

Mir Mushtaq Ahmed (25th April 1915-29 June 2001)

Veteran freedom fighter and a great Socialist Mir Mushtaq Ahmed, son of Mir Abdul Sattar, was born at Shimla on 25th April 1915, but after spending his childhood in Shimla, Mir Sahib came to Delhi in 1924, to pursue his studies and also to take part in freedom movement which he had joined like his father, Mir Abdus Sattar. Incidentally he was lodged in the same cell in Ambala Jail in which his father had been imprisoned earlier. He settled in an old house in the Jama Masjid area of old Delhi.

He was educated in Delhi and after graduating from the Anglo-Arabic College, later Delhi College and now (Zakir Hussain Delhi College), he joined Congress party in 1935. He was also associated with All India Students Federation and was secretary of the New Delhi district Congress committee as well as of the Delhi unit of the Congress Socialist Party. Of Kashmiri descent, Mir Sahib (as he was universally known) came in contact with Shri Faridul Haq Ansari and Mrs. Satyavati Devi at a young age. He left the congress in 1948 when there was parting of ways between the Congress and the Socialist Party. He became Chairman of the Praja Socialist Party Delhi unit and elected as Socialist member of Delhi Legislative Assembly in 1952 from Kuccha Chelan but lost in 1957. He was one of the oldest socialists of undivided India.

In 1937 he invited Mohammad Ali Jinnah to speak at Delhi College, but the meeting ended with the Mir taking the distinguished guest to task for making remarks of communal nature. When the Viceroy visited a cinema house in Connaught Place, the Mir, hoisted the Congress flag atop the bandstand, as an act of defiance. For this he was jailed. He decided to live in India even though his whole family migrated to Pakistan after Partition in 1947.

Mir Mushtaq invited the then Congress president Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at Delhi's Shahjahanji Jama Masjid, and conducted an important public meeting on 1st August, 1942, imploring people to side with the "Quit India Movement".

He was first known Indian to hoist the tricolor flag at Connaught Place prior to independence, when Connaught Place was considered the heart of imperial British India, he would hoist the tricolor at the bandstand in Central Park each year on 26 January.

After independence when Urdu was orphaned it was the Mir who with some of his friends took the cause of Urdu and formed ***Anjuman Tameer-e-Urdu***.

He was its founding president. Its office was also in one part of his house in Urdu Bazar near Jama Masjid in Old Delhi. He also launched an Urdu weekly, *Asia*, later ceased its publication.

After the country's independence he left the Congress to join the Socialist Party in 1948 and later Praja Socialist Party. In 1955, he was elected General Secretary of Delhi state P.S.P. along with Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani as President and elected unanimously to the National Executive of the Praja Socialist Party for 1956-57.

Later on, he was elected Chairman of the Party's Delhi Unit, but resigned his primary membership of the Party in 1961 and subsequently, rejoined Congress party led by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and became the first chief executive Councilor of Delhi. Mir Mushtaq Ahmed was Presidents of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) during 1963-1966. He was Chairman, Metropolitan Council of Delhi. 1972-1977.

Prime Minister Nehru also attended a reception in honour of Mir Mushtaq Ahmed, New Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President. Others present at the "at home" included Mr. Y.B. Chavan, Mr. Krishna Menon, Mr. Mehar Chand Khanna and Mr. Sham Nath.

He was first chairman of Delhi Waqf Board and also founded the Janata Co-Operative Bank that is still flourishing in Delhi. Mir Mushtaq Ahmed was one of the eminent politicians of Delhi and was one of the few leaders who identified themselves completely with the capital he loved the place. Meera Bagh an affluent residential colony in Paschim Vihar of Delhi was established by Mir Mushtaq Ahmad, the first Chief Executive Councilor of Delhi under the aegis of Janata Co-operative Housing Society, which is situated in the western part of New Delhi. The colony has over 500 houses and is divided into 2 blocks, A and B, situated on either side of Outer Ring Road.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi released "*Mazamin-e-Mir*" a book of articles written by Mir Mushtaq Ahmed, in various Urdu newspapers and periodicals over the past 35 years. The noted freedom fighter Padma Shri Mir Mushtaq Ahmad will be remembered for his social services and his involvement in co-operative societies. He was passed away on 29 June 2001, at the age of 85. With his death Delhi has lost one of the rare old faces of the traditional ***Dilliwallah***.