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The Impact of Debate on 'Islam and Socialism' in Colonial India: The Understanding of Chaudhry Afzal Haq

ABSTRACT

Socialism is a theoretical and practical response in modern times to combat the problems of inequalities between the rich and the poor due to the capitalist policies of colonial powers. For the last two centuries, western capitalistic institutions brought about economic disparity and social disparity in the arenas under their colonized influence. In colonial India, modern Muslim reformers sought to prove that the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah contain all elements needed to deal with modern economic problems. The problem stimulated many Muslim scholars to ponder over themes in vogue in the last century including current debate of socialism. Generally, the 'ulemā find the capitalist system excluding interest more compatible to Islam. A few Muslim individuals and groups were inspired by the Russian socialist revolution led by socialist ideological thought. They considered the economic part of that socialism better matched to the code of Musawat (equality) in Islam. During the struggle for freedom, Indian Muslims were enthusiastic about the socialist movement against colonialism and its economic exploitation of India. The Majlis-i-Ahrar and its leaders were influenced by these socialist ideas of Musawat and parity in wealth. The Majlis's two stalwarts Maulana Habib ur Rehman Ludhanivi and Chaudhry Afzal Haq penned extensively on the similarities between the idea of economic parity in socialism and the principle of musawat and Akhuwat in Islam. In this paper we aim to examine the understanding of Chaudhry Afzal Haq on the compatibility of both ideologies based on his articles published in the newspaper Zamzam in 1941.

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There is no uniform definition of Socialism. Various scholars have defined it according to their understanding. According to German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) socialism is a doctrine that visualizes a socio-economic system in which property and distribution of wealth are under social control. It is an economic system associated with state or collective ownership of means of production. This control may be either direct, exercised through popular collectives such as workers' councils, or it may be indirect, exercised on behalf of people by the state. (Kant, 1998) The Jungian psychologist Volodymyr Walter Odajnyk (1938-2013) points out that socialism aims to achieve more equitable and efficient distribution of social goods and greater economic planning than exist under capitalism. Its implications extend to the moral, social, and political realms. (Odajnyk, 1987, p.146)

The French political theorist, Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) is credited as the founder of the concept of socialism in modern world. He was a descendant of the royal family of Charlemagne. He renounced his title of Comte after losing faith in contemporary aristocracy and became president of his commune after the French Revolution. (Taylor, 1968, pp.28-33) He indicated that the progress in science and industry had created a social imbalance in the society. He proposed that social harmony could be achieved through the scientific division of labor. His thought influenced the socialist theories of Karl Marx, August Comte (1798-1857), and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). (Berki, 1975)

Karl Marx is generally considered to be the founder of scientific socialism. (Taylor, 1968, pp. 57-66) Along with his friend Frederick Engels, he authored *Communist Manifesto* in 1848 calling upon the laborers of the world 'to unite as they had nothing to lose but their chains'. (Henderson, 1976, p.133) His book *Das Kapital* written in 1867 is considered the Bible of scientific socialism. (Hoffman and Graham, 2010, p. 461) Modern socialists have deviated from Marxist socialism which assigns the state a central role in managing the economy. (Steger, 2006, p.135) Communism is a more extreme form of Marxist socialism that promotes one party state and government ownership of a state-run economy. Modern socialists call themselves social democrats as they emphasize the democratic aspects of socialism and de-emphasize the links with other forms of socialism, particularly Marxist socialism. (Sargent, 1987, p.8)

The above definitions highlight three basic objectives of socialism. First: the collective ownership or control of the means of production by the state as well as control of distribution and trade. Second: control of

economic planning. Third: total equality both economic and social. However, there is a difference of opinion on strategies in achieving these objectives. Some socialists inspired by soviet model advocate the nationalization (government ownership) of all businesses. Some advocate state control of capital within a somewhat free market, while the social democrats prefer selective nationalization in mixed economies partly free and partly government controlled or owned. (Ray & Ray, 2012, p. 238) Others, like “Yugoslavian, Hungarian, East German and Chinese communist governments in 1970s and 1980s instituted various forms of market socialism, combining co-operative and state ownership models with free market exchange and free price system but not free prices for means of production”. ((Ray & Ray, 2012, p. 238)

Socialism assigns a pivotal role to government for production and distribution. Social distribution bridges the gap between rich and poor to promote equality. On the other hand, capitalism recognizes the right of private property and seeks to individualize wealth which leads to an unequal society and unequal opportunities for all. It promotes free market while reducing government’s influence in the market.

Origins of Socialist Ideas in South Asia

Socialist ideas in South Asia can be traced back in the religious and political thought of Shah Wali Allah (1114–76/1703–62). He considered lack of a sound economic system a major cause of the decline of the Mughal Empire. He was in favour of wider distribution of wealth on socialist lines asserting that the land belongs to Allah, and personal property is justifiable if it is not against public interest and is not acquired through exploitation. He believed that holding justice and balance in economic relationships was a key to sustaining the social and political fabric of a society. (Shah Waliullah, 2003, pp. 306-308)

In the twentieth century, the world witnessed the rise of competing ideologies of capitalism and communism (a more extreme version of socialism). The Indian subcontinent also evoked varied responses within its diverse society. In Hindu community, two voices need attention. One is Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956). He was the leader of untouchables in colonial India. He wanted to establish an egalitarian society based on liberty, equality, fraternity and social justice. He searched for intellectual and organizational avenues to realize this ideal. He “considered that social reforms should precede economic reforms” therefore he wanted to abolish caste system in Hindu community. (Ray & Ray, 2012, p. 239) He rejected Marx’s theory of class struggle and its hatred for religion. He despised the ingredients of violence, and dictatorship in communism. His love for peace, constitutionalism and democracy led him to conceive his own brand of

socialism; “state socialism” through parliamentary democracy. He suggested it in his *Memorandum to the Constituent Assembly Debates* over the *Directive Principles of State Policy*. (Ray & Ray, 2012, p. 241) His love and conversion to Buddhism convinced him that it offers ideal solution for the whole society as Bhuddha referred to greed and sorrow in general and human salvation for all human beings. (Ray & Ray, 2012, pp. 246-247)

The other influential thinker was Svami Rama Tirtha (1873-1906). His ideal Vedanta described as “freedom of the spirit” affected the contemporary intellectual and spiritual times. He advocated greater brotherhood and bonding through spiritual laws. He criticized the caste system in Hinduism. Besides, he emphasized education for women and the lower classes. His views are considered as very innovative and original. (Kuller, 2002).

During Western political domination, Muslims faced the twin challenges of subjugation of Western colonial powers and exploitation of indigenous sources by their capitalist economic system resulting in inequity and poverty in society. Islamic revival movements used to resist these onslaughts. In addition, Muslim leaders were also eager to search common values between Islam and rest of the world. The socialist values of government ownership of certain industries, the establishment of social welfare programs, and enforcement of regulations to safeguard masses against exploitation by the wealthy, are common traits of an Islamic system of social justice and have been promoted by Muslim scholars throughout history. Compassion and concern for the poor and needy form the basis of Islamic faith. Therefore, Islam guides the consistency of prayer and collection of *zakat* simultaneously. *Zakat* is the mandatory contribution to funding of welfare programs and social services in an Islamic society.

Thus a debate took place among Muslim scholars as to whether socialism was sanctioned by or compatible with Islam. How would ‘Islamic Socialism’, if it existed at all, be devoid of the basic concepts of socialism in modern times? Here one could remind oneself of Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal’s ideas that provided new dimensions and strength inspired by their concepts of equality of mankind and just distribution of material goods. (Abdul Hakeem, pp. 248-249)

The ‘*ulemā*’ and the Russian Revolution

Certain circles of the ‘*ulemā*’ of the subcontinent were influenced by the Russian Revolution of 1917 as they had witnessed that historical event happening at the time of their struggle against colonialism. It had far-reaching impact on the socio-political pitches of a certain class of Muslim urban leadership, who mostly believed in a collective solution of problems of Muslim India. Maulvi Barkatullah Bhopali (1859-1927) was a freedom

fighter who toured the world against the British imperialists. He travelled to Moscow in May 1919 and met Lenin and his revolutionary front-runners. He also admired Karl Marx. In his book *Bolshevism and Islamic Nations*, he stated that “the actual spirit of Marx’s thought and divine religion are almost the same. Both have same objective to provide a dignified and peaceful life to the oppressed and penalized humans of God after liberating them from malice and persecution imposed on them by their fellow human beings.” (Naeem, 2018)

In his interview with the newspaper *Izvestia* Maulvi Barkatullah showed his belief in the Russian Revolution which in his words inspired the Muslims of the subcontinent. He shared his political program and resolved to root out British Imperialists from Asia. He added that due to their anti-imperialist agendas and their resolve to give people quality-of-their-lives as a common objective, people of the subcontinent and the communists are allies. He admitted simply that an appeal from the Soviet government to the nations of world to rise up in the face of the capitalist regimes immensely influenced the people of subcontinent. He also appreciated the Soviet Union’s revelation of unilateral cancellation of all secret agreements signed between Russia and Great Britain to colonize nations, particularly Eastern nations. He venerated Russia’s resolve to respect the principle of equality among all the nations. (Naeem, 2018) He appealed to Muslims and Asian nations to strengthen the Bolshevik forces to counter the aggression of the British imperialism. (Naeem, 2018)

Born into a Sikh Khattri family as Buta Singh Uppal the Muslim scholar/political leader Ubaidullah Sindhi (1872-1944) embraced Islam at the age of 15 but also had contacts with communism at early stage in his life. Though, later distanced himself from the atheist basis of communism, he urged Muslims “to evolve for themselves a religious basis to arrive at the economic justice at which communism aims but which it cannot fully achieve”. (Ahmad, 1967, p. 198) For his attempt to destroy British colonial rule in the Silk Letters Movement (*Rešmī Rūmāl* Movement) of the Deobandi ‘*ulemā* in the years 1913-1920, Ubaidullah Sindhi is revered up to this day as one of the truly great Indian freedom fighters. Up to his death in 1944 the well-loved “stammering *moulvi* of the Mewatis” strongly opposed the partition of British India as did many of his former colleagues and comrades at the *Dar ul Uloom Deoband*. (Ahmad, 1967, 199)

Hifiz al-Rahman Seoharvi (1901-1962) was also influenced by Marxist ideology. He was an eminent Muslim scholar and leader from the Jamiat-e-Ulema-i-Hind (JUH). He authored *Islam ka Iqtesadi Nizam* comparing the Islamic economic system with capitalism and socialism. He observed that Islam and socialism share five elements in common. First: prohibition of the accumulation of wealth in possession of the privileged classes. Second: organization of the economic structure under state control

to ensure social welfare. Third: equality in employment/recruitment opportunities extended to everyone in the state. Fourth: prioritization of collective social interest above individual privileges. Fifth: prevention of perpetuating exploitative class-structure through emerging social revolution. (Ahmad, 1967, p. 201) He saw divergence between the two in Islam's sanction of private ownership within certain limits and, most importantly, its refusal to recognize an absolutely classless society. He asserted that Islam by establishing prohibition of accumulation of wealth and by providing equality in employment opportunity regularized class structure. (Ahmad, 1967, p. 203)

Majlis-i-Ahrar and Socialism

In colonial India, the Majlis-i-Ahrar seemed to be considerate towards socialist ideas. The Majlis's intellectual leaders Habib ur Rehman Ludhianvi and Chaudhry Afzal Haq discussed the theme of cohesiveness between the code of *Musawat* in Islam and socialist ideology. In his articles, Chaudhry Afzal Haq pondered over the compatibility of *Musawat* in Islam and socialism. (Haq, vol. 1, 2016, p. 253-283) A debate between Maulana Biha-ul Haq Qasmi Amritsari and Afzal Haq was generated in the newspaper *Zamzam* published from Lahore. Maulana Qasmi's essay was published in newspaper *Zamzam* in 1940. (Qasmi, 1940) Afzal Haq penned some essays in response to Maulana Biha-ul Haq Qasmi's writing. (Haq, 1941) These essays have been republished in *Majmua Chaudhry Afzal Haq* by Al-Faisal publishers in 2016. The present article is based on these essays. Before unfolding his understanding of the debate a brief biographical sketch in the ensuing pages demonstrates his towering stature among urban Muslim intellectual and political leadership in colonial India.

Chaudry Afzal Haq (1891-1942) was a multi-dimensional personality. He was a writer, philosopher and politician and, above all, a visionary among the freedom fighters of British India. He was one of the founders of *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam*. Afzal was considered brain of this organization. (Awan, 2010, p.156) He had the same standing in the *Majlis-i-Ahrar* that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) had in the Indian National Congress. (Mirza, vol. 1, 1975, p. 357) Afzal Haq was designated as the patron-in-chief of the new party and he finalized its objectives. His speech in the Provincial Ahrar Political Conference at Amritsar was so comprehensive that the Ahrar Working Committee declared it Ahrar's election manifesto of 1937. (Mirza, vol. 2, 1975, p. 444-450) His brief autobiographical sketch sheds light on his devotion to his ideals.

Afzal Haq matriculated from Islamia High School Amritsar. He could not continue his education due to family problems. He was recruited as inspector in the Police Department in 1917. In 1921, during the Khilafat

Movement, being overwhelmed by Attaullah Shah Bokhari's speeches, he resigned from his police service and joined his squad. He was arrested on 14 February 1922 during the Non-Cooperation Movement and was imprisoned for six months. In jail he wrote *Dunya main Dozakh* ('Hell in this World') exposing the brutalities in jail. Besides, he wrote *Mashooqa Punjab* focusing the story of *Hir-Ranjah* (the romantic epic of the Punjab). In 1922, he wrote *Fitna Irtadaad aur siyasi Qalabazian* against the *Shudhi* movement of the Arya Samaj. Svami Dayanada Sarasvati (1824-1883) was the founder of *Shudhi* movement which aimed at converting the Muslims to Hinduism. (Qureshi, 1974, pp. 280-281) Afzal Haq's response to such challenges revealed his sensitivity on contemporary socio-political issues from vernacular to international debates.

Afzal Haq had a deep sense of the problems of Indian Muslims and their relevance to the Muslim world. So he believed that both can get freedom simultaneously. To weaken colonial power, he opined, Indian nations should fight side by side. He was critical of both Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism and more inclined towards a composite nationalism. His main concern was that being divided would weaken the national freedom movement against the British imperialists. He presented his *Majlis-i-Ahrar* as a moderate party between two extremes. He was critical of the Muslim League's policy of creating fear of the Hindu majority among the Indian Muslims. (Haq, vol. 2, 2016, pp. 878-879) He was in favour of unified force and stressed unity for the cause of freedom among Indian nations but, at the same time, strongly rejected a common Indian civilization of Hindus and Muslims. (Haq, vol. 2, 2016, p. 881)

Afzal Haq actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by the Indian National Congress. He was arrested and imprisoned for nine months. He remained in the Gorakhpur jail where he wrote his autobiography, *Zindghi*, focused on "the guidance of other people through his experiences". (Haq, 2016, p. 979) The Punjab government awarded him three thousand rupees on this book. (Mirza, vol. 1, p. 468) Chiragh Hassan Hazrat (1904-1955) in his forward to *Zindghi* wrote that the autobiography resembles Dante's *Divine Comedy*. He also remarked that the reading of Afzal's autobiography also reminded him of the *Javed Nama* of Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal. (Haq, vol. 2, pp. 981-982) Afzal Haq was released on 15 January 1931 after the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

In 1931, Afzal Haq started an agitation movement against atrocities committed by the Dogra Raj in Kashmir. Due to severe health problems, he could not personally join the agitation in Kashmir. Yet the movement continued under his directions. (Mirza, vol. 1, p. 265) He was arrested in Lahore on 19 April 1932. (Mirza, vol. 1, p. 272) On 10 May 1932 the court sentenced him to one-year rigorous imprisonment with one-hundred-rupee penalty. On account of the violation of order, he had to leave Lahore and

reside in Tehsil Ghurh Shankar. He was sent to the New Central Jail Multan. (Mirza, vol. 1, p. 274)

Afzal Haq contested from the Muslim rural constituency of District Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana in a Punjab by-election in August 1923. He won election by eighteen hundred votes and became a member of the Punjab Legislative Council. (Mirza, vol. 1, p. 358) On this occasion, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan paid tribute to Afzal Haq in the following verses: (Khan, 1927)

ڈٹ کے کونسل میں کھڑا جس وقت افضل حق ہوا
حق کی ہیبت چھائی ایسی رنگ باطل فق ہوا
جافلے دی مونٹ ارنسی کی سٹی گم ہوئی
ان کے ہر پٹھو کی منطق کا کلیجہ شق ہوا

(Afzal Haq's strong conviction in the council, hushed up all tales of vicious voice; Monte Arnasi [the governor of the Punjab] was dumbfounded and all his allies staggered)

Afzal Haq raised questions on vital social issues. He was nominated as member of the Jail Reforms Committee established by the Punjab Legislative Council during 1927-1930. His proposed jail reforms were highly appreciated and were implemented by the government. He participated in the elections of 1937 but lost his seat by just 98 votes to Rana Nasrullah Khan of the Unionist Party. (Mirza, vol. 2 & 3, pp. 117 & 143) He mentioned that the *Ittehad-e Millat* Party's leaders such as Maulana Abdul Qadir and Dr. Alam's propaganda that Afzal Haq was 'responsible for the incident of Masjid Shaheed Gunj' proved to be the major cause of his defeat in the elections. He submitted a petition against this election which was rejected by then Governor of the Punjab. (Mirza, vol. 2, p. 495; vol. 3, p. 143) Later, he contested in a by-election in the urban constituency of Amritsar against Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq, a combined candidate of All India Muslim League and the Unionist Party. (Mirza, vol. 3, p. 335) The Muslim League candidate was elected to this seat winning 4587 votes and Afzal Haq was polled 3932 votes. (Mirza, vol. 3, p. 350)

Afzal Haq led the resistance movement against the British forced army recruitment for the Second World War in the Punjab. Consequently, he was arrested fourth time and sent to the Central Jail Rawalpindi for sixteen months. During these years, he authored *Mehboob-i-Khuda*, and his letters sent to his children later published as *Khatoot-e-Afzal*. (Haq, vol. 1, pp. 931-974) He also penned *Pakistan and Untouchability* in the English language. (Awan, 2010, p. 157) Another valuable contribution is *Tarikh-i-Ahrar*. (Haq, vol. 1, pp. 573-802) On 20 December 1941, in a meeting of the working committee of *Majlis-i-Ahrar*, he had an attack of asthma converted into pneumonia and hepatitis which caused his death on 8 January 1942. (Qasmi, 1991, p. 483) He was buried in Miani graveyard on

Litton Road, Lahore. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan acknowledged his contribution to the freedom struggle in the following verses: (Khan, 1942)

رونق کاشانہ ابرار افضل حق سے تھی
مستی خمخانہ احرار افضل حق سے تھی
اک کرشمہ تھا یہ اس کی ہمت مردانہ کا
لرزہ براندام اگر سرکار افضل حق سے تھی
ذره ذره کہہ رہا ہے وادیء کشمیر کا
کامیاب احرار کی یلغار افضل حق سے تھی
بے گواہ اس پر کتاب زندگی کی سطر سطر
شوخی و رنگینی افکار افضل حق سے تھی
اس کی مرگ ناگہاں گھر کو نہ لے بیٹھے کہیں
کیونکہ پشتیبانی دیوار افضل حق سے تھی

(Afzal Haq was the delight of Ibrar's mansion; and elation of the bar of Ahrar; he was the marvel of the manly vigor who had amazed the authorities; every particle of the valley of Kashmir is indorsing, he was the breath of Ahrar's auspicious onslaught; justified by every line of the book of life; novelty and audacity of thinking was due to Afzal Haq; may his sudden death not ruin the house (of Ahrars); as he was defence and protection of the abode.)

The above lines are a glowing tribute to Afzal Haq by his contemporary poet and writer. The intellectual endeavors of Afzal Haq on the compatibility of Islam and socialism are discussed in the ensuing pages.

The Concept of Equality in Islam

Many incidents in the writings of Afzal Haq confirm the concept of equality as taught by Islam. One such incident he referred to in his essay about Hazrat Umar (R.A.) and his servant. When both entered Jerusalem, the servant was sitting on the back of the camel and Hazrat Umar (R.A.) was holding the string of the camel. The people of Jerusalem could not guess who the Caliph was. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 267) Another incident: he referred to Hazrat Usama, who had been the son of a slave, but the Holy Prophet (S.) appointed him commander-in-chief of the Muslim forces sent to Syria. In that expedition, Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A.), Hazrat Umar (R.A.), Hazrat Usman (R.A.) and Hazrat Ali (R.A.) served under his command. After the death of the Holy Prophet (S.), the new Caliph, Abu Bakr (R.A.), on being asked to review the decision, sustained the decision made by Holy Prophet (S.) and had Hazrat Usama sent once again as commander of this expedition. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 267)

Afzal Haq asserted that in Islam the idea of difference in capacities and abilities of human beings in context of wages is acceptable. But Islam

has rejected the difference in the economic conditions of people. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 260) Afzal Haq referred to the holy verses from the *Surah al-Nahl* ('The Bee'):

والله فضل بعضكم على بعض في الرزق فما الذين فضلوا برأى رزقهم على ما ملكت ايمنهم فهم فيه
سواء - افبنعمة الله يجحدون0

(Allah has granted some of you an advantage over others in [respect of] provision. Those who have been granted an advantage do not give over their provision to their slaves so that they become equal in respect. What, will they dispute the blessings of Allah?) (Qari, 2004, p. 378)

Afzal Haq derived the above mentioned principle that individuals used to be inspired to earn but at the same time are destined to spend and share it with others. Afzal deemed the example that the human race belonged to the Clan of Allah Almighty (s.w.t.), a few surpass in their income over others, but they are bound to share it with the less fortunate. Islam teaches *Akhuwat* (brotherhood) which surpasses equality. Afzal assures his readers that the concept of *musawat* in Islam remained a common belief among Muslim scholars at all times without any difference of opinion in its interpretation. He claimed that grounded on this principle of *musawat* Islam had acquired the status of a religion based on equality and solidarity. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 260)

The Concept of *sarmayadari* ('capitalism') in Islam

Afzal Haq also elaborated the definition of capitalism in Islam. He explained that a wealthy *ameer* meant an individual who gathers or hoards money and does not spend or share his wealth with the needy. On the contrary, a person who earns a lot of money and spends it may not be a *sarmayadar*. He asserted that the *Holy Quran* inspires Muslims to spend money on their fellow human beings. Nowhere Islam allowed to accumulate or hoard money. Afzal referred to verses from the *Holy Quran* which warned against accumulation and hoarding of money with severe consequences. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 266) He quoted the following verses of the *Surah al-Tawbah* to warn:

ياايهاالذينء امنوا ان كثيرا من الا حبار و الرهبان لياكلون اموال الناس بالباطل ويصدون عن سبيل الله. والذين يكتزون الذهب والفضة ولا ينفقونها في سبيل الله فيشرهم بعذاب اليم. ا. يوم يحمى عليها في نارجهنم فتكوى بها جبا همهم و جنوبهم وظهورهم - هذا كنزتم لا نفسكم فنذوقوا ماكنتم تكتزون0

(O you who have faith! Indeed, many of the scribes and monks wrongfully eat up the people's wealth, and bar [them] from the way of Allah. Those

who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend it in the way of Allah, inform them of a painful punishment on the day when these shall be heated in hellfire and therewith branded on their foreheads, their sides and their backs [and told]: 'This is what you treasured up for yourselves! So taste what you have treasured.) (Qari, 2004, pp. 259-260)

Simplicity: An Islamic Virtue

Afzal Haq referred an incident to display the simplicity taught by the Holy Prophet (S.) as a trait of Islam: When a companion constructed a lavish house, the Holy Prophet (S.) expressed his displeasure. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 266)

Islam Opposes the *Jagirdari* System

Afzal Haq explained that the idea of *Jagirdari* (feudal system) in Islam is condemned. He referred to *al-Farooq* in which the author Shibli Numani justified that during conquests, 'Umar bin al-Ḥaṭṭāb (b. 592 in Makkah; d. 3 November 644/ 26 Dhū al-Ḥijja, 23 A.H. in Medina), the Second Caliph of Islam, had maintained the old Iranian system of possession of land and allowed old rights and privileges for a short period of time. Besides, Muslims were also rewarded with *jagirs* due to their army services, all allowed under a specific situation and for a limited time to restore peace in the area so that Islamic principles could be applied afterwards. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 263) He cited another example to consolidate his argument that, after the conquest of Egypt, *jagirs* were eliminated immediately. Even the Muslims were forbidden to purchase land there. After Muslims conquered Iraq, Muslim soldiers refused to accept land. Afzal Haq particularly referred second Caliph's orders for assessments of all kinds of land and confiscated which was more than a Muslim's needs. He indicated that Hazrat Umar (R.A.) also seized Hazrat Bilal's possessions that were beyond his needs. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 263)

Afzal Haq referred to the instructions of the Holy Prophet (S.) and his Companions when land beyond actual needs was confiscated and denied letting on lease for the purpose of earning money. He referred to the saying of the Holy Prophet (S.) that "cultivate the land by yourselves or give it to a Muslim brother for cultivation, and do not give land on lease. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 263) Afzal quoted Hazrat Raafea, who used to give lands on lease. But after the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W) advice he refrained from that practice. Hazrat Raafea said, "though it was beneficial, we thought that obeying the Messenger of Allah (S.) would be more beneficial for us". (Haq, vol. 1, p. 263).

Emergence of Socialism

Afzal Haq mentioned Karl Marx's declaration that "socialism has evolved through certain stages in history and its emergence was inevitable due to historical forces". Afzal Haq witnessed that long before Karl Marx Muslims were fully sensitized to the inequality existent in society and the menace of exploitation of economic resources by money holders and lenders which resulted in untold miseries for the poor. He cited the letter of the conqueror of Egypt sent to the second Caliph Hazrat Umar (R.A.) about the state of affairs in Egypt that "cultivators cultivate land but the hard earned wealth is not distributed equally among cultivators and owners of land". (Haq, vol. 1, p. 264)/

Concept of Private Property in Islam

Afzal Haq elucidated the concept of private property in Islam. He explained the difference of the concept of personal property in Islam and in European private property. In English law, human being sovereign/independent could possess all, while whereas in Islam, all sovereignty belongs to Allah the Almighty. In Islam, the human being's role is limited to that of a caretaker, obedient and accountable to Allah. (Haq, vol. 1, pp. 265-266) Consequently, due to the teachings of Islam, two groups appeared among the Muslims during the early days of Islam. One group of Muslims used to earn daily and spend daily. The other group of Muslims accumulated wealth to spend it on suitable occasions. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 266) Both groups strongly opposed accumulating wealth for a longer period of time.

Afzal asserted that in the early days, Muslims never considered wealth as personal wealth. Islam imposed *zakat* on individual wealth which regulated it well. He claimed that there may be difference in detail but the principle of property had the same meanings in Islam as in socialism. He elaborated that socialists being atheists considered the state as the owner of national wealth/property. In Islam, Allah (s.w.t.) being the Sovereign (s.w.t.) has delegated His right to the *khilafat* or government on earth. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 267) Afzal gave the example of society under the Holy Prophet (S.) in the state of Madinah when the difference between the rich and the poor disappeared. Afzal quoted the incident of Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed when he awarded an artist in form of money, the Caliph investigated the matter that if the money was awarded from government exchequer it was dishonesty and if it was donated from his pocket, then it was extravagance. Afzal Haq pointed out that if there would have been a difference between the government exchequer and personal property then dishonesty and extravagance would not have the same punishment. Thus, he concluded

that both types of property belong to Allah (s.w.t.) and to the government. (Haq, vol. 1, pp. 267-268)

Islam and Capitalism

According to Afzal Haq, Islam differed from capitalism due to payment of interest. The capitalist system based on interest (*sūḍ*) is opposite to the ideal of equality in Islam and increases the miseries of the poor, while enhancing the wealth of the rich. Islam imposes taxes on rich people to spend the collected money on poor people. He stresses that this donation may be taken not as a favour of the rich rather as a right of the poor. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 282)

Right of the Government to Manage the Economy

Afzal Haq referred to the *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha* vol. II, p. 132 where Shah Wali Allah writes that the Prophet (S.) and the *khaliḥā* have power over everything to distribute among the soldiers of Allah or distribute it to peaceful non-Muslims. (Haq, vol. 1, pp. 268-269) Afzal Haq argued that both Islam and socialism may be compatible with regard to property owned by the state in both systems. He also asserted that Russia had to learn a lot about the details of equality from Islam. Islam promotes *musawat* with *Akhuwat*. He pointed out that unlike Islam, socialism lacked an accountability procedure, which not only recognizes the right of private property but considers an individual accountable to the state and ultimately before Allah. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 275) Afzal Haq concluded that socialists have reached the stage of *La Ila* ('There is no God...') and they had to accept in the future stage of *Il-Allah* (...but Allah...) yet.

Causes of the Russian Revolution

Afzal Haq also reflected upon the Russian Revolution and asserted that class struggle was the main cause of that revolution. He explained that when the people of the upper classes pushed the lower classes to the wall there was no choice for those downtrodden classes but to react accordingly. Clergymen under the influence of the '*elite*' preached to the 'Have-Nots' to succumb meekly to their fate. Thus, when the lower classes felt that both the law and the church supported the rich, they revolted against that oppressive system. Upper classes bore the brunt of the rage exhibited by the lowest who demolished churches which acted as agents of the upper classes, and they refused to obey a divinity who was portrayed as protecting only the upper classes. (Haq, vol. 1, p. 270-271).

Afzal Haq accomplished his arguments in form of code of *musawat* and *Akhuwat* that Islam offers as unsurpassed economic solution. He mentioned a saying by Holy Prophet that poverty leads to *kufir*. (Haq, vol. 2, p. 274) He asserts in one of his *khutba* (speech), that when Socialists consider the universe 'an accident and God a concept of the poor and weak people', in his opinion, that division not created by God, but a creation of the people themselves. (Haq, vol. 2, p. 883) He quoted several verses from *Holy Quran* that Islam allows for earning money but it imposes certain restrictions on its spending and holding. It inspires wealthy class to spend on the poor people. (Haq, vol. 2, p. 884)

Ahrars and Socialists

Afzal advised that the Muslims instead of hating socialists, they should learn from their experience socially, as they are on the first step of *La Ila* and he hoped that a time would come when they would get the stage of *Ill Allah*. He shared that socialists' international approach and passion for equality brought them closer with *Ahrars'* ideology. (Haq, vol. 1, 276; vol. 2, p. 885) He denounced the people 's concerns against socialists. He called it conspiracy of privileged sections of society who never wanted lowest to be together for the sake of betterment of Muslims and bring them near to socialists against imperialist powers. (Haq, vol. 1, 283) He advised Muslims to act according to true 'Muslim character' to the world instead of just projecting 'glory of Islam'. (Haq, vol. 1, 283)

The Concept of *Hakumat-i-Ilahia*

Afzal Haq presented the Ahrars's prime objective of establishing *Hakumat-i-Ilahia* based on the principles of equality and justice. He further elaborated the salient features of the proposed *Hakumat-i-Ilahia*. Firstly, there would not be class system or caste system. Secondly, poor people would not be exploited. Instead they would be provided with jobs and other necessities of life according to their capabilities. Thirdly, there would be freedom for all to practice their religion and promote their culture. Lastly, there would be no capitalistic form of economy and complete *musawat* would be observed. (Haq, vol. 1, 278) A glimpse of this *Hakumat-i-Ilahia* can be perceived in his speech delivered in the Provincial Ahrar Political Conference at Amritsar in 1936. He promised *Qard-i-Hasana* (loan free of interest), establishing space for aged people, the handicapped and the homeless, education for every child, health facilities for all developing indigenous industries, and introducing reforms in the justice system, police and jails. (Mirza, vol. 2, pp. 444-450)

Conclusion

The above discussion clearly indicates that Afzal Haq believed that Islam aims to establish *musawat*, social justice and equality in society. Yet it recognizes the instinctive attributes of the human being: e.g. freedom and the sense of possession. Without these two values, all initiatives for progress would wither away. To boost the individual's determination for work and progress, Islam recognizes the right of personal property. To achieve the objective of an egalitarian society and social justice, it inspired its followers to share their earnings with their fellow human beings. Socialism in theory appeals to an individual's heart and soul. Yet in practice it has failed wherever it was employed because of ignoring basic human psychology. Currently, the world has turned to private enterprise with programs of social welfare, which has proven/demonstrated the rationality and articulation of Islam in its economic principles.

Chaudhry Afzal Haq was a visionary among the Muslim urban middle-class leaders of the *Majlis-i-Ahrar*. He successfully defended the onslaughts against the Ahrars and their sympathies with the socialists. He perceived a natural affinity between the principles of egalitarianism, social justice, and Islam in its struggle against oppression, advocated the same objectives of socialism. In addition, pointing toward the subtle commonalities of Islam and socialism, he particularly elaborated the concept of *musawat in Hakumat-e Illahiya* which would have been a kind of egalitarian state which both Ahrars and socialists envisioned in the last century of colonial power.

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