

SOOTHSAYING

Apocalypse Less than a Year Away?

Mario P Chanco writes from Morong, Philippines

'All I can say is that some of the disaster and catastrophe conditions described in the prophecy have happened, are continuing to happen....'

A mimeographed paper summarizing its highlights was distributed in several Metro Manila churches a year and a half ago. It was believed to have come from Pope John XXIII's diaries, said to have been discovered by a Vatican cleaning woman many years after the Pope's death.

And despite the deafening silence from the Catholic Church over the reported discovery of this lost portion of the pope's diaries, agitation and anxiety have been increasing among persons and institutions who want to know:

1. Whether the worst of the disasters, catastrophes and misery supposed to precede the master plan for redemption, has already happened.

2. Whether the transformation of earth from a charred, spinning rock to a lush oasis in space, as described in the published account of the Pope's lost papers, foretells the incineration of the globe by nuclear war among nations or by the heavenly hand of an aroused creator.

3. Whether the inventory of wars, diseases, global famine and other disasters will accelerate between June 5, 1994 and June 5, 1995, or in the period between June 5, 1995 and the claimed Second Coming on Dec 25, 2000.

The ranks of those concerned about the alleged papal prediction include, not just

the religious faithful but, curiously enough, hard facts-oriented scientists, meteorologists, physicists, academicians, even agnostics.

The scientists are eager to relate, if they can an accelerating chain of terrestrial natural catastrophes to some mysterious extra-terrestrial force.

But the alerted and the attentive among them remember that one of the major prophecies of Pope John XXIII, the beloved ecumenical pope who served from 1958 to 1963, contained in his recently discovered secret diary was the coming on June 5, 1995 of 'saviours from the heavens who will begin their task of assisting the clean-up and repair of the environment and the (world's) crippled countries.'

Further extracts from Pope John's secret diary, which were first received and published in toto for distribution to a few groups in several Manila Catholic churches and which have neither been publicly denied nor confirmed by national or foreign ecclesiastics, said:

'Many will fear these odd-looking beings, but they come in peace and will, with God's will, transform Earth from a charred, spinning rock to a lush oasis in space. The survivors will flourish in a world without war, disease or hatred. As the year 1998 arrives, our

Heavenly Friends will have shared much of their advanced knowledge.

'Mankind will at last wipe out most of its diseases, and our life spans will increase to the length of those listed in the Bible. The visitors will also share the remarkable power of resurrection, and throngs of the wrongly dead will rise again.'

Those prophecies, and the precise date, June 5, 1995, promised for their delivery, come toward the end of the papal diary.

The Pope, recounting his heavenly visitations from the Blessed Virgin, runs a cool, predictive finger through earth-shaking political and physical occurrences that have happened exactly as predicted.

Among them are: 'The world will lose a great leader (John F Kennedy?) and a powerful nation will find itself involved in a conflict it cannot win (America's defeat in Vietnam?).'

'The Madonna speaks sadly of unrest in her homeland (Palestine?), a change in the balance of power, and much blood being spilled in the sand. The world will get a false sense of hope when the chains of oppression are shattered throughout

Eastern Europe (the Berlin wall syndrome?) but the joy will be short-lived as the freed peoples fight among themselves (Bosnia? Rwanda?) on how to run their countries.

'The early 1990, will be a period of deadly natural disasters. Paradise will be struck by powerful winds and waves, while killer floods and violent earthquakes will shatter man's dwellings. By the middle of the decade, regional skirmishes will develop into full-fledged conflicts. As the casualties mount, a worldwide famine will strike (Africa and Central Europe?) The impending global grains shortage?.'

'I cannot help but think I could perhaps head off some of the troubles that loom for us all. But Christ tells me the misery (great natural disasters, nuclear accidents, famines?) must take place for the master plan to succeed.'

Strangely enough, the scientists, technologists, the savants to whom this writer presented this scenario, did not scoff directly at the 'unproved' relationship between an extra-terrestrial hand and the series of great natural and political catastrophes which have hit the world.

In a session with weather scientists, a pseudo-claric and sociologist, who attended the

Wondrous Tales from a Lost Papal Diary

Heavenly visitors will arrive at the height of despair to help man heal his wounds and work together to right all the horrible wrongs

THE world will suffer through a painful period of violent wars, deadly famine and destructive natural disasters over the next eight years, but that nightmare will be followed by a lengthy stretch of love and harmony — a beautiful, serene Heaven on Earth.

The startling prediction come from the sensational lost diary of Pope John XXIII, the beloved pontiff who died June 3, 1963. The dusty leather-bound diary containing handwritten predictions was found by a Vatican cleaning woman who was sorting through boxes stacked in a little-used storage room.

The entries clearly spell out the assassination of John F Kennedy, America's plunge into the Vietnam War, unrest in the Middle East and the fall of communism years before they took place. Later entries call for even more troubled times.

'Pope John had periodic visits from both Jesus and the Virgin Mary,' says Rev Giuseppe D' Angelo, who's pored over the wondrous tales.

'These sessions in the Pope's chambers resulted in fantastic glimpses into the future of mankind.'

The Pope was saddened to learn conditions will get much worse before they take a sudden, sensational turn in the year 2000 that will return the world to its pristine beauty that was here for Adam and Eve.

'Pope John writes of Heavenly visitors arriving by June 1995 flaming chariots of steel. These special visitors will arrive at the height of despair and help man heal his wounds and work together to right all the horrible wrongs.'

Father D' Angelo, 73, has agreed to release some of the diary entries made between February of 1959 and April of 1963. The scrawled messages reveal of frightened and excited pontiff who decided to keep his meeting with Christ and the Madonna a secret.

The first appearance of Christ took place February 12, 1959. Pope John notes: 'Dear God, I have been blessed like no man before me. The Saviour has granted me a special audience here in my chambers. He tells me that I have been chosen to hear the truth no matter how awful it may be. It scares me a bit to be so entrusted, but I am honoured all the same. Jesus tells me the Virgin Mary will come soon to deliver the first news of what will be.'

'April 7, 1959: She is more beautiful than I had ever imagined. The Madonna is a joy to behold. I just wish her message was a more positive one. She says in four years time the world will lose a great leader and a powerful nation will find itself involved in a conflict it cannot win. The fighting will take its toll on the battle field and from within as the population despises the loss of its young men. The Holy Mother sheds tears as she describes the heart-breaking vision.'

'August 17, 1959: The Madonna's second visit is much like the first. She speaks sadly of unrest in her homeland, a change in the balance of power, and much blood being spilled in the sand. She says several madmen will send their people into battles in the name of God. But the Creator has nothing to do with these senseless struggles among brothers.'

'January 3, 1960: Christ comes to me again; I yearn to tell my fellow Christians of these miraculous appearances, but I am advised to keep quiet until the time is right. I cannot help but think I could perhaps head off some of the trouble that looms for us all. But Christ tells me the misery must take place for the

master plan to succeed.

June 13, 1960: The Virgin Mary says the world will get a false sense of hope 30 years from now when the chains of repression are shattered throughout eastern Europe. The joy will be short-lived though as the freed peoples fight among themselves on how to run their countries. Thousands of poor innocent children will perish due to the foolishness of their fathers.

'March 6, 1961: Just when I thought my Heavenly visits were over the Madonna comes to me once again. She seems tired of the heartache she must share with me. My heartaches to see her hurting so. The news again is foreboding. The early 1990s will be a period of deadly natural disasters. She says paradise will be struck by powerful winds and waves, while killer floods and violent earthquakes will shatter man's dwellings. By the middle of the decade, regional skirmishes will develop into full-fledged conflicts. As the casualties mount, a worldwide famine will strike.'

'The devastation will be like none seen before, especially throughout Africa, where million will perish.'

'September 23, 1961: She has returned with yet more bad news. It is becoming truly difficult for this humble servant to hear of such overwhelming hardships.'

'The Madonna tells me terrifying diseases will be unleashed on the already weakened populations of the world by late 1984. Wars will begin to wind down because the fighting nations will be greatly weakened from within. This is the beginning of the change. Hallelujah!'

'May 19, 1962: From the Heavens will appear the saviours. They will arrive on June 5, 1995, and begin their task of assisting the clean-up and repair of the environment and the crippled countries.'

'Many will fear these odd-looking beings, but they come in peace and will with God's guidance transform Earth from a charred, spinning rock to a lush oasis in space. The survivors will flourish in a world without war, disease or hatred. My heart is finally at peace with this knowledge that there is hope for humanity.'

'July 2, 1962: The Madonna tells me this will be her final visit. It is a joyous one for she shares tremendous news. As the year 1998 arrives, our Heavenly friends will have shared much of their advanced knowledge. Mankind will at last wipe out most of its diseases and our life spans will increase to the length of those listed in the Bible. The visitors will also share the remarkable power of resurrection, and throngs of the wrongly dead will rise again. Finally, a wondrous miracle will take place in the sky above New York City on December 25, 2000, when millions will witness the sensational appearance of a messiah who will announce the new beginning of a second paradise here on Earth.'

Pope John XXIII died a year later before he ever had a chance to release his predictions. Experts say that the diary is 100 per cent authentic, and they urged people to prepare themselves for even leaner times before the New Beginning next century.

This document, allegedly containing excerpts from the diary of the late Pope John XXIII, was distributed by certain groups in several Catholic churches in Metro Manila last year. — *Dephneus Asia*

A Cemetery with a Difference

by Najma Jalil

CHITTAGONG, the main sea port of Bangladesh, is a paragon of rare scenic beauty. The beautiful landscape and the luxuriant tropical vegetation are not the only source of attraction to the tourists. The picturesque landscape itself has the power to evoke feelings within us that are at once so appealing and extraordinary. That is why this hilly district catch at the hearts of so many tourists and excite the wanderlust of so many city people.

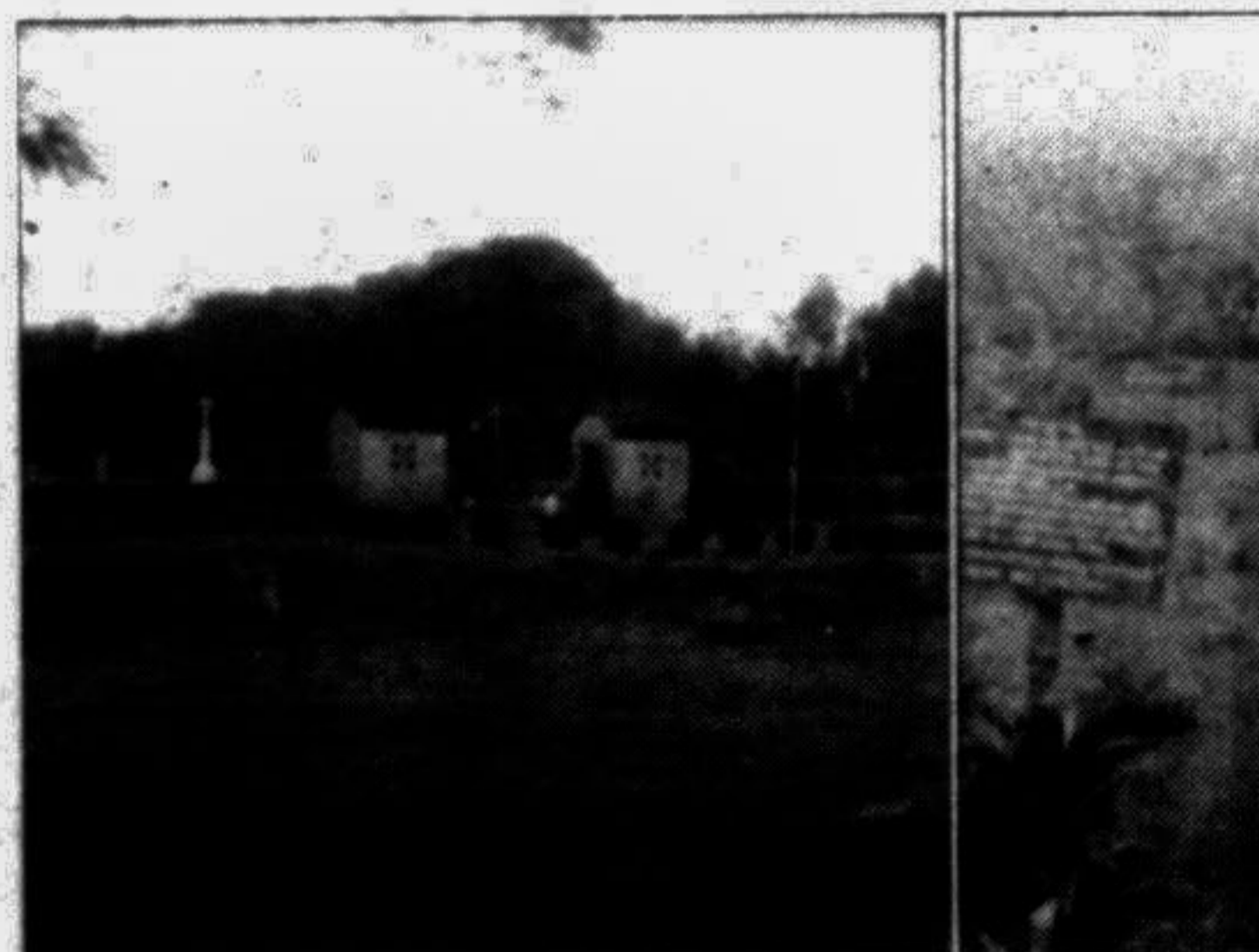
Added to these bounties of nature are numerous landmarks created by man himself through the process of history. One of such landmarks is the Chittagong War Cemetery.

of time schedule for the visitors, just beside the gate. Passing through the gate I walked towards the main entrance of the cemetery. As I moved slowly towards the epitaphs, I felt a strange stillness that enveloped the area. At once I felt the exultation of a pilgrim, for, I was already inside the cemetery. Numerous plots of flowers such as roses, marigolds, etc., surrounded the epitaphs thus enhancing the magnificence of the cemetery. Each and every epitaph had a distinct feature reminding me of their historical significance.

Historical facts reveal that both the War Cemeteries one in Chittagong and the other in



Epitaphs



The main entrance: two waiting rooms — one has the memorial register

Although this cemetery is situated at the heart of the town (Chitteswar Road) yet it is untouched by the bustle of urban life. Moreover, this is a popular spot for most of the city dwellers, and nature-lovers, who assemble here in search of peace and tranquility that reign over the area.

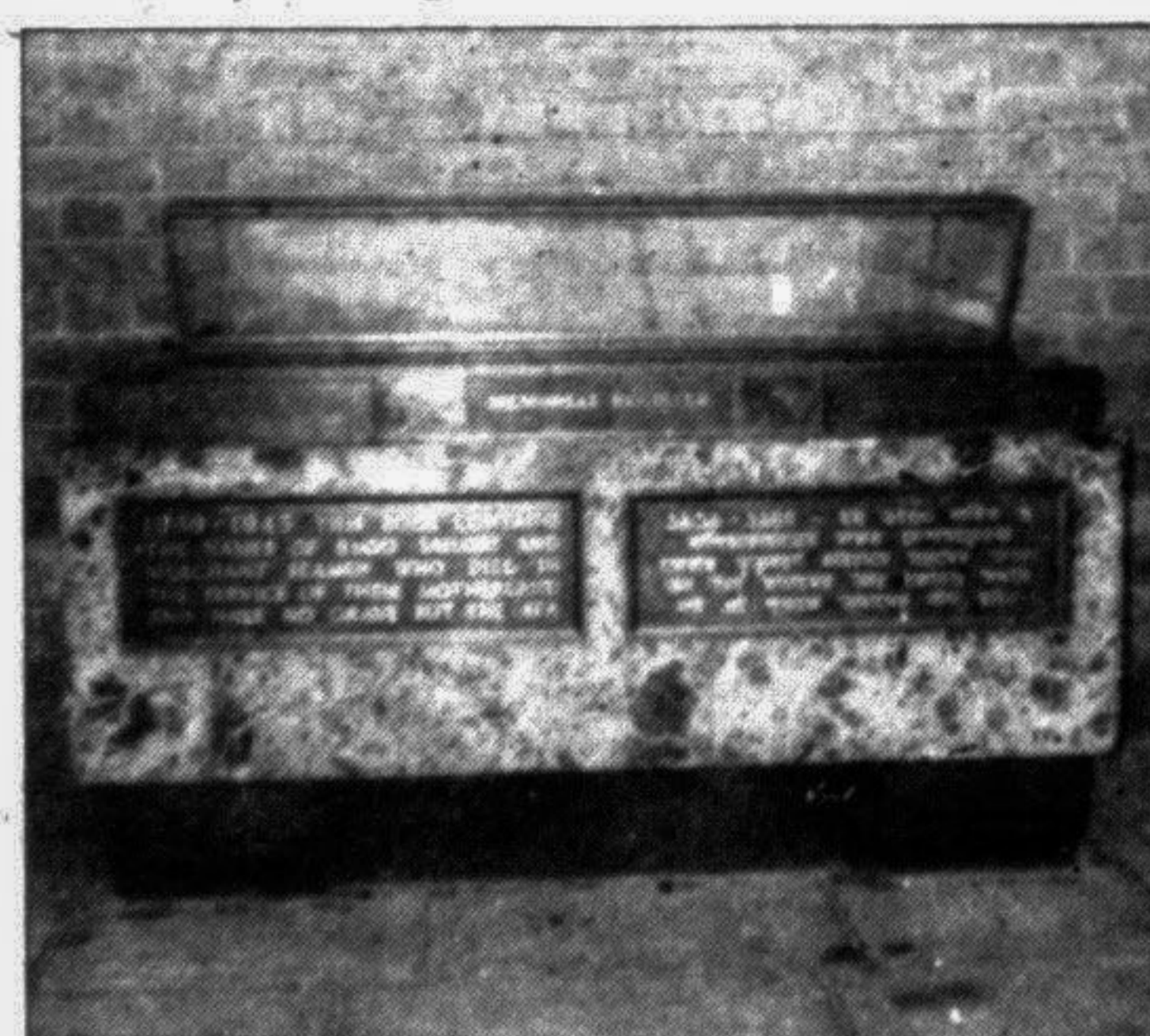
So, like many others, I went there, one late afternoon, specifically to contemplate the serenity of the area and thus wanting it to be true. The road

Comilla are maintained by the Commonwealth. But the cemetery in Comilla is bigger than the cemetery in Chittagong and contains more epitaphs. The Memorial Register 1939-1945 records the names of 6500 sailors and merchant seamen, who in the service of their motherland lost their lives and have no grave but the sea. Moreover, the names, age, nationality and crops/regiment etc of the martyrs (more appropriately, the allied forces)

Signboard (left) for the visitor

strange stillness and splendid natural surrounding of the cemetery a place of consolation. For myself, though, the

cemetery is undoubtedly a unique tourist haven — a respite from the busy life of the town.



The memorial register

are clearly mentioned on the epitaphs. At the centre stands the War Memorial looking utterly pure but so solemn. In the sunlight, when its shadow falls on the ground, it looks like a sundial, commemorating that ideal historical tragedy, which it represents. Yet this tragedy upholds a certain dignity that can never change through the passage of time. Visitors from all over the country no wonder find this

Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed A Personality in Politics

by Mohammad Amjad Hossain

HERE were many personalities in Bengal to whom the present socio-political structure owes much. We could pay due respect to them by recognising their valuable contributions. One of such personalities was Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed on whom much has not been written. He was among the few politicians who possessed rare qualities. Outstanding features of his character were his support for the cause of the downtrodden people and his strict adherence to principles and values.

Twenty five years ago, on 31 October 1969, Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed passed away at the age of 80. He along with his elder brother Maulana Afsaruddin Ahmed known as 'Ahmed Brothers of Bengal' were the first Muslim leaders from Bengal to join Khilafat movement spearheaded by Ali brothers — Maulana Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali.

Born in 1889 in a respectable Muslim family at Kaya under Kumarkhali of Kushtia, Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed had his higher education from Calcutta University. Having obtained M A in History in 1916 and Law degree in 1917 he began his career as a law practitioner in Krishnanagar district court of Nadia. His father Mahatabuddin Ahmed, who was a landlord and businessman, planned to send him to England for higher study in law. But Shamsuddin Ahmed could not pursue it because of sudden demise of his father.

Story goes that Naziruddin, a forefather of Mahatabuddin, Ahmed, was a descendant from the frontier tribe, who was sent by Emperor Jahangir as Subedar to quell a mutiny in Pabna district. For his courageous act of containing the mutiny he was awarded two villages in Pabna by Mughal administration. And one of the villages was named after him as Nazirpur.

By dint of his merit Shamsuddin Ahmed had the opportunity to practice law in Calcutta High Court in two years time. Not only he joined Calcutta Court but also became a junior under leading Barrister and statesman Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, who was a highly successful defender of nationalists in court.

Inspired by Khilafat movement which burst into an anti-British agitation, and non-cooperation movement against the British launched by Mahatma Gandhi, young lawyer Shamsuddin Ahmed joined politics. In Bengal, he was an undaunted organiser of Khilafat movement and because of his untiring efforts the movement gained popularity. In organising the movement, he was assisted by his elder brother Maulana Afsaruddin Ahmed and younger brother Dr Sadrudin Ahmed. The first conference on Khilafat movement was in fact held in Lucknow in 1919 when an All-India Committee was set up with Seth Chhotani of Bombay as President and Maulana Shaukat Ali as Secretary. As a

result of his active participation in the anti-British movement, Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed was interned in the Central Jail of Alipur in 1920. His eldest brother Maulana Afsaruddin Ahmed also was put in the same prison at the same time. On release from Alipur Central Jail in 1922 Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed was elected as Secretary of Khilafat Committee of Bengal while he held the post of Secretary of Bengal Congress as well.

In 1922 Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed married Fatema Khatoon, who happened to be distantly related to Haji Shariatullah's family. It would not be out of place to mention that Haji Shariatullah of Faridpur led Ferazi movement in Bengal in 1820 which however, was confined to religious reform. But this movement turned into a peasant movement under the leadership of his son, Dudu Miah in 1840.

Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed associated closely with historic 'Bengal Pact' formulated by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das in 1923 with a view to establishing harmony and unity among Hindus and Muslims of Bengal. In 1929 the Bengal Pact was rejected and the documents burnt at the National Conference of Congress held at Krishnanagar. Incidentally it was presided over by Nitaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Following the incident Muslim members of Congress became angry and quit the party. Meanwhile, Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed won the



election on Congress ticket in Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1927. In 1928 Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed played a very significant role in resolving the biggest ever workers' strike in Tata Company at Jamshedpur. He succeeded in realising genuine demands of the workers. As a reward he was offered vice-presidency of the workers union.

During the 30s there had emerged a number of new political parties in India including parties at regional level. Of these mention may be made of Nikhil Banga Praja Samiti and Forward Bloc of Subhas Bose. In 1929 former Muslim members of the congress decided to form Nikhil Banga Praja Party (All Bengal Workers Party) under the leadership of Maulana Akram Khan. Maulavi Shamsuddin Ahmed was made joint secretary of the party. From 1922 to 1934 there had been no improvement of the condition of peasant community in Bengal by the Congress and Khilafat committee. Then a new political party under the nomenclature 'Nikhil Banga Krishak Praja Samiti' (All

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