nizam, who surrendered at 1700 hours on September 17, 1948 and integration of Hyderabad State with Indian Union became a reality. MIM was proscribed and Razvi was jailed. He was released only when he gave an undertaking to migrate to Pakistan within forty-eight hours of his release.

On the eve of his departure to Pakistan in September 1957, Rizvi handed over the command of the MIM to Abdul Wahid Rizvi who was an eye witness to the atrocities of the Razakars in Hyderabad State before its merger with Union of India. Retaining the name of the MIM which carried the baggage of the bloody history of Hyderabad and becoming its president by simply prefixing All India to it was a kind of courage which is hardly seen in the political history of post-partition India. It was not only a bold step of Owaisi but also a reflection of his loyalty to Rizvi and pro-Nizam mindset which he started expressing in his public speeches. He was therefore taken into custody on March 14, 1958 under the order dated 13-3-1958 made by the Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad under Section 3(1) read with Sub-section (2) of the Preventive Detention Act, 1950 (Act IV of 1950) on the grounds that he had been "rousing or attempting to rouse communal passions and creating or attempting to create panic, resentment or hatred in the minds of the Muslims against the State and the non-Muslims as disclosed by his speeches made by him in public meetings"

Abdul Wahid's son Sultan Salehuddin Owaisi filed a writ against the detention of his father in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh but the honourable court in its order maintained: “Since we are of the opinion that the grounds, whether taken individually or otherwise, are not irrelevant, the argument of the learned counsel will fail. It is clear to our mind that there has been no infringement of the right vouchsafed by the constitution under Article 22 (5). We therefore dismiss this petition”. (Vide Sultan Salehuddin vs The State Of Andhra Pradesh And ... on 1 August, 1958. Equivalent citations: AIR 1959 AP 73, 1959 CriLJ 160. Indian Kanoon - <http://indiankanoon.org/doc/1795108/> <sup>[11]</sup>)

Detention of Owaisi hardly changed his attitude as after his release in 1959 he re-started en-cashing the hidden anger of Muslim society against the loss of Islamic power in the state. “Majlis played passion politics by trading on hate-Hindu sentiments and cashed on the angry Muslim electorates” (Party Politics in Andhra Pradesh – Hanumantha Rao, 1983, Page 164). “In 1957 the MIM was revived in Hyderabad and a decade later was petitioning the Government of India for the foundation of a purely Muslim State on India's eastern coast” (Encyclopaedia of Islam – Lieden E.J.Brill, Vol. V, Page 1081).

Even though, the situation in Andhra Pradesh was under control for about a decade following the arrest of Qasim Rizvi, the city of

Hyderabad remained under perpetual communal strife and religious tension particularly after the revival of the MIM in the new name of AIMIM by Abdul Wahid Owaisi.

After the death of Abdul Wahid Owaisi when Salehuddin became the president of the party in 1976, he criticized the Indian state for allegedly abandoning the Muslims to their fate. Increasingly aligning the party with the fundamentalist ideology of the MIM, he replayed the Islamist and militant politics of Razvi and launched aggressive communal campaign to such an extent that he was popularly known as 'Salar-e-Millat' (Commander of the community). He reminded his community members of their past glory and "compared the Majlis to the Black Power Movement of America" ([www.nowpublic.com](http://www.nowpublic.com) [2]).

The mindset of the AIMIM was truly reflected when its legislators opposed the motion which AP Assembly had placed for condemning the 9/11 attack on America.

Sultan Salehuddin while taking over the presidency of the party from his father in 1976, stepping down from his Lok Sabha seat in 2004 for his eldest son Asaduddin Owaisi and making his second son Akbaruddin as leader of legislative party in Andhra Pradesh Assembly, the respective three generations of Owaisis have not only converted the AIMIM into a family trust but have also kept the Muslims of Hyderabad under siege.

As far as the communalisation of Charminar and the location of Bhagyalaxmi temple abutting this Islamic monument is concerned, the issue was first raised by Abdul Wahid in 1960s. His objection to an addition of a temporary shed in the temple during some Hindu festivals was a pointer to his mindset. Considering this Islamic monument which was constructed by Qutub Shah "in 1591 AD to commemorate the beginning of the second Islamic millennium year (1000AH) (Jean de Thevenot, a French traveller of the 17th century. Quoted from Wikipedia) as a symbol of the might of a Muslim ruler, the AIMIM under the leadership of Salehuddin gave a new dimension that existence of temple abetting Charminar was a threat to the Islamic heritage. Accordingly, in 1979 the AIMIM gave a call for Bandh to protest against this issue. But "when the local Hindu traders refused to shut down their shops, some extremists desecrated the temple on 23 November 1979, looted the shops and set fire to them"(Ibid.). During Ganesh festival celebration in 1983 when a Muslim threw a stone at the temple, it led to a communal tension in the area.

The fundamentalist character of the AIMIM was further exposed on August 9, 2007, the same eventful day of Indian history when the MIM, the parent organisation of the party had opposed Quit India Movement in 1942. Some of its MLAs along with their supporters roughed up Tasleema Nasreen, the exiled Bangladeshi writer living in India while she was in Hyderabad for releasing the Telugu translation of her work. The behaviour of AIMIM MLAs reflects a pattern emerging from these incidents that it is totally against the democratic and secular constitution of India and needs careful examination by the government.

So much so even a Muslim leader Ahmaj Ullah Khan of Mjilis Bachao Tahriq, a break away group of AIMIM while criticising the latter said that its leader Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi came into power by hyping Babri Masjid demolition issue. (<http://www.siasat.com/english/news/mbt-observe-%E2%80%98black-day%E2%80%98...>)

[3])

Thus, keeping the restive Muslim masses of the state under siege by politicisation of Charminar and taking advantage of their poll dynamics that resonated the vote-bank mindscape of most of the political parties in the country; the AIMIM is retaining the Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat since 1984 and having seven MLAs in the AP legislative assembly presently; besides about one hundred members elected to various municipal bodies, over forty Corporators in Hyderabad city including the post of Mayor.

Like every year when on October 31 the temple management started preparation for celebrating Deepavali festival and erecting a tarpaulin canopy for protection of the devotees from sun and rain, the AIMIM activists raised objection on the plea that it was in violation of the provision of the law for the protection of the heritage.

The history of this temple may be a debatable issue in media and the political parties but a book entitled 'The Elephant, The Tiger, and Cellphone' written by Union Minister Shashi Tharoor suggests the existence of this temple for long. It says: "But at the foot of the city's most famous monument, the four-turreted Charminar, sits a Hindu temple to the goddess Mahalakshmi, the priests chanting their mantras for centuries under the celebrated Islamic minarets".

Similarly, G. Niranjan, General Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee in a letter to Sonia Gandhi appealed her not to have any kind of adjustment or alliance with AIMIM. Confirming the existence of Bhagyalaxmi temple during the period of Nizam's rule he said, "It is fresh in the memories of citizens of Hyderabad, the communal flare up on the eve of kaba (Mecca) incidents in the year 1979 and damage caused to the Matha Idol by deliberate attempt of hitting it by a bus. The renovation of temple took place at the instance of State Government headed by Dr Marri Channa Reddy Ji, the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, he said. It clearly proves its long history and its existence even before the formation of AIMIM party in the State. The AIMIM party which did not raise any objection all these years suddenly raised objections on the midnight of October 31, 2012, when temple committee initiated arrangements for Diwali festival by replacing the tarpaulin intended to save the devotees from scorching heat and rain".

Despite a known communal background of the party, the AIMIM continued to be a trusted ally of the Congress till November 12 this year when it withdrew support to it in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly as well as from the UPA at Centre on the issue of the Bhagyalaxmi temple abutting Charminar.

Since AIMIM is thriving on communalisation of the Muslims of Andhra Pradesh, its objective behind communalisation of Charminar is to make it an All India issue and also to continue pressure on the Congress party also to close communal history-sheets and suspect-sheets against Muslim youths involved in various riots.

How does one deal with the provocative speech of Akbaruddin Owaisi types? What is the remedy? The Remedy lies in the political will of the

ruling establishment at centre as seen on the eve of the accession of Hyderabad to Indian Union. The second remedy has to be from the Muslims of Andhra Pradesh themselves. If they want to live a peaceful and dignified life they will have to guard themselves from fundamentalists among them under the patronage of the parties, which are still obsessed to the pre-Independence mindset of All India Muslim League, Nizam of Hyderabad and Rizvi, the leader of Razakars, who were opposed to integration of Hyderabad with Indian Union.

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