

# Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan and Journal of Indian History

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**ABSTRACT:** Shafaat Ahmad Khan was a prominent historian and academic born in an esteemed family with significant military and civil positions in British India. After graduating with a B.A. in history from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1914, he was appointed Professor of Modern Indian History at the University of Allahabad in 1921. Dr. Ahmad Khan organised research into Indian history and published numerous works. He launched the *Journal of Indian History* in 1922 and began its tryst with history, committed to inclusivity and diversity and enriching the understanding of Indian history. He was one of the best speakers and one of the most brilliant parliamentarians in the province, and he soon established his position as one of the leaders of Muslim opinion in India. Ahmad Khan was tenacious in opposing the Congress as a constitutionalist until the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1934, and he was also at the forefront of the Round Table Conference. The Indian History Congress is the major national organisation of Indian historians who have occupied position of first President in its founding session under the Modern History Congress, held at Poona in 1935 and he called upon Indian historians to study all aspects of history rather than only political history and to emphasise the integrative factors in the past. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan was also a nationalist who was part of the Indian national movement and addressed the many problems that mired Indian society while upholding social solidarity and projecting the inherent problems faced by his community.

**KEYWORDS:** *JIH, IHC, RTC, Sources, National Movement*

## **Shafaat Ahmad Khan: Early Life**

Shafaat Ahmad Khan hails from an old and influential Rohilla Pathans family in the Rohilkhand Division in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. His family members have held high Civil and Military positions in some Indian States and British India. His family supported the British Government during the 1857 Revolt, which toppled the exploitative rule of the English East India Company in India.<sup>1</sup> Their family had possessed considerable landed property in the Division, and his father resided in his estate and devoted his whole time to managing and improving his property. Shafaat Ahmad Khan was born at Moradabad, in the Rohilkhand, in 1893 and educated at the Government High School till 1910. After passing his Matriculation Examination from the school in 1910, he left for England in May 1910 for higher studies. In 1914, he took his B. A. Degree with First Class Honours in History from Trinity College, Dublin, and was awarded a gold medal and a prize by his University in the same year. He spent nearly five years researching in the leading British archives-such as the British Museum, the Public Record Office, London, India Office Library and Record Department. He embodied the results of his research as a thesis for the D.Litt. and the degree was conferred to him. Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan was appointed as Assistant Professor at the University of Madras in 1920, served there for nine months, and was later appointed Professor of Modern Indian History at the University of Allahabad in 1921.<sup>2</sup> He threw his heart and soul into reorganising the University and supported Sir Claude de la Fosse, the able and enterprising Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University. He helped him in some of the most critical committees appointed in the formative period, 1922-23. In his own department, he showed administrative ability of a high order and soon became one of the most successful administrators of the University. He organised research into Indian History with rare devotion and zeal. He published a series of works throwing a flood of light on many of the obscure problems of Indian History.

## **Shafaat Ahmad Khan and *Journal of Indian History***

The Department of Modern Indian History was established in 1912 as

the historical research Department of the University of Allahabad and the faculty members of the department were engaged in original investigations into different periods of Indian History.<sup>3</sup> Prof. Shafaat Ahmad Khan was the Director of the School during the establishment of the *Journal of Indian History*.<sup>4</sup> Pundit Ramaprasad Tripathi (Reader), Bani Prasad and Iswari Prasad were assistant Professors, and the research scholars included Visweswar Dayadantayagi and Syed Maqsood Hussin Naquvi.<sup>5</sup> The department fostered scientific methods to resolve many of the difficult problems of modern Indian history and produced a number of monographs embodying the result of research processed there.<sup>6</sup> If one begin with strict academic historiography in the sense of production research that uncovers that original data and marshal them critically and inductively, the one historian writing on the modern period seems to be Shafaat Ahmad Khan, his interest was in the British penetration of the country.<sup>7</sup>

The *Journal of Indian History*, which later established itself as a leading publication in Indian historiography, became an indispensable platform for advancing knowledge and fostering critical dialogue in Indian history. The first two volumes of the Journal were published in non-calendar years, i.e. 1921/22 and 1922/23, respectively and Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan published the Journal thrice a year and continued to be its editor until 1923.<sup>8</sup> When he became a member of the U.P. Legislative Council in 1924 and continued on it for two terms, Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Professor of Indian History at the University of Madras, took over the editorship of the Journal.<sup>9</sup>

As the editor of the Journal and as a trained historian who has contributed much to the development of Indian history, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan nurtured and enhanced the *Journal of Indian History* with his extensive academic research and writing of history. Under him, the Journal began its tryst with history, committed to inclusivity and diversity and enriching the understanding of Indian history by showcasing all the various perspectives and approaches, inevitably transforming the Journal into an indispensable platform for advancing knowledge and fostering critical dialogue in Indian history.

At the beginning of the first volume and in the first part of JIH, he contributed six articles related to the trade relations with East India and other parts of the world such as ‘The East India Trade in the xvii Century’,<sup>10</sup> ‘Sources for xvii<sup>th</sup> Century British India in the Archives’<sup>11</sup>, ‘Documents on the East Indian Trade’<sup>12</sup>, ‘The East India Company’s War with Aurangzeb’<sup>13</sup>, ‘Sources for the History of xvii<sup>th</sup> Century British India in the India Office and Public Record Office’<sup>14</sup>, and ‘The Anglo-Portuguese Negotiations relating to Bombay, 1660-1667’<sup>15</sup>. His descriptions regarding the sources for constructing the history of British India in the seventeenth century found in the British Museum and Bodleian libraries shed a flood of light on the variety of sources available. While the British Museum contains a rich collection of pamphlets, broadsides, and manuscripts, the documents in the Bodleian Library are of primary importance for the history of the New East India Company. The Public Record Office contains a complete collection of the negotiations of the company with the Dutch, along with the Minutes of the Committee and Councils for trade and plantations and the despatches of the English administrators and petitions of the English East India Company. “This, by no means, is an exhaustive account of the wealth of materials that can be gathered there,”<sup>16</sup> Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan remarked. He continued, “All these documents are useful to the historians because it is mainly through the study of the concrete details that he can get a grasp of the principles upon which they were founded.”<sup>17</sup>

The publication of book reviews is an essential part of academic journals. In the *Journal of Indian History*, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan spent considerable time and energy on the reviews of important books that came out during his period. Among them is *The English Factories in India 1655-1660*, written by William Foster. Khan appreciated the academic enterprise of the author who utilised an immense variety of archival materials from various repositories in Europe, all the while lamenting the limitations faced by the author in general and researchers in particular. This is why he underscores the fact that “..... forty-eight thousand volumes of documents contained in the Record Department of India Office may well be envied by the helpless scholar in India and this is no reason why a comprehensive scheme of active cooperation should not be

worked out by the School of Oriental Studies, the New school of Historical research and the India Office Library and Records Departments.”<sup>18</sup>

The first volume of JIH is remarkable for the review of the *Essays on Educational Reconstruction in India*,<sup>19</sup> authored by eminent historian and diplomat, K.M Pannikar. The book is a collection of essays on Education in India that critically analyses the educational system prevalent in early twentieth-century India. The author looked at the undeniable need for reform and social reconstruction of education in India which could be of national interest and universal in its approach. These essays talk about the problem of national education, the need for vernacular languages and mediums of instruction in secondary schools, university reforms, and the training of children with a formal system of primary and secondary education. K.M. Pannikar was the first Malayali scholar who appeared in the annals of the *Journal of Indian History*. He was a profound personality who has already established his multifarious brilliance in various walks of life.

Other significant book reviews included in this volume are *The British Empire*, by J.P. Bulkley published by the Oxford University Press in 1921, *Asoka*, By Vincent A. Smith, Oxford, Third Edition, *The Economic Effects of War on India*, by IqbalNhadurSaksena. Anglo-Oriental Press, Lucknow, *The Indian Point of View in Economics*, The ManockjeeLimjee Gold Medal Essay of the University of Bombay by D.B Shah, published by Vailbhar Press in 1920. A clear and succinct account of the development of the Indian point of view in Economics, *Labor, Capital and Finance* by Waller W.Wall, F.J.I published by Pitman etc.<sup>20</sup> A Short History of British Expansion by James A.Williamson published by Macmillan in 1922 was reviewed as an admirable summary of the history of the British people in “its external aspect” that traces the growth of commerce and colonies from the Norman conquest to the present day.<sup>21</sup>

Another best practice followed by the Journal of Indian History was the acknowledgement of receipt of books for review printed in the last portion of the Journal. The Book reviews and acknowledgement of receipt of books for review were very much useful to the researchers and students alike. The period when books and printed materials were scarce

was a matter of recognition and information regarding the publication of new materials in History.

## Academic Works

His works on the period are recognised as standard and authoritative treatises and are known all over the world for their massive, solid and thorough research, their luminous exposition of principles and movements, and their clear and accurate analysis of the material. Ever an ardent researcher of India-British History, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan made great use of the archival material both in Great Britain and in India and distinguished himself quite early in his professional career by the publication of works like *The East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century, Anglo-Portuguese Negotiations Relating to Bombay 1660-77*<sup>22</sup> and the *Sources for the History of British India in the Seventeenth Century*<sup>23</sup> which have all exercised a strange fascination on the mind of many of the most erudite and conscientious historians. The work *The East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century* deals with the subject from a different standpoint. It has traced the history of the East India Trade in the Seventeenth Century and estimated its influence on the foreign, no less than the economic policy of England during the period.<sup>24</sup> While the book *The Sources for the History of British India in the Seventeenth Century* is neither a catalogue of libraries and record offices nor is it a selection of transcripts from the English and Indian archives. The object of this undertaking was two-fold: in the first place, it looked at supplying a critical analysis of essential data for the study of seventeenth-century British India; and in the second place, it looked at bringing within one purview all the materials lying scattered in various record offices. Every important document was subjected to close and careful scrutiny and references were given to printed works that threw further light on the subject.

His monumental work on *The Sources for the History of British India in the XVII Century* is a striking tribute to his extraordinary calibre, persistence and devotion to the highest ideals of scholarship. The author has utilized essential data preserved in the British Museum Library, the Bodleian Library, the India Office Library and Record Department, and the Public Record Office to answer how far and to what extent was the



English economic and foreign policy affected by the East India Trade.<sup>25</sup>

He was also the President of the All India Modern History Congress held in Poona in 1935, which subsequently developed largely under his auspices and those of Mahamahopadhyaya Professor D. V. Potdar, into the Indian History Congress. His zeal for promoting the cause of Indian historical research never flagged under the growing weight of his political activities: and his service to the Indian Historical Records Commission, of which he was a member for some years, was exceptionally praiseworthy.<sup>26</sup> The relationship between Sir Shifaat Ahmad Khan and Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar was deep-rooted in the case of the *Journal of Indian History* and maintained a mutual academic relationship with each other. Shafat Ahmad Khan due to his political engagements as a parliamentarian in the UP Legislative Assembly was compelled to keep away from routine academic activities but did not curtail his academic research and writings. The depth of their relationship and the case of the *Journal of Indian History* attest to his words in the appreciation cited in the *Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar Commemoration*. "At a critical time, he came to my rescue and took over the Journal of Indian History with alacrity and zeal. He adopted my child, nursed it, and fondled it with true paternal affection, and the baby has now developed into a strong self-confident youth. Dr. Aiyangar must have experienced many difficulties in keeping up the standard of the Journal, but it must now be plain to the meanest intelligence that he has emerged victorious out of a struggle of eleven years and established it on a secure and firm basis."<sup>27</sup> In 1940 Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, never grudged himself to the object of his attention, *The Journal of Indian History*, and devoted years of patient toil until the Journal has taken deep root in the South. The Journal which I fondled as a baby has now, thanks to his (C. S. Srinivasahari) and Dr. Aiyangar 's nourishing: diet, reached a vigorous and virile manhood. (sic.)<sup>28</sup> He also authored many significant historical works throwing light on the hitherto unknown sources regarding the history of colonial India. Dipesh Chakravarti examined the process of his historical enquiry, especially the heuristics process and its reflection in historical narratives.<sup>29</sup> His efforts for the collection of material and its necessity in historical research were expressed in his articles in JIH<sup>30</sup> and 'The East India Trade:

In the Seventeenth Century.<sup>31</sup> Shafaat also conducted tour to collect rare historical materials and to identify the repositories where preserved such rare documents and to submit a proposal for their safe custody.<sup>32</sup> Other works of Shafat Ahmad Khan are *Ideals and Realities: Studies in Education and Economics*<sup>33</sup>, *What are the Rights of the Muslim Minority in India?*<sup>34</sup> and *The Indian Federation; An Exposition and Critical Review*.<sup>35</sup>

## **Public Career of Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan**

The administrative and research work at the University did not exhaust Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan's exceptional energy. He decided to contest a seat in the United Provinces Legislative Council in 1923 and defeated his opponent by an overwhelming majority. His work in the Legislative Council of these provinces is too well known to be mentioned. He had all the requisites of a parliamentarian and all the qualifications of a leader. His enormous industry, upright character, remarkable capacity for friendship and sterling capability soon brought him to the forefront of provincial politics. He was one of the best speakers and one of the most brilliant parliamentarians in the province, and he soon established his position as one of the leaders of Muslim opinion in India. He worked whole-heartedly for the development of compulsory primary education in rural areas and pleaded for facilities for Secondary and University Education.

It need only refer to his numerous speeches on finance, his work in connection with the Agra Tenancy Bill of 1926, and his championship of Muslim rights inside and outside the Council. When the Simon Commission visited India in 1928, he immediately convened a meeting of leading Muslims of the United Provinces at Allahabad and formed a Committee for the preparation of a Memorandum for the Simon Commission. He was President of the Conference of Muslim members of the Legislative Council, and Municipal and District Boards. With the help of his Secretary, Mr. Zahur Ahmad, M.L.C., Bar-at-Law, and other prominent Muslims, such as Mr. Masudul Hasan, Khan Bahadur Hafiz Hidayat Husain, and a delegate to the Round Table Conference, he compiled a Memorandum on behalf of U.P. Muslims which became the Magna Carta of Indian Muslims.<sup>36</sup> It is a document of about 500 pages



of foolscap size and contains a most vivid and accurate account of the condition of Muslims in the United Provinces.<sup>37</sup>

It was a concrete and visible expression of the Muslim Renaissance which had been unfolding itself slowly for the last ten years. The Muslim community was roused from its dogmatic slumber and became conscious of the vital need for the protection of its political individuality, and distinctive culture. The resolution of the Muslim Conference passed a few months later at Delhi, embodied the principles that the U.P. Memorandum had illustrated. Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan constantly faced attacks from various quarters of life. He was furiously attacked and denounced at numerous meetings; he was abused unmercifully in the press; and the Hindu members in the Legislative Council subjected him to incessant criticism. He bore all these attacks with extraordinary patience and maintained himself with matchless tact and firmness. He did not make a single enemy and retained the friendship and confidence of all communities. Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan was not allowed to seek relaxation to the Legislative Council by the University, which, as everyone knows, contains an overwhelming number of Hindus in all its bodies, executive and academic.<sup>38</sup>

During these days of political apprenticeship he was incessantly busy, organising his community, touring through the province, holding meetings at various centres, and keeping up the spirit of his community. He was the president of the U. P. Muslim Educational Conference in 1925, and again in 1929; he presided over the Muslim Educational Conference in 1929, the Ajmer-Merwara Muslim Educational Conference in 1929, and the Bengal Muslim Educational Conference in 1930. He was also the president of the Bengal Muslim Conference at Dacca where he delivered a presidential address which roused the Muslims of Bengal. He has been a member of numerous executive bodies and has been a member of the Improvement Trust, Muslim University, Aligarh and many select committees on U. P. Government as well as Private bills. In 1929, he founded the weekly "Star" and soon made it the ablest and most influential exponent of Muslim policy and Muslim aspirations in India.<sup>39</sup> The pro-British attitude of Shafaat Ahmad Khan was visible in 1930's.

For instance in 1932, at a meeting in the House of Commons with Aga Khan, the poet Mohammed Iqbal and the historian Shafaat Ahmad Khan stressed 'the inherent impossibility of securing any merger of Hindu and Muslim, political, or indeed social interests' and 'the impracticability of ever governing India through anything but a British agency'.<sup>40</sup>

## **Work at the Round Table Conference**

A new sphere of activity was opened for Shafaat Ahmad Khan by the Round Table Conferences. When the civil disobedience movement started in India, he was one of the first to raise his voice against it. He pointed out the dangers of the movement and warned his community against the risks involved.<sup>41</sup> Not content with mere platitudes, he helped in organising meetings attended by thousands of Muslims at Allahabad and various other important places in the province and advised them not to defy the law. A convinced constitutionalist, he opposed the revolutionary programme of the Congress with courage and determination. He did this until the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed in Delhi in 1934. In the Round Table Conference his outstanding ability, engaging personality and phenomenal energy soon brought him to the front.<sup>42</sup> Shafaat always urged a friendly relationship with Indian National Congress while growing communal sentiments in India. In April, 1939, Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, who claims to be the Aga Khan's mouthpiece in political matters, strongly urged Sir Abdulla Haroon, Jinnah's trusted henchman, to recognise the importance of the Muslim League's resuming immediate contact with Congress.<sup>43</sup> Sir Abdulla Haroon replied that as negotiations with Congress in the existing circumstances could only mean surrender to Congress, there was no point in negotiating. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, however, repeated his advice that before Congress and Indian States combined, an attempt should be made to arrive at a settlement with Congress. (sic.)<sup>44</sup>

He was appointed to South Africa as High Commissioner in 1941. Before going to South Africa he was, in 1940, a member of the Federal Service Commission and the GIP Railway Committee of the Government of India. During his tenure of office in South Africa from 1941 to 1944, Khan seems to have kept aloof from the discussions within the Indian political organisations. This may have been because he felt the function of

the High Commissioner to be purely diplomatic.<sup>45</sup>

### **Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan and Indian History Congress**

The Indian History Congress is the major national organisation of Indian historians and has occupied this position since its founding session under the name of Modern History Congress, held at Poona in 1935. In his address, the organisation's first President, Professor Shafaat Ahmad Khan called upon Indian historians to study all aspects of history, rather than only political history and to emphasize the integrative factors in the past. Its name was then changed to the Indian History Congress from its second session held in 1938. In the presidential address to the Modern History Congress, held at Poona in 1935, he stated, 'History does not consist merely in the dissection of tiny bits of facts, out of old parchments, collected together after years of toil, without any principle or significance. This is not history, but a heterogeneous collection of unorganized facts pieced together with soulless and mechanical industry. History consists, not merely in the organization, collection and examination of material, but also in its interpretation.'<sup>46</sup>

He declared: History Congress aims at organizing the scattered energies and divided work of a number of institutions which have hitherto worked in isolation into a coherent and effective body. It will be the clearing house of Indian historical research and will organize research into the various phases of Indian history on an all-India basis. While carefully safeguarding the position and status of each organization and each province, it will initiate lines of policy concerning Indian research as a whole, and serve as an authoritative organ of Indian historical scholarship. In actual work, it will be a federal body with certain clearly marked and well-defined spheres of action, reserved exclusively or almost exclusively for its own legitimate and normal sphere, while provincial organizations will keep up their residuary powers within the ambit to which they have hitherto restricted their efforts. This does not mean that provincial organizations will not be expected to contribute substantially to original knowledge, nor does it imply the existence of an extraordinary body, with dictatorial powers, imposing its decrees or its rebellious subjects. All that it implies is that the exchange of views among scholars, the lack of which has been

severely felt by many historians, will be frequent and effective, and the experience gained by researchers in other fields will be availed. But this is not the only function of the Congress. Its other function is to give an impetus to research on an all-India basis, in a systematic and organized form, on a permanent basis, through a strong and effective organization. Its standards will be higher than have been developed so far, either in the West or in the East and its normal sphere of activity will be marked by the confidence and support which the world of Indian scholarship will render to it at almost every step.<sup>47</sup>

The All India Modern History Congress knows no politics; it will not serve the interest either of our national life and thought propagandists who paint the glories of their country's past in a flamboyant language and consider Western influence and European culture primarily responsible for the low position which their country occupies in the society of autonomous communities, nor will it support writers who, obsessed with prejudice and racial pride, have completely ignored those features of which have maintained and preserved the continuity of our cultural life, and the stability and permanence of our indigenous institutions. The power of assimilation which our country has shown during the last one thousand years would be quite inexplicable to historians who think that the passage of a law is immediately followed by its general and universal application and fail to take note of a deep gulf that separates the actual from the ideal. The Congress is not the forum for the dissemination of theories of racial supremacy or political predominance, and nothing can be or is more fatal to the healthy formation of sound opinion on the history of India than the manipulation and distortion of facts of history to serve the ends of political parties in the country. It is exclusively intended for scholars of history, and to the brotherhood of historians, the controversies of the day make no appeal.<sup>48</sup> Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, whose actual writings were not equal to the lofty ideals of historiography held out by him in his Presidential Address at the Indian History Congress (1935).<sup>49</sup> He continued his full support and active participation in the activities of the Indian History Congress and was selected as the General Secretary in the 1939 Session. Prof. Khan Bahadur M. AzizulHuque, Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University and Chairman, Reception Committee, observed

'All of us have reasons to be grateful to Dr. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, the learned and indefatigable Secretary of the Indian History Congress, whose vision and foresight brought into being the Indian History Congress, and I have no doubt that posterity will gratefully remember him for bringing the historians of India together to exchange notes and thoughts'.<sup>50</sup> In the Srimant Sayaji Rao Lectures delivered at Baroda in 1938, Shafat Khan stated "I have always been a great believer in scientific history and always felt that the essential task of a historian consists in the collection of material and its rigorous examination. When this task is satisfactorily discharged, he will be able to bring all the requisite qualities of dispassionate judgment and freedom from prejudice, to bear on the construction of his history."<sup>51</sup>

In 1944 he returned from South Africa and engaged in activities without taking part in the turmoil happening in Indian politics. His arrival to India was suspiciously watched by the political authorities of Britain who took their stand to observe him closely.<sup>52</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of the interim government and Wavell, the Viceroy of India discussed about the composition of the interim ministry and proposed to "consist of five 'Caste Hindus', five Muslims, a Scheduled Caste member (one of those formerly known as 'untouchables'), and three minority representatives".<sup>53</sup> But before it finally took office, there was much debate and politicking, some of its acrimonious, about its composition and structure. The Congress interim government under Nehru, sworn in on 2 September 1946, "presided helplessly over the growing communal inferno".<sup>54</sup> Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who had broken away from the Congress, stayed away as he wanted the Muslim members to be only from the Muslim League. One of the names he objected to was that of Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan, a scholar politician.<sup>55</sup> The inclusion of Sir Shafaat had particularly riled the Muslim League because he had left it over fundamental differences. While in the League, he had defended it publicly but also disagreed on many issues – the final parting came when the League asked that titles given by the British be returned, and Sir Shafaat disagreed strongly.<sup>56</sup> He was a personality who was in the hit list of many of the right wing organizations due to his active involvement in the issues that directly or indirectly affected the Muslims in India. Shafaat

Ahmad Khan was attacked brutally by unknown individuals at Shimla on 25 August 1946. *The New York Times* reported “Moslem is stabbed after he is named for Indian Cabinet; Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, who left League, knifed seven times, but is likely to recover attack called political Delhi, Allahabad and Amritsar scenes of strife between religious communities”.<sup>57</sup> About a year after the attack he died in Shimla in July 1947, having fallen ill two months earlier. Prof. C.S. Srinivasachariar wrote in his obituary for Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, “Dr. Khan was one of the most sympathetic of professors, and his interest in historical learning and scholarship was profound and generous. Ever a friend of all students of Indian History, he shone as one of the leading lights in the sky of Indian historical learning. His sudden death is a great loss to Indian academic life.”<sup>58</sup> Over the years, the journal’s reception within the academic community has been overwhelmingly positive, with scholars citing its high-quality research and insightful contributions to understanding Indian history. The Journal has thus played a significant role in shaping the discourse on Indian history and has become a valuable resource for researchers and students alike.<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan was a renowned academic and socio-political luminary with an outstanding ability to address challenges encountered on numerous occasions in life. He was a genuine academic historian of the Indian genre who advocated for scientific technique and methodology in historical research. The foundation of the *Journal of Indian History* was an initial attempt to construct a counter-hegemonic position against the Eurocentric vision of history and its practice in India. During this time, academic discourses were predominantly centred on the European imagination of history and were published by disciplines other than history. Most academic publications dealing with Indian history were owned and administered by European institutes or academics that closely pursued colonial ideologues. At this vital juncture, the realisation that there is no such standard journal on Indian history anywhere in India paved the way for the formation of the Journal of Indian History to promote scientific approaches in historical works. He personally took

the initiative to disseminate scientific history, which was reflected in his research monographs and papers. The *Journal of Indian History* thus, through his pioneering vision established itself as the beacon of historical studies in India. The journal's format, with its rigorous peer-review process and inclusion of special issues, monographs, and thematic volumes, further enhanced its impact and contribution to the field. Its rigorous editorial process ensures that only the most thorough and innovative research is published, making it a trusted source for scholars in the field.

Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan was also a nationalist who was part of the Indian national movement and addressed the many problems that mired Indian society, all the while upholding social solidarity and projecting the inherent problems faced by his community. Nevertheless, Dr. Khan faced criticism and attacks from various quarters but handled them with patience and tact, maintaining the friendship and confidence of all communities. However, he was not allowed to seek re-election to the Legislative Council by the university, which had a majority of Hindu members. But Dr. Khan's community organising activities continued, with him visiting the province and hosting gatherings to lift the spirit of his community. During the Round Table Conference, he served as Secretary to the Muslim Delegation and was an active member of several sub-committees. His comments on crucial matters demonstrated his zeal, debate agility, and ability to establish common ground. He criticised the Congress's revolutionary programme and advocated for a constitutional approach. Overall, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan's accomplishments as a historian, academic, and public figure have established him as one of the most distinguished historians of modern India. His scholarship, leadership in the Muslim community, and involvement in political issues have all left an indelible mark.

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