

# FACTS ARE SACRED

BY:

KHAN ABDUL WALI KHAN



REPRODUCED BY

SANI H. PANHWAR

# **FACTS ARE SACRED**

**BY:**

**KHAN ABDUL WALI KHAN**

Reproduced by

**Sani H. Panhwar**



Chapter 14								
	Federation Defeated	..	..	..	..	..	..	82
Chapter 15								
	Wavell's Bid for 'A Bit of India'	..	..	..	..	..	..	98
Chapter 16								
	Subduing Punjab and NWFP	..	..	..	..	..	..	103
Chapter 17								
	Mountbatten Gets to Work	..	..	..	..	..	..	109
Chapter 18								
	Groundwork for Pakistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	115
Chapter 19								
	The Referendum	..	..	..	..	..	..	119
Chapter 21								
	The Choice of Governors General	..	..	..	..	..	..	126
Chapter 22								
	Road to Pakistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	131
Chapter 23								
	The Loss of Kashmir	..	..	..	..	..	..	136
Chapter 24								
	The Disinherited Ones	..	..	..	..	..	..	141
Chapter 25								
	Muslim League's Contradiction	..	..	..	..	..	..	145
Chapter 26								
	Famous First Words	..	..	..	..	..	..	149
Chapter 27								
	Legacy of Colonial Interests	..	..	..	..	..	..	154
Chapter 28								
	Inheriting the British Mantle	..	..	..	..	..	..	158

## PREFACE

MUCH of this book was written during two spells in Jail, one under Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan in 1969 and next during the time of Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1973. I was handicapped by the fact that I could not obtain the reference books I needed. During the second term especially, I regretted the time wasted. I was mostly in solitary confinement, and could have wholly devoted myself to writing. But under Bhutto, even pen and paper were often not available, leaving alone books.

However, with what references I could get, I have tried to present the other side of the picture of the people.

How unfortunate it is for a nation that it is always given the rulers accounts of events and is barred from all other versions. The rulers in Pakistan have brought up people on their own understanding of history. In fact, just in order to justify their political acts they haven't hesitated to distort history. They have prevented the people from getting to know true facts. They do not report history, they manufacture it.

It appeared to me then, and still appears now, as if a case were being tried in a court of law, and only the prosecution could offer arguments and evidences against the accused. The accused was not allowed to say a word in his defence. He just stood there bound hand and foot, his mouth sealed, his pen snatched away. Who would call that a court? Who would expect justice in such circumstances?

So I thought even if I can not personally reach out to people, I should at least leave behind some account of the past so that history does not stand permanently distorted. The present generation may remain oblivious of the truth, but at least the coming generations would get to know it. My main concern was to convey the spirit of our own political struggle; to place before posterity the true story of Bacha Khan's Khidmatgar movement. I too had been a member of that caravan.

In writing the account, I like other writers, have made full use of the diaries and memories of concerned British officials, especially in relation to their attitude and policies towards our movement. Besides that material I have used my own knowledge of facts and political experiences, as also the principles of induction and deduction to offer certain conclusion. We have a saying in Pushto that if we say round, yellow and sour, wise men immediately know that we are referring to orange. Similar was my quest for clues.

After release from Mr. Bhutto's jail when I went to London and had some free time from medical treatment I came to know about the classified government document in the India Office Library which had now been thrown open to public. They could now be read on the premises and even photocopies of any portion could be obtained. According to British rules all secret official documents are declassified and made available to scholars after a lap of 30 years. I was keen on collecting all possible historical material on our movement. Readers of this book will see that Bacha Khan's politics and the *khudai khidmatgar* movement became red rags for the colonials for two reasons. First, the British were determined to squash any movement that aimed at Indian independence and thus constituted a threat to their rule. Secondly, they were resolved to crush any activity which in their view would help a hostile outside power against them.

It is known that the independence movement within India was being spearheaded by the Indian National Congress which was representative of all the religious and other creeds, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Parsi - no matter what the persuasion, the party was open to all. The British strategy, as it soon developed, was to somehow weaken the Congress and to aid and abet bodies functioning in opposition to it.

Secondly, India was geographically so placed that it had oceans on three sides and a rampart of a mighty range of mountains on the fourth. There were also a few mountain passes in the north-west and the only danger from a hostile foreign power could come through them. Russia was of course considered the main source of that danger. The Khudai Khidmatgars could not become instruments in either of the two thrusts of British policies, so they became an object of harassment from the very start.

In the India office library I set about looking for documents relating to the external aspects of the British rule in India. I wished to find out the point of time and exact factors that saw basic changes in British policies towards Moscow - the steps if adopted to confront the first ideological state to emerge on the world map in 1917.

The viceroy of India used to send a weekly report addressed to the secretary of state for India in London. The latter replied outlining the government's policy issues of the moment. I decided that I only needed to carefully study this weekly correspondence to get all the material wanted. I began from the time immediately following Lenin's death.

What I saw and read was beyond anything I had imagined. My object was the British foreign policy in relation to India, but as a bonus I got a close view of how with all looked on the internal affairs of India. Our elders used to tell us about how Britain intrigued to get its way in the subcontinent. Their stories, their doubts and suspicions had seemed hard to believe. I used to think that Bacha khan had become unduly embittered with the colonial rulers because of the agonies he and his followers had suffered at their hands. I was particularly skeptical about the Congress charges that the British were responsible for fanning communal passions within the country to further their imperialistic designs. I used to think that such accusations were exercises in finding scapegoat. It is a common human failing to blame others for the consequences of one's own follies.

Not that I regarded the Congress' and Bacha khan's charges as wholly without basis. But I had not imagined that the truth was infinitely uglier than their portrayal of it. The evidences were there in black and white, written and signed by the guilty ones themselves, secured for posterity in their own official library - the communications highest British dignitary in India, the viceroy, and the minister concerned with Indian affairs in Whitehall. Given such authoritative sources where was the room for disbelief? Indeed, when I was going through these documents there were moments when my mind would get boggled. I would take out my glasses and hold my head in my hands bewildered at what I had read. Unable to continue, I would put away the books and go out for a cup of coffee.

It will be unfair not to give full credit to the British. They did whatever good or bad they thought was necessary for their people- they did not hesitate to put all that down with total candour. There was no hypocrisy to oneself, no pulling of veils for anyone else. Everyone is here bared to the last stitch. No friend or relative or colleague is spared. All participants in all conspiracies are named. Even the Indians who played the British game have been exposing without regard to how their compatriots would be shocked when they would come to know of the secret doings of the idols they had worshipped.

Studying this correspondence of over 20 years, between 1922 and 1942, I realised that all my preceding labour in collecting material from diaries and memories had gone waste. The conclusions that I was collecting the evidence for were all given there as explicitly as one could wish. The government of India's policies against the Soviet Union was down in cold details.

Those policies were of course no surprise. What did come as a revelation was the shameful role played by certain eminent leaders of India in Indian affairs. The worst was the conduct of certain Muslim leaders. It was an embarrassment

reading about them. The accusation of the Congress and Bacha Khan were not a fraction of what the highest British officials had unblushingly laid down here.

What pains I had taken to prove that the thing was an orange. I went through hundreds of papers, pursued the trail of countless books to collect the evidence of roundness, yellowness, sourness. All that now was rendered unnecessary. The masters themselves here say: why all this effort; what need for proof; logic, reasoning, political sense to what purpose; we ourselves attest that it is an orange. Once I almost decided to abandon my book and just compile this correspondence in to a book let to show to the nation the other side of the picture and let it decide itself who were really its well-wishes, and who wanted to consign it to perpetual slavery of the British.

But after much thought I decided to stay with my earlier plan. Publishing only the documents, while it would expose Bacha Khan's critics, it would not serve my original purpose of presenting the story of Bacha Khan's political struggle and the **khudai khidmatgar's** great endeavors. That would also check the course of disreputable politicking which only aims at misleading simpleminded Muslims and distorting the facts of history through loudmouthed falsehood and slanders. Truth emerges one day. Diamond shines forth even in a pile of ashes.

To allow history to remain distorted is to betray a national trust. Coming to know of the facts I had not sufficiently known hurt me bitterly and made me hang my head in shame. I wondered how it would affect those honest and devoted workers who had rendered untold sacrifices for what they were told was an Islamic cause; how they would react when they would come to know that those they had regarded as champions of Islam, those who did not consider anyone apart from themselves and their loyal hangers-on as true Muslims or well-wishers of Muslims, had in fact been on the side of the enemy, working to strengthen his hands. I have my self nothing against there having supported the British; my objection is to their having used the fair name of Islam to back a usurping, and, worst of all, a heretical regime.

It is important that the story is told so that the Muslims are not again stung from the same snake hole. They have to learn to be wary of again being misled in the name of Islam.

Truth is bitter. The present one is particularly so, I realise that this book will hurt many, but it should also open many eyes. As the Englishman says, it is just to put the record straight.

I do not consider it necessary to emphasize that regardless of my political views, whatever I have written down here is based on sources that are available in the British Library. Whoever wants proof can satisfy him with the help of the references to the sources I have given in the text.

As they say, comment is free, but facts are sacred.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Communal politics And the British The tilt towards Muslim League**

ALTHOUGH they long consider themselves as of the ruling stock, the Muslims of India had lost effective power to the British. They were crushed following the 1857 national bid to put the aliens in their place. And neighbouring Afghanistan was brought under the heel through Amir Abdul Rehman. Thus, if externally the path of Russia's possible thrust had been blocked, internally no force had remained that could challenge the British. Some six hundred princely states had also through their rulers become subservient to them. Thus by the beginning the 20th century London's grip over India had become unshakable.

The British colonist was however an extremely canny, weather beaten, modern-day pirate. It was not enough merely to establish the grip; it was also necessary to maintain their firm holds. He was faced with a country the size of a sub-continent and a population that was numberless. He thought hard how he could keep these under his thumb. He had fought Nemours battles, and even, by fair means and foul, conquered countries. But he could not set a soldier on every Indian. He had therefore to find a way that the Indians remained divided amongst themselves. For if they joined hands the situation could become, like the one caricatured by a Hindu humourist who said that if all the Indians even pee' together these handful of British- hers would all be flooded away.

The Englishman had seized power from the Muslim. He had driven out the latter's delusion about his birth-right to rule. He also realised that although Muslims had ruling India for centuries, they were a minority of the population. So while earlier he was helping the non-Muslims and making them fight the Muslims on his behalf and himself benefiting from this mutual hostility, he decided that it might not be sound strategy to keep lending strength to the Hindus who were the country's preponderant majority. There was also another consideration. There were no Hindus in other countries around India whereas Muslims were spread in the four corners of the world from North Africa the Balkans, and from Turkey to Afghanistan, the whole hemisphere virtually belonged to them. Above everything else, the Ottoman Empire constituted the Muslim caliphate. Thus the Muslims were a strong and organised world force.

Against that here in south Asia the situation was as follows:-

- When the British won the Battle of Plassey in 1757 they took Bengal, or eastern India, out of the Muslim hands.
- When they overran south in 1799 they routed Tipu sultan, the head of a highly regarded Muslim dynasty.
- Central India they devoured in 1857, after an Indian bid for independence in which Muslims played a prominent part.
- Northern India had shown some resistance, but that too was quelled after the Balakot martyrs fell in 1831.
- Nearby Afghanistan was another citadel of Muslim power. But it too was eventually tamed following a treaty in 1893.

As a result of these triumphs, the Englishman became the undisputed master of India. All kinds of internal and external dangers were ended. So much so that he went and signed a pact even with Russia in 1907, making it pledge not to interfere this side of the borders, inside Afghanistan. All doors thus secured, our English man settled down to consolidating his position in India.

After divesting the Muslims of their passion about ruling and putting them to one side, he started giving all his attention to the Hindus. The latter began to be favoured with white collar jobs, trading contracts and numerous other gestures of official support. The educated Hindu section was endowed with influence and respectability. However, when Hindus gradually began to draw together the Englishman got worried. He weighted the possibility of their uniting together and presenting a challenge to him. They were after all a big majority in the country.

As for the Muslims, he had already broken their spine. There was no one left among them, especially after their failure of 1857, who could ever pose a threat to him. The prominent Muslims that there were, only vied with one another to demonstrate their loyalty to the British.

Reflecting on the Hindu numbers, however the British again turned to the Muslims. The beginning was made from Bengal. The province was spilt into two in 1905, so as to separate the Muslim majority eastern half and give the Muslims a sense of self importance. That was how the start was made to please the Muslims and try and win them over.

As time passed the game of playing on alternative side of the communal street began to look more and more interesting to the foreign ruler. On the

occasion of official functions and in the show of official favours a tilt now infavour of the Muslims now of Hindus seemed to offer good rewards.

Meanwhile, the British also began laying stress on the natives acquiring education. Without that the routine official chores in the vast country of their tutelage would not get done. But education also started opening up the minds of the educated. As young people began going abroad for higher education they noticed how the governments there also involved the people in formulating policies and running the country. Why shouldn't the Indians too share power with the rulers, they began to wonder. Since the Hindus were in greater number and they had a larger section of big merchants, lawyers and other affluent people among them who could afford the best education for their children with in the country and abroad, the stir of the educated first occurred in their folds.

The Muslim leaders too had learnt a lesson from the 1857 debacle and their effort was that all sections of the population should join together to rescue the country from British imperialism. They laid such stress on Hindu - Muslim unity that reading of it comes as a surprise even today. I will give just one example, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (regarded by some of our political theorists as the father of the two nation concept) spoke as follows in an address in Gurdaspur on January 27, 1884.

We (that is, Hindus and Muslims) should try to become one heart and soul and act in unison. In old historical books and traditions you must have read and heard - and we see it even now - that all the people inhabiting a country are designated as one nation. The different tribes of Afghanistan are together termed a nation. The miscellaneous hordes people Iran are distinguished by the term Persian: though they abound in variety of though and religion, they are still known as members of a nation ..... Remember that the words "Hindu" and "Mohammadan" are only means of religious distinction, otherwise all persons whether Hindu or Mohammadan, or even the Christians who reside in this country, all in this particular respect belong to one and the same nation. (Syed Hassan Mehmood - A nation is born, page 339).

In the same year, speaking to the India Association in Lahore, Sir Syed repeated the theme:

In the word 'Nation' I include both Hindu and Mohammadan because that is the only meaning I can attach to it.

Also

"These are the different grounds on which I call both these races which inhabit India by one word, i.e. 'Hindu' - meaning to say that they are the inhabitants of Hindustan".

Thus Sir Syed's argument is whoever is a citizen of India, regardless of his faith, should be called a Hindu.

The point is, because the British were at the time favouring the Hindus, granting them concessions and opportunities of social and economics advancement, and enabling them to progress in education, and the Muslim were being discriminated against, the latter saw salvation only in Hindu - Muslim co operation. That was only how they could rid themselves of the aliens.

The Englishman also knew this. He could see that if Hindus and Muslims did join against him it would be impossible to face them. That is why when he first set about introducing reforms and wished to give powers to the Hindus in the local bodies and municipal committees, he adopted the system of separate electorates. The first installment of reforms, called Morely - Minto papers, came in 1909 and provided that Muslims will only vote for Muslims and Hindus for Hindus. Thus was laid the foundation stone of religious belief being made a factor of democratic institutions. That was the Englishman's first blow against the concept that Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wished to spread throughout the country. The seeds of dual nationhood were soon to begin to contend with the belief in one nation. Hindus and Muslims were as it were put on notice that if they wished to get into representative bodies they had to set up separate parties on the basis of their religion. That would make sure that the spirit of a united nation would not take root.

The Englishman was very happy with the kind of game he was playing and used it with variations to suit the need of the occasion. Thus in 1912 he went back on the divisions of Bengal and once again united the two parts of the province. Earlier he had thought it wise to please the Muslim since they were spread all over the world and were, especially with a movement like pan - Islamism in the air, a political force to be reckoned with. The Hindus on the other hand although a big majority in India, were only confined to their country. Later, however, with the start of World War I and Britain arraigned against the Ottoman Empire, the bridge head of Muslims, it could not befriend the Muslims of India.

About that time another installment of reforms named after Montagu - Chelmsford was brought in. Separate electorate remained a feature of this one also.

When at the outbreak of the War the British attacked the Turks, the Muslims in India were electrified and they began an open opposition. However the British got worried only when Gandhiji and the Congress joined with Maulana Mohammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali in support of the Khilafat movement.

The Englishman saw that the two - nation game, the game of divide - and - rule might soon be up.

The Khilafat committee presented the Muslims with a four - point action plan, asking them (1) to renounce all official awards and titles, (2) to resign from government employment, (3) to resign from the police and the armed forces, and (4) to refuse to pay taxes.

The British got worried about points 2 and 3. These were going to hurt them and also bring a bad name to them. So they set about undermining the national movement by giving it a sinister communal angle. Their henchmen spread the word that the action plan was in fact a Hindu conspiracy against the Muslims. Its purpose was that the latter by defying the British and resigning their means of livelihood should be utterly destroyed.

The obvious British game was to break the Hindu - Muslim unity created by the Khilafat movement. Since Khilafat was purely a Muslim concern, if a bipartisan movement on its behalf is torpedoed by the Muslims themselves the Hindus would be bound to feel deeply embittered and disgusted.

So it happened that the first salvo at the Khilafat movement was fired by the Nizam of Hyderabad. On May 22, 1930 he issued a decree saying that since the movement was against the interest of the Muslims he was putting a ban on it.

During that period Gandhiji and the Ali brother had together visited the Aligarh Muslim University. The British wished to dispel the impact of that also. They set about making that institution an instrument not just protective of Muslims but also one hostile to the Hindus.

Similarly a member of the Viceroy's executive council, Sir Mohammad Shafi, submitted a memo on Nov 2, 1921 which made two proposals. First that, to undermine the unity of the developing movement in India, it was important to separate the Muslims from it, and that could happen only if the British signed an accord with the Turks. Secondly, an association should be organised called 'Anglo-Mohammadan Union in the interest of the British Empire'.

Such thinking and activities occupied the British and their Muslim loyalists over the next months, and on Sep 21, 1922 the Viceroy, Lord Reading, wrote as follows to the Secretary of State for India.

*"I have sent you a telegram which will show you how near we have been to a complete break between Muslims and Hindus. I have been giving the greatest attention to this possibility, and I have the greatest assistance from Shafi in my council, who is a highly respected Mohammadan."*

## Chapter 2 Divide and Rule

THE British thus became more and more convinced that they could best achieve their ends through the instrumentality of Muslims. Their agents kept making sure that no basis of a co-operation develops between the two groups, and they both remain separately dependent on them. Thus Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, writes as follows on January 22, 1925:

*"The more it is made obvious that these antagonisms are profound and affect immense and irreconcilable sections of the population, the more conspicuously is the fact illustrated that we and we alone, can play the part of the composers."*

The objective determined the rulers next needs were to find the ways and means. After a great deal of manipulations and intrigues that aspect was also sorted out. The good news from the Viceroy to Whitehall is dated January 1, 1925:

*"The bridge Gandhi had built to span the gulf between the Hindus and Mohammadans has not only broken down, but I think it has, completely disappeared."*

The Englishman's worry was that the Muslims were scattered among various organisations. They were all willing to accept the supremacy of the British but none was ready to find accommodation with each other. In the same letter the Viceroy while giving the tidings that the conditions were now favourable and that the Muslims were resolved to back the government to the hilt also complains:

*There is no outstanding man to compose their differences and head them.*

In those days, apart from the fact that the Muslim strength was scattered over several bodies, even the Muslim League was divided into two groups. One was led by Sir Mohammad Shafi, the other by Mr. Jinnah. The British were cheesed off with Mr. Jinnah because he favoured joint electorate. The efforts were now directed to winning him over to the other view. Thus, the Viceroy reports on May 20, 1929:

*"I had a long talk with Jinnah a few days ago, which made it very clear to my mind that he and all the Bombay people who are not disposed to love Congress are disposed to swing in our direction if we can give them help later."*

Once convinced that Mr. Jinnah could lean on the government's side, it became very easy for the British to start coying unity within the Muslim League ranks. As the Viceroy forecasts on March 21, 1929:

*"The two wings of the Muslim League are to meet in Delhi at the end of this month with a rapprochement between Sir Mohammad Shafi and Jinnah. Jinnah may be expected to regain before long his former commanding influence in the Muslim League."*

Thus days before the meeting the Viceroy could predict an accord and also say which side would clear the way for the other.

This done, the next task was organisation of the party and also provision of funds. The Viceroy notes on November 26, 1929:

*"I heard that suggestions are being put out that governments should intervene in some way towards raising funds in order to organise proper Muslims representation and of course we should like them to have best advocacy they can find."*

It seemed that the British had offered the responsibility of trying to get all the groups together for the reorganisation, getting the necessary funds, and worrying about a strong, well organised party. The Viceroy had no other preoccupation. As he writes on February 2, 1931 of a meeting with Sir Fazl-i-Hussain.

*"He developed the view that the only chance of some progress was that a strong party should come into being which should devote its self to fighting Congress"*

Fighting Congress required organisation. It had to be one of Muslims. The Englishman cast himself in the role of the godfather who issued instructions from behind. It looked as if he were the Muslim League president, and as if Lord Lrwin was actually referring to his party men when he wrote on November 9, 1931:

*I told him (Sir Mohammad Shafi) that I thought they would all have to fight hard and that it was no good supposing that a few packed meetings or newspaper articles (would) act as whole-time missionaries and carry the flaming torch throughout the length and breadth of India. They must be prepared to build up a great organisation, which might focus all constructive efforts to fight Congress ..... And they proposed to get to work vigorously and comprehensively. This is encouraging and I only hope their good resolutions do no fade away.*

He added that the plan had been fully drawn up and that funds would be contributed by the rulers of the princely states.

The Englishman's game was to get the Muslims to join together in a sort of confrontation with the Congress and make it appear to the rest of the world that the Indians were fighting amongst themselves, so what could he do. Thus during the first Round Table Conference he made full use of the communal differences and thereafter stepped up his efforts to back up the Muslims against the Congress. When the second Round Table Conference was called, the strategy was pursued to further limits. Sir Samuel Hoare, the Secretary of State for India, writes with apparent satisfaction on October 2, 1931:

*The delegates are much further off with each other than they were last year, and I don't believe there is the least chance of a communal settlement in the minorities committee."*

The Harijans, or the depressed classes, were also similarly sought to be involved in the castes issues and alienated from the congress so as to further weaken the Hindus. It gives the British great joy that like the princes, the Harijan leader Dr. Ambedkar also falls into their hands. An excited Secretary of State of India writes on December 28, 1932:

*Ambedkar has behaved well at the (Round Table) Conference, and I am most envious to strengthen his hands in every reasonable way.*

But Gandhiji foiled this gambit by going on a hunger strike, demanding a rightful place for the Harijans in the Hindu Society. That places Ambedkar in a difficult situation. If he persisted in a confrontation with the Hindus he would have to bear the responsibility for Gandhiji's death, and if he adopted a conciliatory approach he would lose the Britisher's support.

Eventually, Gandhiji fast produced result. Countrywide public opinion forced Ambedkar to join hands with Gandhiji if he really wished protection for the Harijans rights. An agreement called the Poona Pact was reached and was signed by Ambedkar himself.

This strategy having failed the Englishman were now left only with the Muslims. Here, one difficulty was following the replacement of Lord Irwin with Lord Wellington as Viceroy, Quaid-i-Azam had left India and gone and settled in England. The rumour was the something untoward had earlier happened between Mr. Wellington and Mr. Jinnah.: (It was said that when Wellington was the Governor of Bombay he once held a party to which Mr. & Mrs. Jinnah was invited. Wellington's wife was an extremely austere person. Mrs. Jinnah, a

Parsi lady, was apparently not sufficiently wrapped up to suit her Victorian taste, and so she told her ADC that Mrs. Jinnah might be feeling cold, and would he fetch her a shawl. Mr. Jinnah took this as a slight and left the party with his wife. Since then his relations with Wellington had remained soured). With Wellington elevated from governorship of Bombay to Viceroy Ship of the whole country, Mr. Jinnah didn't feel keen to come back.

Thus it happened that when the Viceroy was drawing up the list of Muslim representatives for the third Round Table Conference Mr. Jinnah's name was not there. Those on the list included H.H. the Aga Khan, Hon. Chaudhri Zufrullah, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Sir Abdul Rahim, Sir Mohammad Yaqoob and Sir Mohammad Iqbal. The British were however sure of their success. The seeds of communal discord they had sown looked bound to bear fruit. The Viceroy was thus reassured on October 31, 1932:

*"The Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims are to meet on November 3 at Allahabad to endeavour to arrive at an agreement which will do away with the communal award. I am assured by those who know that no agreement will ever be reached."*

The mischief that had been done to rouse communal feelings seemed to the British to guarantee that the elections that would be held under the new reforms would firmly pre-empt any kind of joint front developing between the two communities. The proof was also provided at the third Round Table Conference where the differences were sharper than at the second one. It was obvious that the Englishman were very pleased with himself. He would take the leaders of various communities to London, put them to fighting amongst themselves like cocks and when no common ground would emerge would shrug his shoulders for all the world to see as if to say - look, what pains I am taking, how much money I am spending, but these Indians cannot come to any agreement amongst themselves, so what course have I left?

The British were clear in their mind from the beginning that if the elections were held on the basis of separate electorates religious sentiments would be bound to be roused. Among the Muslims, only those parties would gain strength that would appeal to the voter on the basis of religion. This would cause the nationalist Muslims to contest against those standing in the name of Islam; and, secondly, it would lead to the Congress being opposed in the assembly by Muslim members elected on the basis of religion. As a result, representation on the basis of communities rather than one deriving from single nationhood would come to be accepted, and in this way the Congress would never be able to induce national unity against the British.

Although the Secretary of State for India kept writing to the Viceroy, Lord Wellington, urging him against election the latter remained adamant that the Congress had weakened, its civil dis-obedience movement having been a total failure. Then latter went to the extent of announcing the end of Gandhi as a political force. From the reports and diaries of his own officials he was convinced that the election campaign would so polarise the communities and create such extreme feelings between them that the Congress would stand no chance of winning: instead, a powerful party may emerge in opposition to it. He had his moments of impatience, though, and writes thus on September 9, 1934:

*"But alas! Our backers are a flabby crowd without any courage while the Congress, however stupid their actions, are not afraid of fighting."*

If there was no political party to stand up to the Congress challenge there were at least individuals deserving of official blessing. So, on September 24, 1934:

*"I have written to Governors asking them to give a hint to the ministers to help pro-government candidates and also asking them, if opportunity offers, to see that good candidates are selected.....We have to sit quite still up here and say nothing except in private....On publicity we are doing the best we can....."*

Lord Wellington's tenure ended in 1936. His place was taken by Lord Linlithgow. In London Sir Samuel Hoare was replaced by Lord Zetland as Secretary of State for India. Between them the two - but especially the Viceroy - fanned the Hindu Muslim passions so cleverly and with such finesse that no possibility remained of the two sided coming together again. Like Lord Irwin, the new Viceroy was also confident that under the system of separate electorate any elections were bound to excite communal sentiments. The candidate would appeal for votes on the basis of religion and the assembly that would emerge would have few members of a purely nationalist or Indian mind. The Hindu and Muslim members would in fact each seek solution to national problems from the point of view of the interest of their own communities and would try to ensure that their separate electorates would have no reason to be dis-satisfied with them on that basis. Thus, politics was to be dominated not by national but only by communal concerns.

## Chapter 3 Quest for Loyal Ally

HAPPY at any signs of weakness within the Congress the Viceroy noted at one stage that differences were cropping up within that organisation. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were not on particularly good terms. Gandhi had called a meeting of the Congress in December so it could sort out the issues and elect its new president, although the election was not due until April next year. There were differences even on the choice of the next president, noticed by the Viceroy. Gandhi favoured Raja Gopal Acharia, while Jawaharlal wished that he should be succeeded by Abdul Ghafar Khan.

However, when the polls to the provincial assemblies were held, the Congress swept eight of the 11 provinces. The nation's verdict created a new problem for the British. When next a vote would be held for the central legislature under the 1935 India Act, there seemed no possibility that the Congress would not achieve a dominant position there also.

**Table of the 1937 elections to the provincial assemblies.**

Province	Total Seats	Congress Seats	Muslim Seats	Muslim League Seats	Muslim Seats besides Muslim League
Bengal	250	54	117	40	77
Assam	108	33	34	9	25
Punjab	175	18	84	1	83
Sindh	60	7	36	0	36
NWFP	50	19	36	0	36
Bihar	152	98	39	0	39
C.P.	112	70	14	0	14
Orissa	60	36	4	0	4
Madras	215	159	28	11	17
Bombay	175	86	29	20	9
U.P.	228	134	64	27	37

*G. Allana. Muslim League Historic Documents.*

The British felt compelled to review the situation all over again and rally all available forces in opposition to the Congress. Looking around, they identified three such elements. The biggest and the most loyal were the more than six

hundred rulers of the princely states. There had been no elections there, nor did they offer any scope for a democratic or national-minded rule. The second were the Scheduled Castes. Their rallying point could be that the Congress was a body of Brahmins and pedigreed Hindus, while Harijans, numbering four crore (40 Million) according to Churchill, were a nation apart. The third force was that of the Muslims. They too were body of some 10 crore (100 Million).

Jawaharlal Nehru had set up a separate Congress organisation for the princely states, called the States People Congress. The state rulers argued that if the British, who held effective power over the country, could not defeat the Congress. How could they have any chance of doing so? The British had also drained all their power, and no one was left among them who had a will of his own or enjoyed personal prestige. The English tried hard to prop them up against the Congress but failed. The Secretaries Of State for India, Amery, got so disgusted with them eventually that he was compelled to write the following on October 1, 1943:

*"It has been real mistake of ours in the past not to encourage Indian princes to marry English wives for a succession of generation and so breed a more virile type of a native ruler."*

In other words, in Amery's view the contemporary generation of Rajas, Nawabs and princes desired to be eliminated. If they had been born of English mothers they would have been more manly, and would have been better able to serve British ends.

The Harijan problem had been resolved by Gandhiji, who went on a hunger strike to get them equality of status and rights. Until then the Harijan leader Dr. Ambedkar was playing into British hands, and the British were very happy. But with Gandhi's tact, the Hindus told Ambedkar that if he was really concerned about Harijan rights he should join hands with Gandhi, for their cause was common.

That placed Ambedkar in a corner. He had no escape; Gandhi broke his fast when Ambedkar joined with him in signing the Poona Pact. Thus this second potentially also slipped out of British hands.

"That only left the Muslims, and the British started working on them so as to set them up against the Congress. After Lord Wellington left, the Quaid-i-Azam returned to the country and the Viceroy invited him over for a meeting. The letter he wrote to the Secretary of State for India on September 9, 1937 made the following reference to Mr. Jinnah:"

*"He took very strongly the view that we did not pay sufficient attention to the Muslims, that there was the real risk of the Muslims being driven into the arms of the Congress."*

He goes on to say that Jinnah was particularly suspicious of his meeting with Gandhi."

He suggested that the interview (with Gandhi) was largely responsible for the lifting of the ban on Abdul Ghaffar Khan's return to the Frontier Province and the fall of Abdul Qayyum's ministry.

The clear message was that even if a co-religionist Muslim was on the side of the Congress, Mr. Jinnah had no use for him and would like to get the British support against him. Interestingly, even Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum was not a Muslim Leaguer. In fact, until then Muslim League didn't exist in NWFP which is why there was not a single Muslim League member in the provincial assembly. But since the Sahibzada was a British loyalist, there was this unhappiness over the fall of his ministry. It should be remembered that ministry had fallen on a vote of no confidence. Mr. Jinnah should have had no objection to what had happened as a result of a democratic process.

Mr. Jinnah's meetings with the viceroy continued. After the next meeting, the Viceroy writes on August 19, 1938:

*"He ended up with the suggestion that we should keep the Centre as it is now, that we would make friends with the Muslims by protecting them in the Congress provinces, and if we did that, the Muslims would protect us at the centre."*

It seemed that this arrangement suited both sides. The Englishman knew that if he held election at the Centre, the power in Delhi will also pass into Congress hands. His effort then was to somehow free himself of that obligation under the 1935 Act. Mr. Jinnah also was willing that these powers should remain in the British hands and not be transferred to the Indians.

On the issue of the princely states also, it appeared that the British and the Muslim League were of one mind. The Viceroy writes on January 29, 1939:

*"I gathered further that a resolution was passed at Patna to the effect that the All-India Muslim League would no longer be able to stand aside if Congress intervention in the affairs of the states continued."*

They meant that the League was opposed to the rights of people in the states. And of the 600 states, hardly ten belonged to the Muslims. Most notably of all,

the Muslims of Kashmir had at that time risen up against their Hindu Maharaja demanding protection of their rights. The League seemed to have overlooked them also, and was opposing the Congress for the protection of the rights of the Hindu rulers.

The Viceroy writes of yet another meeting with Mr. Jinnah on March 28, 1939:

*"But he was satisfied now. He thought that the present system would not work, and that a mistake had been committed in going so far."*

In other words, Mr. Jinnah was opposed to the constitutional reforms conceded, and thought that the people pressing for them were unaware of the circumstances of the country. Democracy couldn't work. Provincial polls had been an error.

As the saying goes, what the blind man wants: two eyes. So the British had their prayers answered. Here was a party opposed to democratic reforms and was prepared to support the British against those demanding it.

It is worth remembering that was the time when the British had reached all corners of the world, and proudly claimed that the sun never sets on the British Empire. That claim seemed true also. He ruled over crores (Over Million) of people. He brought up his children on their wealth, and created his armies with their youth. Just as his empire was global, so his strategies were governed by international factors.

Following the elections in India and the assumption of powers by Congress minister's in the provinces, however, the British were worried. Apart from other factors, in their own neighborhood in Europe, Hitler was devouring smaller states and expanding his control. In Italy, Mussolini too had emerged as a threat and was nibbling away on right and left. The British had tried all their tricks, but, as the Pashtoons say, when the chips are down, cunning is unavailing. Eventually, they formally declared war on the Germans on September 3, 1939. Now their own house was on fire. Who could fight the Germans? The British were only lucky in that the British Channel lay in between.

In declaring war against Germany, Britain did so on behalf of India also. Congress objected to this. How Britain could do this without their consulting India, it asked. The Congress could now, in the light of the preceding elections, claim that it and it alone truly represented the Indian nation. The British were first surprised at these sudden new claims to the right to speak on behalf of

India. They next tried to argue. A fascist force, they said, has emerged. It is invading sovereign nations and making slaves of them. Wouldn't the Congress side with the powers that are resisting this menace and are fighting for the independence of these nations? The Congress replied. On principle we support the forces of peace and independence and oppose fascism in all forms. But as far as India is concerned its independence is already since long under seizure. If the British are sincerely and honestly against encroachments on the sovereignty of free nation and want us to support them on this, it is only logical that they should begin by applying this principle here and first end the encroachment on India's freedom.

The Congress made its demand even more specific. It said that it would participate in the War only if Britain first announced its War aims and include in them a clear statement that when the Allies will have own the war, India would also be granted its independence. The Congress emphasised that it did not wish to profit by Britain's predicament: It only wanted a solemn declaration of intent from it, which would be appropriate also because that way the war of the Allies would also become India's own war of independence and the Indians would be able to plunge in it wholeheartedly.

But, of course, Britain wasn't prepared for this. As Winston Churchill declared at the time, he had not become the country's Prime Minister "to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire." The Congress retaliated by adopting the position that the War might be for the independence of European nations, it is certainly not for India's and so participating in it would be like strengthening the chains of India's slavery.

I was present at the All-India Congress Committee (A-ICC) session in which the Congress president Jawaharlal Nehru declared that if Britain announces that it will free India following the victory against Germany, India participation in the War will become wholly justified, for then, "We shall be fighting for the liberation of own land, otherwise, we shall be fighting to defend our chains." Who would be so foolish and blind as to go fight a war, render sacrifices, and do that only in order to remain a slave?

This decision of the Congress all but exhausted British patience. So far Britain was only unhappy that it had held provincial elections, which had led to its freedom becoming restricted. It was trying to wriggle out of the obligation of taking the next step and holding election for the central legislature, for that would mean that the Viceroy, the honourable representative of the Imperial Crown would, like provincial governors now, become bound by the wishes of the elected cabinet ministers. Worse still, now, when Britain was engaged in a life and death struggle, when menacing clouds hung over its people, at such a

critical moment, the Congress had the effrontery to put conditions on lending it a helping hand. Britain knew very well that if it did not have India's men and resources to back it up, it would find it very difficult to sustain its vast empire. It could not accept a situation in which this would happen. So it felt it had no choice but to come out openly against the Congress and to find a way of bringing it to heel.

This marked a sharp turn in British policy in India. The War had caused a sea-change in the political outlook here. So far a federal arrangement in India was the obvious, accepted assumption. Apart from tactical support to the Muslims so as to compel the Congress towards some kind of power-sharing with it, Britain had throughout been working towards that end. But now Congress had adopted a course which not only led to self-rule but also aimed to so weaken the British as to reduce them to a position of subservience. The polarisation was thus complete. It became matter of life-and-death both for the Congress and the British-indeed, in my view, for India and Britain as a whole.

On Congress directive the ministries in eight out of eleven provinces resigned in protest against Britain's not promising India independence after the War. Thus Britain was shamed before its own Allies and before the rest of the World. That was the last straw. British attitude completely changed after that.

As the War clouds thickened over Europe, Britain set about rallying itself. In India, its eyes turned to Mr. Jinnah, but the position of Muslim League, of which he was the leader, was till uncertain. The party couldn't form a ministry in a single province. NWFP had a Congress ministry. In Sindh Allah Baksh Soomro presided over a coalition which too was opposed to the League. With the Punjab Chief Minister Sir Sikander Hayat and the Bengal Chief Minister Maulvi Fazlul Haq, the Viceroy had maintained direct links, and consulted them from time to time on political matters.

The War added to the importance of the Punjab, and Sir Sikander could even tender such advice to the Viceroy as to say about Mr. Jinnah, "Nothing should be done to inflate him," on the ground, among others, that Bengal and Punjab were already supporting the British and they don't approve of Jinnah. The Viceroy sums up the situation, and reveals his own attitude, in his note of August 31, 1939, as follows:

*"Sikander's admirable statement on Saturday last seems fairly effectively to have spiked the guns of Jinnah and Muslim League. It seems to be pretty clear that relations between the Muslim League and the Punjab, Bengal and other important Muslim centers are becoming definitely rather strained and that the chances of a break way are considerable."*

The Viceroy was unhappy with Mr. Jinnah. That was why apparently these other Muslim leaders were keeping their distance from him. The Viceroy goes to write:

*"I do not propose to make any move to him until there is an outbreak of war or some other development necessitating immediate contact with all party leaders.*

When five days later, on September 5, 1939, war does break out, the Viceroy writes to the Secretary of State of India:

*"I felt it wiser to be patient with Jinnah and endeavour to lead him into the direction which we desire. And indeed if I can give any help to these Muslim Leaders to get them more together than they are at the moment I shall do so."*

Only five days ago the Viceroy was happy that Sir Sikander Hayat was thumping his nose at Mr. Jinnah and that not only Punjab and Bengal but other centers of Muslims were also estranged from him and looked likely to be cutting loose from the Muslim League. But today, with War declared, he takes a different result and promises to exert himself to bring these Muslim leaders close together - just so that they could act in unison in support of the British.

Now it remains to be seen how this clever player makes his moves on the chessboard to extract the maximum benefit for him.

## Chapter 4

### Muslim League Plays into British Hands

AS MENTIONED earlier, Britain was resolved that there should be no election at the Centre. After the War had broken out and India too had been declared party to it, she got a good excuse. She also received encouragement in this from Muslim League leaders. Here is what the Viceroy writes on October 7, 1939, about the advice he received from Nawab Ismail, President of U.P. Muslim League.

*"The Nawab suggested that it was essential that any declaration should make it clear that a democratic system at the centre is not acceptable to the Muslim community and went on to urge that the Congress claim to speak for India and to control defence was perfectly inadmissible."*

This was strange logic. The Congress which had won election in eight provinces could not speak for India: while the Muslim League, which could not form a ministry even in a single province, had the right of veto.

Another Muslim League Leader, Sir Abdullah Haroon, sent a telegram to the Viceroy to similar effect. The latter reports:

*"Sir Abdullah Haroon took the view that democratic development in the West did not suit India....The Muslims had no differences with Great Britain except over federation which should be dropped. They wanted the British to stay and they (the British) were now growing popular with Muslim community."*

Thus Nawab Ismail objects to federation on the ground that it is not acceptable to the Muslims, and Sir Abdullah Haroon argues that democracy does not suit India, federation is an inconvenience, and that the British should stay on. Between this and the Congress attitude it is obvious what pleased the British more. Not only had these Muslim leaders, even the Muslim League Working Committee, under Mr. Jinnah's presidentship, had this to say:

*"Muslim League.....(is) irrevocably opposed to any 'federal objective' which must necessarily result in a majority community rule under the guise of democracy and parliamentary system of government. Such a constitution is totally unsuited to the genius of the people of the country which is composed of various nationalities and does not constitute a national state."*

*(G. Allana, Pakistan Movement p. 218)"*

Here Muslim League is not speaking only on behalf of the Muslims but claims to reflect the attitude of the entire Indian nation. Its plea is even more dangerous - that since the country comprises several nationalities it cannot constitute a nation state. The Working Committee goes on to say:

*"The Committee further urges upon His Majesty's Government to give an assurance that no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of neither the All India Muslim League nor any constitution be framed and finally adopted by His Majesty's Government and the British parliament without such consent and approval."*  
(Ibid, p. 219)

When the Viceroy announced that there would be not election at the Centre, the Muslim League Working Committee expressed great relief in the following words:

*"The Working Committee appreciates the declaration of H.E. the Viceroy which is in the interest of India and particularly the Musalmans that the federal principle embodied in the Government of India Act 1935 has been suspended. They wish that instead of its being suspended it should be abandoned completely."*  
(Ibid, p. 217)

Thus the Muslim League was ahead even of the British. They later said that they accepted the Indian's claim to self-rule but had to postpone the election at the Centre because of the outbreak of War. This implied that when the situation would be normalised, the War would end, election would be held and the elected representative of the people would assume power. But this displeases the Muslim League. It was unhappy that the election had only been postponed instead the Viceroy should have announced the scrapping of the whole scheme.

Pushtoons have saying - that the footman is faster than the rider. It was unfortunate that such demands were being made on behalf of the Muslims who numbered some ten crore (100 Million) and had majority in several provinces. Keen that power should not pass into the hands of the Congress where it was in majority, the Muslim leaders unfortunately disregarded the interests of the Muslim themselves. They overlooked the fact the Muslims had a plurality in places like Bengal, Punjab, Sindh and even Assam.

Even Mr. Jinnah said in his address at an annual session of the Muslim League:

*"We felt we could never accept the dangerous scheme of the Central Federal Government embodied in the Government of India Act 1935. I am sure that we have*

*made no small contribution towards persuading the British Government to abandon the scheme of Central Federal Government."*

*(Ibid, p. 230).*

Thus Mr. Jinnah was proud, even claimed it as a Muslim League achievement that the British had agreed to drop the scheme. It may be asked whose idea this really was, the Britisher's or the Muslim League's? Who really benefited from it? Whose rule did it guarantee?

This is what is called cunning. The Englishman pulls the trigger to safeguard his own interest but uses the Muslim League's shoulder to place the gun on. What can be a greater tragedy for a nation that is political organisation should take pride in the nation's slavery that it should consider it a great achievement that it had stymied the scheme for transfer of power and ensured that government remained in the hands of foreign masters.

It now seemed that a direction had been established - of the British and the Muslim League working together in mutual interest. If on the one hand the Muslim League and volunteered to promote British policies, on the other, the British set about doing their best to bring all Muslims into the Muslim League fold. A series of meetings took place between Mr. Jinnah and the Viceroy. About one such meeting, the Viceroy writes on October 5, 1939:

*"He thanked me with much graciousness for what I had done to assist him in keeping his party together and expressed great gratitude for this."*

The party was Mr. Jinnah's but the responsibility for keeping it together seemed to have been assumed by the Viceroy. Another point touched on by the Viceroy in this letter is also interesting. He says that Mr. Jinnah complained about the Congress ministries having been very harsh on the Muslims. The Viceroy replied that his investigations showed that was not correct, and that the Muslim complaints arose only from an inferiority complex. Mr. Jinnah wasn't convinced. He cited the example of the Frontier Ministry which, according to him, had decided that Hindi would be made a compulsory subject in schools. He had to find some thin to back his complaint, so he picked on this allegation which he thought would be irrefutable. What had actually happened was that Pushto, considered necessary for Pushtoon Children, had been declared compulsory. Mr. Jinnah apparently mistook that for Hindi.

Now witness how Britain plays her game of obstructing Indian independence and fulfilling her imperialist and colonialist objectives.

The Viceroy writes as follows to the Secretary of State for India on December 4, 1939:

*"I am fully alive, as my letters to you about Jinnah's questions will have shown, to the objection to allowing the Muslim minority to turn itself into a majority with right of veto, and that does seem to appear to be a position that we can accept."*

This was in clarification of his policy with regard to the Muslim League Working Committee's demand that the British Government give an assurance that 'no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of the all-India Muslim League'.

The Viceroy understood that this meant converting the Muslim minority into the national majority and investing it with the power of veto. But since it was also a question of safeguarding the British Crown, the civilised, democratic Britain disregards the principles of basic human rights, democracy, and electoral commitment, and brazenly declares that it is a position that we can accept. His eyes are closed in the furtherance of his own interests and use the Muslim League as stalking horse to pursue his own objectives.

In his subsequent letters to Whitehall, the Viceroy hints that if Britain isolates the Muslim majority provinces in the North-west from the rest of India it would serve her purposes well. The minister sitting in Britain has the international perspective in mind. He urged the Viceroy in India not to forget that the Hindus are only confined to India while the Muslims are spread from the frontiers of China to the Middle East and as far as Turkey, and there is always a danger that their minds may once again turn to Jamal Afghani's concept of pan-Islamism. He warns that if the Muslims one day join hands with the Soviets against the British would create a very dangerous situation for Great Britain.

The Secretary of State for India understands that in the overall perspective, Britain had been high-handed with Muslim she had seized power from them in India, and recently she had crushed the Ottoman Empire into pieces. So her fear of Muslims one day striking back with Russian support was not without basis.

The Viceroy sent for report from his Central Intelligence on the situation all over India. On the basis of that he wrote to the Secretary of State for India on November 17, 1939 that he had detailed discussions with all categories of Muslims - Muslim Leaguers, Wahabis, Khaksar, Ahrars, and experts concerned with Afghan and tribal affairs, and reached the conclusion that the differences between the Hindus and Muslims reached a point that the outcome could only be a division. "Thus, shortly, a nation of Muslim India must be established."

This even before the demand was made by the Muslims, and more than seven years before Britain appeared to the rest of the world to very reluctantly concede it.

As for the Muslim's obtaining Russian assistance in a common front against the British, the Viceroy's reading was:

*"Such aid is out of the question, as once Bolshevik aid is accepted, Islamic principles will be submerged, and if an opportunity is given to Russian influence to be felt south of the Oxus, all Muslim nations will degenerate to the level of the Soviet Central Asiatic State."*

He further underscores the point by categorically ruling. "Muslims will not ask favour from the anti-God Bolshevik Russia."

On the threat of Pan-Islamism too the Viceroy is fully reassured: "In the Turkish treaties are seen the barring of Bolshevism from the Islamic world, and a rapid development of the line-up of Muslim nations against Soviet expansionist policy."

Thus the Viceroy explains the merit of his scheme by saying that like the Turkish treaties it would ensure the creation of a solid front of all Muslim powers against Russia, and would become an Islamic halter round Russia's neck.

Britain's success was that they had created allies among the Muslims who were ready to support the colonial power in both her internal and international policies.

Within India, Britain had already been using Muslims to safeguard her interest, to retain hold over the country and to oppose the Congress moves. The process had been simplified with Muslim League expanding its embrace. Now the colonial ruler only needed to keep this organisation in his hand to ensure support of almost all Muslims. Using Islam against the Russians at first presented a problem: if the Russians were non-Muslims so were the British. The Soviets couldn't be represented as a kafir menace since the British themselves, whose subjects Muslims already were, were equally kafir. The British resolved this dilemma by pointing out that the Russians were anti-God were atheists. As we shall see later they used this line to obstruct any communication between the Soviets and the Muslims very adroitly.

## Chapter 5

### The Proposals for Pakistan

THE Viceroy repeatedly impressed on Muslim League leaders like Sir Sikander Hayat and Maulvi Fazlul Haq that their insistence that power should not be transferred to the Congress or that election should not be held at the centre was a negative approach. It presented the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India with the problem that they could not convince their own parliament as to why if the Congress had won election it should not assume power. The viceroy urged the Muslim leaders to present some positive and constructive solution rather than obstruct the democratic path or ask that a minority be allowed the power of veto over constitutional demands of the majority, which the civilized world would not accept.

The Viceroy writes to the Whitehall about Sir Sikandar Hayat's reaction to the reasoning in the following words:

*"He thoroughly understands the necessity and importance of getting onto a constructive line and having a scheme of his own on which to stand before attempting any propaganda in England ..... He would let me know confidentially how matters went in the meeting of the Muslim League Working Committee on 3rd February."*

After the Working Committee meeting Sir Sikandar and Maulvi Fazlul Haq both went to see the Viceroy and according to the later, mentioned:

*"That I should be interested to learn that the Working Committee of the Muslim League has now instructed a subcommittee to draft a constructive programme. I said I was delighted to hear it and that I should await its terms with the greatest interest."*

Later Mr. Jinnah himself went to see the Viceroy, who reports:

*"After the usual compliments he opened the proceedings by asking me, what we to do were, assuming that "we meant Muslim League ..... At the risk of wearing him I was bound to repeat that it was quite useless to appeal for support in Great Britain for a party whose policy was one of (being) sheer negative."*

This was a strange meeting. The Viceroy kept talking about elected ministers and power transfer while Mr. Jinnah insisted that the Viceroy, like his predecessor Lord Willingdon, should just turn his back on the Congress. The viceroy argued that the times have changed since Willingdon; Congress now had ministries in eight provinces and if it liked it could at any time recall them.

But Mr. Jinnah insisted that until the Viceroy breaks off with the Congress completely the Muslim League would not trust him.

The British meanwhile had a particular interest in one ministry - that in NWFP. The Viceroy told Mr. Jinnah in one meeting that if they latter tried, the formation of an elected ministry in that province could be prevented. Mr. Jinnah said he would consult his colleagues and then came back on it. Later he told the Viceroy that his colleagues thought that they were not in a position to form a ministry themselves, but if the NWFP Governor, Sir George Cunningham, helped them they could succeed. He urged the Viceroy to impress on the Governor how important it was to give that halo and enable a non-Congress ministry to be formed in his province. The Viceroy writes:

*"Mr. Jinnah added that he was most anxious, if possible to put this through, as he was convinced that there could be no more salutary (result) for Congress and no better advertisement of the real position in India, whether before the country or throughout the world, than that a non-Congress ministry should be established in the NWFP. He was therefore most anxious to bring this matter to a successful issue."*

It was a fact that NWFP was the biggest hurdle in the way of the shared objectives of the British and the Muslim League. The reason was that of all the provinces, this had the largest proportion of Muslim population. Also, NWFP was situated close to the border of the Soviet Union. A ministry of Khudai Khidmatgars there did not suit Britain's internal or external policy. For such a ministry could not be used either in opposition to the Congress or in support of British power within the country. Mr. Jinnah was also broadly hinting in the same direction when he said that a non-Congress ministry in the Frontier would make a good impression within the country and abroad. The actual position was that not a single candidate in the province had fought the election on a Muslim League ticket, and so that Assembly had no Muslim Leaguer at all. But the Viceroy was agreeable to making the effort. He records:

*"I would communicate his (Mr. Jinnah's) views to the Governor and he and his friends would in due course and by one means or other, be put in possession of the Governor's views."*

This makes one point clear, that the British and the Muslim League at that time had common ground. Just as Mr. Jinnah was unreserved in asking the question. "What are we to do now?" So the Viceroy was candid in voicing his dilemma. Mr. Jinnah was quite aware that it was in the Britisher's own interest that they strengthened the support behind them. He even suggested to the Viceroy that he dissolve Allah Sommor's ministry in Sindh. His complaint is reported by Viceroy in the following words:

*...."But the Chief Ministers had made speeches recently copies of which he would send me, which made the position in Sindh impossible if the Chief Minister remained in power. I said I would see the text of the item."*

Britain was trying hard to persuade all the Muslims that if they wanted its help in any matter they would first join the Muslim League. On the basis of this effort he was able to reassure the Secretary of State of India.

*"All I can say is that if Congress is set on having a fight here, they are going to have a fight not only with us but with the Muslims."*

The position of the Muslim League at the time was that of sand bags with which the British had built a defence around themselves, so that if there was any assault from the Congress the impact of it would fall on the Muslim League, and if the Muslim League got plastered in the process that was its bad luck. If the Muslims had actually wished that the chain of British slavery should remain tight round the entire country, they couldn't have done more to help that objective.

### **Varying Justification of Pakistan**

Since the British generally, and the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow in particular, had made it plain to Muslim League leaders that the parliamentarians at Westminster couldn't be convinced with negative politics and that they should come up with constructive and concrete proposals, everyone of any consequence started thinking on those lines.

One of these persons was Chaudhry Khaliqzaman. The Viceroy wrote to Whitehall that Chaudhry Khaliqzaman had proposed to Lumley, the Governor of Bombay, that India should be divided into three dominions. It seems that Chaudhry Sahib wished to set up a dominion of the princely states as well as of Hindus and Muslims.

Then there was the report to the Viceroy from Sir George Cunningham, the NWFP Governor, Sardar Aurangzeb, returning from a meeting of the Muslim League Central Committee, had reported to him on the thinking there. According to Cunningham:

*"The scheme which they were now contemplating would involve the creation of six or seven Indian dominions. And that this novel scheme now holds the field in preference to the original Pakistan proposal."*

Long before this, the Secretary of State for India Lord Zetland recounts a meeting with Sir Feroz Khan Noon, in which the latter had suggested that the north-west of India should, like Burma, be separated from India and called 'Pakistan'. The Secretary of State says in a letter of December 13, 1938:

*"I told him that I saw almost insuperable difficulties in the way of our acceptance of such a policy. And he said if that was so he would not himself encourage it when he returned to India."*

Among various other proposals one was the Cambridge student Chaudhri Rehmat Ali's, and another of Sir Mohammad Iqbal's. Now let us see what the Englishman's own scheme was.

For, the ultimate decision was in the British hand. As for the Muslims, their position was well reflected in the attitude of Feroz Khan Noon who, when told, around 1938, that the British wouldn't agree to partition promptly retracted and said that he wouldn't ever mention it again. So what is important is what was it that the British had in mind, what they thought would fulfil their objective.

When they couldn't tie up with Sikandar Hayat Khan and the Muslim League Working Committee, they rejected all the proposals offered by the Muslims, and asked one of the Muslim members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Chaudhri Zafrullah, to draw up a plan for two dominions. That plan was duly forwarded by the Viceroy to London. Later, on March 12, 1940, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State saying that he had asked for certain clarifications of the scheme. He had been told by Sir Zafrullah that he, Zafrullah, would submit the details later but meanwhile it should never be disclosed who had drawn up that plan, though the Viceroy could use it in whatever way he liked. Writes the Viceroy:

*"I may do what I like it, including sending a copy to you; thirdly, the copies have been passed to Jinnah and I think to Hydari (Sir Akbar Hydari, then Prime Minister of the Nizam of Hyderabad), and, fourthly, while he, Zafrullah, cannot of course admit its authorship, his document has been prepared for adoption by the Muslim League with a view to be given the fullest publicity."*

The Viceroy explains that although the scheme had been drawn up at his instance, since Zafrullah was Qadiani, the Muslims' knowing that it was his handiwork would make it suspect in their eyes from the very start. Consider the dates. This letter was written on April 12, 1940. The plan had been sent earlier. A copy of it had also gone to Mr. Jinnah, and also to Sir Hydari (for the financing of it). Obviously it was much the same scheme that was adopted as the Pakistan Resolution just at that time, on March 23, 1940. Incidentally Sir

Zafrullah's tenure on the Executive Council was ending in March. He was given an extension for services rendered.

Two days after passage of the Pakistan Resolution, the Viceroy writes on March 25, 1940:

*"As Congress putting forward a preposterous claim (of being representative of the majority) which they know is incapable of acceptance he (Jinnah) equally will put forward just as extreme a claim, of the impracticability of realising which he is probably just as well aware, but the existence of which will (1) while reaffirming the Muslim attitude of hostility to Congress claim, (2) take away some at any rate of the damaging charges which has hitherto been leveled against them (Muslim League) that they have no constructive ideas of their own."*

Thus the Viceroy had kept pressing the Muslims for a plan, but when they couldn't come up with any of their own he set to sponsoring one himself. How pleased the British must have been felling with themselves, first encouraging Muslim League to stand up against the Congress, then inducing a 'positive' and 'constructive' proposal from behind the scene as a pressure tactic, taking the public stand that it was impracticable.

So when the Muslim League adopted the Viceroy-sponsored Sir Zafrullah plan, the British became better assured that they could depend upon the League in the promotion of their policies and in its facing up to the Congress. Now on, they only recognised Muslim League as the representative of the country's Muslims.

About this time the nationalist Muslims held a big representative convention in New Delhi, presided over by the Sindh Chief Minister Allah Bux Soomro. The Secretary of State for India, Lord Zetland, enquired about it from the Viceroy. The Viceroy wrote to him thus on May 14, 1940;

*"I attach no particular importance to the Delhi Conference of the Muslims which took place a few days ago. It has been well organised and the Congress press machine has written it up admirable....We both are, of course, aware that there is no important Muslim element outside the Muslim League.....Indeed I am sure that Jinnah remains the man to deal with on Muslim side."*

The Muslims struggling with the Congress against the slavery of the British and for national independence were, according to these views, of no account. The British didn't even consider those Muslims who had organised themselves outside the Muslim League. More than a thousand representative people gathered under the leadership of an elected Chief Minister were dismissed by

the Viceroy as of no consequence, while he declares Mr. Jinnah as the only man for the British to deal with.

The Khaaksars were even in worse position. The other non-League Muslims were charged with not supporting British rule, but the Khaaksars had actually offered help. As the viceroy wrote on May 24, 1940:

*"Meanwhile the Khaaksars have formally renewed their offer to me of 50,000 men to help in the War (against the Germans)... (But there is the) formal statement by Jinnah that he accepts no responsibility for Khaaksars or the present attitude of the Khaaksars in the Punjab it would not be advisable for me to enter into any correspondence with them or their leaders, and I propose accordingly to leave, the telegram (offering help) unanswered."*

Against the Congress the British had the excuse that since the organisation was not supporting them in the war they were not cooperating with it, but here were Khaaksars making specific offer of 50,000 volunteers and the Viceroy doesn't even have the decency to acknowledge their telegram - and just because they were not open to Mr. Jinnah's counsels!

Lord Zatland completed his tenure. About this time, his last letter is dated May 14, 1940. L. S. Amery is appointed the news Secretary of State for India. His first letter is dated May 16, 1940.

## Chapter 6

### Using the League to Beat the Congress

WHEN the Congress ministries resigned in the eight provinces that they held power, governor's rule was imposed under Article 93 of the Government of India Act. Mr. Jinnah advised the Viceroy that non-official political advisers should be appointed in these provinces. The purpose of the suggestion was that Muslim League nominee should be included in the ministries of the provinces, where the League had not been able to sufficiently establish itself. Even the Viceroy found the suggestion excessive. He writes on July 10, 1940.

*"I hope that Jinnah will not continue to press his extravagant claim...If he does, I think myself that we may definitely have to consider whether we should continue with the effort which I so far made to keep the Muslim together, whether we should not let the balance of the Muslim League as represented by Sikandar, Fazlul Haq have their break with Jinnah. But I do not want to see such a break if we can reasonably avoid it."*

Later, on August 28, 1940, he pursues the theme:

I hope that Sikandar and Fazlul Haq will be able to bring pressure on Jinnah to make him toe the line. If he does not, I shall go without him."

The British were convinced that Muslim League didn't have a base, that it was standing on their support; that if they pulled their crutches it would fall on its face. They also felt assured that they would never lack quislings from the Muslim ranks. If on the one hand Sikandar Hayat Khan and Maulvi Fazlul Haq had position of their own since they were elected heads of the ministries of Muslim majority provinces, on the other, it was also true that if the word would spread that the British were unhappy with Mr. Jinnah there was a line-up of others who would offer their services. The Viceroy writes of Sir Akbar Hydari on April 1940:

*"You may be amused to hear that Hydari, during our conversation a few days ago, coyly hinted to me that if there should be trouble with Jinnah and the Muslim League there was at any rate a very prominent Muslim who could steer the country through the troubled water that may lie ahead."*

The Viceroy says that he thanked him and said that it was best for him to remain the representative of the Nizam's interests. He knew that coquetry and affections of displeasure were parts of the politicians' repertoire.

There was careful design in according Mr. Jinnah and Muslim League special prominence. The idea was, if tomorrow there was an effort at a rapprochement between the League and the Congress, the League would have gone so far ahead in the split that it should be impossible for it to retract its steps. For this reason the British quietly listened to everything Mr. Jinnah had to say, even if they regarded it as unjustified. They were confident that they themselves held the key to the League's strength. As the Viceroy declared, either Mr. Jinnah would have to pursue the British interests or he, the Viceroy, would go ahead without him. But meanwhile:

*"I still think it important to hold the Muslim League together if we can do so and in those circumstances there is nothing for it but to be patient with Jinnah, though one's patience is beginning definitely to run out."*

In this letter, dated September 5, 1940, the Viceroy hints at the reason for the impatience. Mr. Jinnah had asked "that the Muslim League should be taken into full and equal partnership with H. M-Government in the ruling of this country and the authority shared with them."

This meant that the country's Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, the Scheduled Caste would all be left cooling their heels while the country would be run by the British and the Muslim League between them, in equal partnership. Thus the League now laid claim to representing all the Indians.

The Viceroy's own wish was to set up an advisory council with the Congress left out. He had discussed the point with the Harijans and Mahasabha leaders Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Aney. But Mr. Jinnah had refused any part in it since he could not be given total control. Thus the scheme did not materialise and the Viceroy personally apologised for it to the other two leaders. The Viceroy did not ask Mr. Jinnah for the basis of his demanded whether he considered it justified by the results of the 1937 election. But he understood its implications. He writes on September 19, 1940:

*"He (Mr. Jinnah) is subjected to very considerable criticism for various sections of the community. He has against him the Prime Ministers of the two majority Muslim provinces. The line he has been taking is unsympathetic to large numbers of Muslims of position even in Muslim minority provinces, such as Bihar and U.P."*

But despite that the Viceroy insists:

"Indeed, I am sure Jinnah is the man to deal with on Muslim side."

Accordingly, the British had resolved to sort out every one of the hurdles in keeping the Muslim League together. For instance, Punjab had a Unionist ministry led by Sir Sikandar Hayat, and comprising Hindus and Sikhs as well as Muslims. Here, the more Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League insisted on partition on India the more it created problem for Sir Sikandar Hayat. It caused the non-Muslims to demand that the British make a clear declaration of their policy on the issue. The Viceroy himself was of the view that partition "would not only be a mistake but it would be very near a breach of faith were we to do anything of the sort" (March 1, 1941).

In the same letter the Viceroy relates that Sir Sikandar Hayat had told him of his difference of opinion over the issue with the Muslim League Working Committee and that he was therefore resigning from that body. The Viceroy added that he did not himself say anything on the point but asked the Punjab Governor, Sir Henry Craig to advise Sir Sikandar against resigning.

*"This is not the moment at which I want to see any split in the Muslim League which I think is very important (tiresome as it's a activities may be in some ways) to maintain as a solid political entity....that is the more desirable since we are moving into the next phase of Gandhi Satyagraha campaign and any fissure in the Muslim ranks, more particularly over this vital question of Pakistan..... Would be very great encouragement to the anti-war party and might well make our position in dealing with the Satyagraha more difficult."*

The British wasn't particularly concerned about Muslim interests. He repeatedly emphasised that Pakistan was not an acceptable or even a feasible proposition. But his objective was to set up an opposition against what he regarded as hi primary enemy, the Congress. That is why he was concentrating all his attention on the Muslim League so that if ever the Congress posed a challenge to him the League would come down fully on the British side.

Sir Sikandar Hayat issued a statement to reassure his Unionist colleagues, to which the British Secretary made a reference in his letter of October 29, 1941. The statement proposed that the British declare that if within a stated time all the communities of India did not reach an agreement on the future constitution of India, the British government would itself, reluctantly, give a constitution according to its own judgement. The Viceroy made a significant note in the margin of this proposal. It saysa "and make it perfectly certain that the Muslims would refuse to play till (the situation will have) brought us in."

The Viceroy couldn't have made his game more clear.

It will relevant to the Chief Minister of Sindh, Allah Bux Soomro. It has been mentioned that a convention of nationalists Muslims was held in New Delhi under Soomro's chairmanship. That had naturally infuriated the Viceroy, since Soomro had nothing to do with Muslim League and was the elected member of the provincial assembly. And by the token of his Chief Ministership of Sindh he was also a member of the Viceroy's Defence Council. Following the convention the Viceroy's attitude towards him became not just bitter, but insulting. So, once on the Viceroy's asking Soomro presented some suggestions to the Defence Council regarding ways of forestalling or resolving communal differences. He had also suggested that Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, then in prison, should be released. The Viceroy writes about what followed in a letter of October 11, 1941.

*"When," he said, "am I likely to hear from you? Have you decided?" I replied, "You will hear nothing. You are not of my advisers, but the Prime Minister of Sindh.... I have not the least intention of telling you how I propose to handle my business and I trust you understand that" He said, "You are very frank" I said, "I am bound to be frank. This is my business, my business, my responsibility."*

It does seem odd that while on the one hand the Viceroy keeps consulting with Muslim League leaders on all political, constitutional and organisational issues, he does not, on the other, grant the Chief Minister of a province and member of his own Defence Council even the right to ask his opinion on certain proposals. Look at the arrogance in his tone. Obviously he wished to make it clear to Mr. Soomro that outside the Muslim League and the approval of Mr. Jinnah he was not prepared to accept the credentials of any Muslim, be he the elected Chief Minister of a Muslim majority province or member of the Defence Council.

There was also an effort to make Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League known internationally. About that time the Chinese leader Chiang Kaishek was visiting India at the British Government's invitation. He expressed a wish to meet Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru. The Viceroy writes that his problem was he was not at that time on talking terms with those leaders. That could somehow be got round; but his greater anxiety was yet another one. He writes on January 26, 1942:

*"I know you would at once take the point of his seeing Jinnah as well as the other two, and I shall have to coax him to receive the head of the Muslim League whether he feels inclined or not."*

Chiang Kaishek was concerned that the Indian problem should somehow be resolved. He noticed that the Japanese were giving the British a hard time. They

had taken Singapore and Burma and were now knocking at India's door. He was, therefore, pressing on the British, both directly and through the United States that some quick solution must be found to the Indian problem. The Americans noted that elected ministries had been formed in eight of the provinces following elections held by the British themselves, but that now those ministries were not in power and the rule over the provinces had been resumed by the British through their governors. The Americans were arguing with the British that today's wars were not fought without the support of the people.

The British themselves realised that whatever the situation in Europe, here in Asia, they were suffering badly. It occurred to them for the first time that they might well lose control of India. In the light of these new realities they began to take a second look at their policies here.

So far they were strongly backing India's unity and the principle of federalism; the encouragement of Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League was only meant to keep them at a distance from the Congress so that the controls remained in their own hands. Even the Harijan leader, Dr. Ambedkar, went along with this strategy, as the Viceroy reports on November 19, 1940:

*"He was perfectly content himself, he said, with that state of things, and was in favour of the Pakistan idea quite frankly because it meant that the British would have to stay in India."*

But now that the British saw the danger of their having to leave India, They began to withdraw their stress on the federal principles. Instead, they turned more seriously to the idea of partition which so far they had only been using as a policy to harass the Congress. The proposal was now formally sent along with Sir Stafford Cripps as a part of his brief when he came to India to negotiate a solution for the country.

Consider the situation, it was 1942. The demand for Pakistan had not yet gathered strength; the Muslim League had not started any campaign to canvass for it. But there were the British weighting their own interest and already seriously examining the Pakistan idea from every angle. But for the Americans pressure, they would not have agreed to enter into any talks with the Congress, when they also had the excuse of a world war on hand.

Even so, they had their own ideas. Listen to what the viceroy says about the Cripps mission and its proposals, on March 23, 1942:

*"I now have considerable hope that whether the scheme succeeds or fails, that is to say it is accepted or rejected, there may be, looking to the propaganda value involved in face of American opinion, a balance of credit to our side."*

At the other end, the secretary for India, Amery, looks at it from another angle. He writes on March 10, 1942:

*"Consequently the only way out and incidentally a way of gaining a little time was to send someone to discuss and negotiate."*

Thus, sending out senior cabinet minister to negotiate a resolution would, on the one hand, gain the British valuable time, and on the other, convey to the United States that the British were serious in finding an answer to the Indian situation. "After all", adds the secretary of state, "once it is laid down that there must be agreement and no coercion of important ministries then the only conclusion is that things must wait indefinitely".

He further clarifies the British thinking in a letter of March 24, 1942:

*"Jinnah, I shall have thought, will be content to realise that he has now got his Pakistan in essence, whether as something substantive, or as a bargaining point."*

Naturally, if Mr. Jinnah was convinced that the British were agreed on Pakistan, how could he be expected to try and resolve issues with the congress? And if the British made it a condition that there had to be such a resolution, and also that the ministries had to feel satisfied, then it could only be the British who would win and everyone else lose. Mr. Jinnah would not get his Pakistan. Congress would lose the provinces they had won. And the British would, as in the past, be left the undisputed master of the country.

In the same letter quoted above Amery reassures the Viceroy Linlithgow that the proposal sent out Cripps were all design to suit the British interests: He lists the proposals:

1. *The Viceroy will have to remain not merely as constitutional governor -General but as representative of broader Imperial aspect of Government for a good long time to come.*

2. Supposing the Pakistan does come off, there will possibly be two Muslim areas, the whole of the states, Hindu British India (If that does not divide itself) and finally at least one important primitive hill tribe area.

So once India is thus split into various pieces and there is no federal centre, it will be impossible for all these parts to maintain their separate army, navy and air force, and thus they would remain dependent on the British. "There will, therefore, have to be someone in the absence of a central self - Governing Federal scheme to take control of these matters".

The argument thus was, firstly, the proposals were such that they were unlikely to be accepted. Then, unless there was an accord between the Congress and the Muslim League there could be no transfer of power. And, even if these impossible became possible, the British interests would remain assured. The Viceroy however, had to be mindful of one fact:

*Whatever you do, or agree to, keep in mind the desirability of retaining Delhi And a considerable area around it as an not let it pass into of an eventually United India and not let it pass into the hands of anyone of the 'Dominions' That may temporarily emerge out of the first experiment in constitution making.*

This was the real face of the Cripps mission- the real thinking and the purpose behind it.

If the secretary of state advises the Viceroy to keep the center firmly in his Hands since if there was any partition it would be temporary and eventually the whole of India would again revert to the British Empire, the Viceroy too has some words of assurance to offer in return. He writes in April 14, 1942:

However, I was at pains, without delay and before Cripps left. To sound Jinnah through Feroz khan Noon, who has been a most useful intermediary, with the result which I have already reported to you by telegram.

The results are obvious- that Britain had accepted the principle of partition, but the Congress was unwilling.

It is a curious situation. The congress mounts the movement, offers sacrifices to defy the government, fills all the jails, receives the bullets, resigns the ministries it has been elected, and yet the demands conceded are the Muslim League's, which has neither launched any movement, nor offered any sacrifices, nor won any elections, nor has yet emerged as a political force to be reckoned with!

Sir Stafford Cripps appears mean while to have gained the objectives he had been dispatched for. The Viceroy reports this good news to the secretary of state on July 6, 1942:

Jinnah's statements in the last few days have brought out emphatically the continued reluctance of the Muslim League to see any compromise reached except on their own terms.

## Chapter 7

### British Clampdown on Congress

THE British had become so blinded by their narrow self-interest that ethics and principles carried little weight. The elections held under their own auspices had proved that the Muslim League at that point lacked political following: even in the Muslim majority provinces it could not acquire any representative status. Despite that they were offering assurances to it that they considered it the sole voice of one question of the country's population, of 10 crore (100 Million) Muslims. One question that could be asked was if, Mr. Jinnah wished to have his position recognised in the non-Muslim-majority provinces and the British were prepared to concede him this, would similar right be granted to the Congress with regard to the Muslim majority provinces.

The truth was the British weren't really bothered about the Muslims or the Hindus. They were simply concerned with their own Raj and prepared to do whatever would fortify it. It was clear to them that if the Congress and the Muslim League could be prevented from reaching a mutual accord, power would continue to remain with them, the British. Accordingly their concern was to coax or coerce Muslim League into a position that would place its reconciliation with Congress out of the realm of possibility. The irony is, even the Muslim League had not planned to benefit from this the British would be the sole gainers.

At the same time, Britain was doing every thing it could to block the course of the Congress movement. There were no scruples about whether the tactics were right or wrong, fair or unfair. The Congress was firmly holding its ground and was not prepared to compromise in its demands for self-determination and national independence.

The British looked around for any political force, no matter how otherwise desperate or distasteful, that they could use in their war of attrition with the congress. It was in this context that the Viceroy proposed lifting of ban from party of India. The bargain struck was that the party's leader, M. N. Roy, would come out in open opposition to the Congress. The Secretary of State for India, Amery, writes on July 7, 1942:

*"I believe there may be much to be said for giving much more encouragement to Roy and to every kind of left wing communist, students, peasants or trade union Organisations... It may be that the elements we encourage may not be reliable in the*

*future, but they may be influenced in a better direction in the sunshine of official favour."*

The British tactics were understandable. But the surprise is that a great leader like M. N. Roy, and organisations of students, labourers and peasants, were willing to become their tool and use all their strength on the side of the forces of colonialism and imperialism. Consider also the white man's cunning - how he brought the lion and the lamb to drink from the same pond, how he coaxed such opposite and mutually hostile forces as Islam and communism to work in concert in support of his imperialist and colonial objectives.

The British were at that point self assured that they had rallied behind them the state rulers, the scheduled caste, the Muslim League, the Mahasabah, the Communist party, and all their subsidiary organisations. Now the Congress seemed to stand isolated, and it was time to settle their score with it.

The Cripps Mission had also created an illusion internationally, but especially in the American mind, that the British were making an honest effort to resolve the Indian issue, and that they had now transferred the responsibility to the local leadership, to the Congress and Muslim League, to settle on an agreed course.

Pleased with the situation Amery, the Secretary of State, writes to Viceroy (July 24, 1942): "The sooner you pounce on them the better". Deport all these leaders to Uganda, he advises, Gandhi is not well, wires the Viceroy. To Aden, then, urges Amery, but out of India at any cost.

Viceroy also dept conveying the good news home that the nation was becoming disillusioned with Gandhi, the Congress was in disgrace; the Congress rule in the provinces had caused leaders of opinion to become alienated; people had no will left to mount any movement; and so on. The message in short was that the time was ripe to take on the Congress.

When shortly in August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee held its annual session in Bombay and issued the Quit-India call to the British, the latter, all primed up, instantly reacted. All the members of the Congress Working Committee were arrested, and a coordinated scheme to crush the movement was set in motion. Processions even in villages were bombarded from the air and jails all over the country were filled with Congressmen. Satisfied with the operation, the Viceroy writes on August 17, 1942:

*"I am most grateful for your support over the use of air power against saboteurs. I am certain that we ought not to shirk from using any of the means at our disposal in dealing with a movement as so dangerously revolutionary as the present one.*

The viceroy himself had admitted that the Congress had no plan yet to launch a movement. He calculated that the party might have been waiting for the moment when British were in a tight spot in the war. He decided to forestall that situation and strike first. As he writes further on in that letter.

*We have this different and far more important reason to be thankful that we have brought on this business at a time when the war position is not such as to offer any immediate threat to India, whether from the East. I have not the least doubt that Gandhi's plan was to wait for bad war news before raising the standard of revolt.*

However, there was surprise in store for him. Although the country had not been prepared for any movement, it responded massively to the sudden reign of terror. When the police, the militia and the army could not succeed in taming the people, the air force and the bombing and shelling were resorted to. Even whipping was prescribed for political prisoners. The directive from whitehall was, 'use any mean' only make sure that the more repressive measures like flogging don't get publicised. The British colonialists were mindful of reaction in their own parliament, in the U.S. and of international public opinion.

But that availed them nothing. The young and the old and even the women among the people rose up with such courage that the oppressor stood aghast. He had been fed on the belief that the nation was sick of the Congress.

The Viceroy writes on July 24, 1942:

*"I continue to be rather puzzled that our intelligence should not have been able to give us rather more warning that it has of the way things were likely to go".*

About the Governor of Bihar he says, a gain with the usual understatement: "He and his government were taken by surprise".

The Viceroy had apparently still to learn that official functionaries and other hangers - on report matters only in ways that they know would please their superiors. It was on such intelligence that he had drawn up his scheme of surprising the Congress and putting it out of combat. The illusions however, either deliberately or to deceive the rest of the world, continued to be nursed at even the highest levels, as we shall see.

When the wave of terror did not succeed in quelling the nationalists and the latter's sacrifices kept mounting the chances of British success kept windling, Chiang Kaishek once again expressed his anxiety to the U.S president, M.Franklin Rosevelt. He urged the latter to impress upon the British that such high-handedness was against the allied interests. President Roosevelt passed on this letter to Mr. Winston Churchill, the British prime Minister, who replied:

*"The congress party in no way represents India and is strongly opposed by over 90 million Mohammadans, 40 million untouchables and the Indian states comprising 90 million.....the military classes on whom everything depends are thoroughly loyal - in fact over a million have volunteered for the army."*

When it came to their own interests, the British became blind. The prime Minister declares the Congress unrepresentative when it had won elections held by the British themselves out of the eleven provinces. And he lumps the entire Muslim population in Mr. Jinnah's camp.

However, the Congress resistance of the time caused discomfiture in the British ranks. They started scrambling for ways to create more rifts among the Indians. Muslims they believed to be secure in their pocket. The Scheduled Caste too they thought had been broken into through Ambedkar. Now their eyes fell on the Sikhs. The Secretary of State for India, Amery, wrote to the Viceroy to put someone on to probing the possibilities of a demand for a separate Sikh State on the line of Muslim League's Pakistan. He calculated that if that demand could be fed and pushed to the fore it would further divide and weaken the Congress.

That was Amery's rosy view from a distance. But the Viceroy who was sitting on the spot knew that propping up such a movement would affect Punjab, and that would pose twofold problems for the British.

First, Punjab was not a Congress stronghold. The power there was with the Muslims, and their Unionist organisation, led by Sir Sikandar Hayat, was loyal to the British. Besides, pitching the Sikhs against the Unionist would cause no hurt to the Congress, which was Britain's main design. The Congress would remain wholly unaffected.

Secondly, Punjab was the main recruiting area for the British. Creating a major rift among the population there would thus injure the British themselves on a sensitive point.

According, by the Viceroy opposed the whole scheme. He writes on September 7, 1942:

I am certain that if we did show the very slightest sign of taking 'Sikhistan' seriously in the least degree, not only shall we aggravate communal tension gravely in the Punjab, but we should never hear the end of it.

There was one yet another proposal - to induce separatism among the Scheduled Caste. But the problem was that they were scattered all over the country. As Amery noted: "Protection of scheduled castes is, of course, impossible on any geographical basis, such as the right of non-accession given to the predominantly Muslim provinces". There was only one way, he went on: which was, if they converted either to Islam or Christianity. Then their rights could be safeguarded.

The 'Sikhistan' plan of the Secretary of State was thus shot down by the Viceroy himself. But some other way had to be found to deflate the Chinese and American pressure. The only alternative seemed to be to further fan communal sentiment. All categories of the Congress leadership were at that time locked up in jails. Mr. Jinnah's statements were creating no impact since there was no one to reply to them. Besides, amidst the spectacle of endless sacrifices no one had the courage to do anything that would seem to strengthen the hands of the British.

The British saw an opportunity in a new direction - that of the Mahasabha. They thought that if the Mahasabhites put new fire into the demand for Pakistan by generating massive opposition to it that would help drive a further wedge between the Hindus and the Muslims. That would also convey to the Americans that the matter was not all that simple. There wasn't just the Congress, but also other forces involved. The new confrontation would also create a new stir, since with the Congress in jails there was no one to counter Mr. Jinnah's arguments.

With this in view the Viceroy writes on December 15, 1942:

I have endeavoured to encourage Mahasabaha etc. by reverting to the topic of the unity of India, though, I trust, in terms sufficiently guarded so far as the Muslims are concerned to avoid giving Jinnah a legitimate grievance. But I have also thought it well, for the point is a most important one and the centre of our position, to bring out that the difficulties of this country are not due to our reluctance to transfer power, but to the fact that we have offered to transfer power.

Consider the Englishmen's cunning. How he is using mutually hostile forces to advance his own interests. He joins hands with the Mahasabah in the cause

of the country's unity, and links up with the Muslim League to further its division. Thus these two forces are primed to pitch themselves against each other. Mr. Jinnah himself had been carried to a stage where, in the Viceroy's words, "the Muslims will do no business except on their own terms."

And their terms are the division of India and the establishment of Pakistan. The Mahasabah leaders on the other hand declare that any division is like carving up a holy cow. Both these community-based organisations are determined on their opposite stands. All their exertions end up in enabling the British to show an innocent face to the world and say that they were ready to transfer power that very instant but, look, the Indians were locked up among themselves. The Viceroy himself announces that Mr. Jinnah has started making such demands "that it is almost inconceivable that Hindu majority could accept them."

By the time of 1943, New Year, the Viceroy had pushed Mr. Jinnah to a position that he was able to give the Secretary of State the good news of an "attitude which might be summed up by saying that if the Congress accepts his terms in full he would treat them kindly" (January 26, 1943). The sneer in the message is transparent. The Viceroy seeks credit for all his efforts that have brought Mr. Jinnah to such position of self-confidence.

Gandhi and all the Congress leaders were at the time in jail. Gandhi was on a fast. As a campaign was mounted to have him released Gandhi wrote a letter to the British Government saying that Congress would have no objection if all powers were transferred to Mr. Jinnah and he formed a national government. The suggestion for a moment caused deep worry among the British. But presently (February 16, 1943) the Viceroy was able to assure London that Mr. Jinnah had refused to attend a meeting called by the Congress for the purpose, and both he and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan had refused to join such a government.

.....And his statement and that of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan in the Assembly have dealt pretty effectively with the suggestion that the Muslim League are willing parties to either Gandhi's fast or to his suggestion that a National Government can be formed by them with his goodwill in a day.

What else could the Congress do for the sake of a grand reconciliation? It tells the British, O.K. We have won the election; it is our right to form the government! But never mind, hand over power to Mr. Jinnah, hand it over back to India. But look at the irony: the British are silent; it is Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali who oppose the idea of a national government. The British were thus able to smoothly pass on the responsibility of all their own cunning, dishonesty, deceit, injustice, and high-handedness on to the Muslim League

and the Muslim League leaders were happy and proud in wearing and owning this crown of British infamy.

May I suggest that this attitude doesn't even measure up to the demands of decency and humanitarianism, not to mention the sublime principles of Islam. If Muslim League was indeed honest in its concern for the rights of the Muslims, here it was being offered the government of entire India, and it wasn't prepared to accept it! The refusal was not because it wanted to snatch that power from the British; its quarrel was with the Congress not with the British. What if, the Congress was at that time in jail for its struggle for the independence of India. The League could wait to fight another day.

The British too were a candid breed. They had no hesitation in exposing people - even sometimes themselves. Even the simpleminded Amery knew the score, as he writes to the Viceroy on Feb. 8, 1943.

*"I don't believe that you will ever get Indian politicians settling down to a reasonable discussion of their own internal problems, so long as they can shirk them by putting the blame on an alien government. To that extent there is really something in Gandhi's plea that Indians can only agree once we are out of their way."*

## Chapter 8

### Confusion over Pakistan

AS mentioned earlier, where Gandhiji went on a fast in the jail and the British Government looked determined on ignoring it, some of the members of the Viceroy's Council resigned their seats. They were all non-Muslims. The Viceroy then turned to the Muslims, expecting that they would not adopt the same attitude of embittered defence.

He was right. One person taken into the Council was Mr. Wazirul Haq who was given the portfolio of food. The Viceroy assured the Secretary of State that the new nominee would behave differently and not bring a bad name to the British. He writes on May 2, 1943:

*"I saw him yesterday and gave him a talking too. I would runt the Food Department myself, though not publicly, for the time being, and the readily accepts that public responsibility will, of course, be entirely with him, and he will have to defend the action of the department in public and, of course, keep in touch with what is going on inside. As regards Commerce, Industries and Civil Supplies I begged him not to make the mistake of immersing himself in a great deal of detail, that was properly to be handled by the secretaries, not to overload himself or to slow down action by frequent interference from his high level ..... He took this entire very well and expressed himself ready to play.*

It is worth noting that earlier ministers and now their substitutes both were the Viceroy's own nominees, and yet considering the difference in their attitude towards the Viceroy's dictates the British seemed altogether right in placing their confidence in the Muslims, whether as ministers or as officials. About that time, Amery had also sent instructions that the non-Muslims who had given in their resignations in connection with Gandhi's fast should immediately be allowed to go. In addition, others too should be watched, and whoever seemed to harbour any sympathies for the Congress should be released from employment.

#### **Mr. Jinnah and Outlines of Pakistan**

After the death of Sir Sikandar Hayat, Sir Kizar Hayat Tiwana became the Chief Minister of Punjab. Hindus and Sikhs were also with him in the Cabinet and as members of his Unionist Party. Since the idea of Pakistan was still new and Muslim League was offering a variety of explanations of it, the non-Muslim colleagues of the Punjab Chief Minister pressed on him to request Mr. Jinnah for the authentic version of it.

The Lahore resolution had mentioned Pakistan's constituents as "States" rather than "State" and then there was also the idea floated that there would be a corridor linking east and West Pakistan. Mr. Kizar Hayat approached the Viceroy and said that there was confusion being caused by varying interpretations of "Pakistan" and it was creating problem for him in Punjab. Besides a clarification would also help in enabling the Muslims of Punjab to make up their minds.

However a clear-cut statement on the issue did not suit the Viceroy himself. His concern was not the interests of either Muslims or non-Muslims. He simply wished to ensure that the two did not ever come together. The more "Pakistan" remained vague the more it would be a source of fear of the unknown in the opposite camp. So whatever he might have said to Khizar Hayat, his letter to the Secretary for India dated May 4, 1943, ran as follows.

*From his (Mr. Jinnah's) own point of view half the strength of his position is that he has refused to define it (Pakistan). Thus I have no doubt that the famous corridor by which he proposes to link North-West Pakistan with North-East Pakistan, a corridor which would presumably run via Delhi, Lucknow, Allahabad and Patna, cutting off the area north of the corridor from the Hindu majorities in the south it, would almost inevitably figure and he would be a fool if he did not make all sorts of excessive demands in respect of tariff, defence, the use of ports and sites.*

The British were thus pleased with the situation. The more excessive the demands the more remote would be the chances of any reconciliation between the parties. But it is also true that until that time Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League themselves were not wholly clear about the shape Pakistan should take. Take this issue of "Corridor" / it is hard to imagine that a swath could be run right across India, from Calcutta to Lahore, and could be designated as Muslim. On what basis? And then how would this length of 1,500 miles be policed and safeguarded on both sides? How much army would it need? A host of questions arise in the mind. Obviously, they arose in the British mind also. Amery wrote on May 6, 1943: "The practical case indeed against Pakistan seems to me over whelming." And yet the British were playing along and it is not difficult to see why.

When Gandhi's first letter to the British government, that power be transferred to Mr. Jinnah, produced no result and the reply to it came not from the British but from Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali rejecting the suggestion of a national government. Gandhi then wrote a letter direct to Mr. Jinnah from the Jail. But the letter was intercepted by the British and it elicited instruction from Mr. Winston Churchill himself in the middle of a tour of the U.S. According to

the minutest date April 24, 1943: "Winston telegraphed from America urging that there should be no communiqué and the letter simply suppressed."

There was consternation in London. Mr. Jinnah had earned a bad name by refusing Gandhiji's offer to head a national government. Now if Gandhiji's letter reached him some avenue of reconciliation might emerge. Within India, however, the Viceroy's view was that the letter should not have been suppressed. Mr. Jinnah had been brought to a stage from where it was difficult for him to climb down. On the other hand, the Congress had done its own utmost - it had offered Mr. Jinnah the rule over entire India. Thus the Viceroy was of the view that there was no room left for any meeting of the minds. That being so, why should the government get involved by intercepting their communication, especially since Britain was trying to prove to the world that it was allowing the contending parties full opportunity to reach an accord so that it could hand over power to them?

Mr. Jinnah was angry that he was not given Gandhiji's letter and strongly protested to the government. According to the Viceroy Khawaja Nazimuddin raised the issue at Delhi and declared that he and others were with Mr. Jinnah on this and were even prepared to resign. After all that, however, Mr. Jinnah issued surprising statement which pleased the Viceroy immensely. The letter writes on June 1, 1943:

*Meanwhile, the fact that Jinnah has wholly associated himself in his public statement on Gandhi's letter with the principle that there can be no communication with Gandhi so long as the Mahatma does not call off the policy of last August is a very valuable advance.*

Gandhi's call of August was that Britain should quite India. Gandhi had latter written to Mr. Jinnah inviting him to talks. He had pleaded that a world war was on; the country was in disarray; Germany and Japan were harassing the rest of the world; it was apt that the Indian leaders should also get together and ponder the future. Gandhi had requested Mr. Jinnah for a meeting Mr. Jinnah imposed condition that Gandhi should first call off his quite India movement; that is, he should first announce relinquishment of the demand for independent and an end to the struggle for it.

The question to ask is that struggle was against British imperialism and for national self-determination. How was Muslim League or Mr. Jinnah getting hurt by it? It might have been for the British to make such condition. Did the Muslim leaders ask themselves how adopted a policy basically in British interest was going to benefit the Muslim cause? With his response Mr. Jinnah had also got the British off the hook for suppressing Gandhiji's letter to him, it

was like that story of the dead dog. A man requested a friend for the loan of his dog so that it could help him guard his crop while he was gathering the harvest. The friend said that his dog had died several days ago. That would have been sufficient answer. But he went further and added, "Even if it had not died I wouldn't have given it to you." Mr. Jinnah told Mr. Gandhi that even if he had received Mr. Gandhi's letter he would not have responded positively to it. Whatever else this did or did not do it absolved the British embarrassment about the letter.

In addition to the pleasure Mr. Jinnah stand must have given to the Viceroy, it had Mr. Amery dancing with joy. He wrote on June 2, 1943:

*I confess I admire the skill with which Jinnah has taken advantage of your deflation of Gandhi over this business of deflating him one further, while at the same time adroitly saving his own face by making it clear that the only letter which would have satisfied him, and which he dared you not to forward, was one abandoning the whole Congress policy (i.e., to the extent of making his condition identical with yours.)*

Coming across such events one repeatedly obliged to wonder whether the Muslim League leaders also asked themselves what good such attitudes were going to do the Muslim interests, or whether they just felt happy and proud doing what suited the British.

Until that point the British had not decided to leave India. Sitting in London the Secretary of State for India sometimes worried that the Viceroy's attitude towards Mr. Jinnah might carry things to a stage that the latter might become a problem for the British. The Viceroy's frequently saying that his utmost effort was not to let Muslim League fall a prey to internal dissension and conflicts also sometimes used to create fear in the Whitehall that the party might one day become so strong that it might prove even bigger challenge that the Congress.

The Viceroy, Mr. Linlithgow, eventually decided to offer an analysis of the political standing of the Muslim League and the Congress in order to reassure Lord Amery. He reported on June 10, 1943:

*Your comments on Jinnah's attitude...I think he probably looks a little more alarming from London than he does here. I don't however, think he wants a row with the government, though on the other hand (like unfortunately all these leaders) he exists on being as rude to government (and to his political opponents) as he thinks he dares. I doubt if anyone takes it very seriously, and his threats do not cause me any sleepless nights. As I have consistently felt and said both to Zetland and you, Jinnah would be quite as bad a master as Gandhi. But Jinnah is not in as strong a position as Gandhi's and Congress' and he is never likely to be in the near future, since he represents a*

*minority that can effectively hold its own with our assistance. Nor of course is his organisation as deep rooted as is that of the Congress. I would expect him to be likely to continue to be not merely non-constructive but positively destructive, and to endeavour to play his hand so as to get the maximum in the way of commitments favourable to his community and the maximum in the way of hurdles to be taken by the Hindus, but without facing a showdown with the Government.*

*That is how the Viceroy, and through him the British government, evaluated Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim Leaguer. Mr. Jinnah himself was aware of the position and its evaluation. That is why in the Lahore session in which the Pakistan Resolution was adopted he told his colleagues: "After the war (began)*

*I was treated on the same basis as Mr. Gandhi. I was wonder-struck why all of a sudden I was promoted and given a place side by side with Mr. Gandhi. He was aware that he had won no election nor had his party acquired sufficient strength and yet he was placed on an equal footing with party and a leader that had done both. Naturally, the effort after that was to retain that position. Mr. Jinnah also knew that the British had no one else to fight the Congress with and was keen to take full advantages of the situation short of a direct confrontation with the British."*

Mr. Amery was still not fully reassured about the Muslim League. In his next letter Linlithgow advises him not be misled by newspaper statements of the party and he writes on October 4, 1943:

*But I believe as I have often said to you in these matters that the Muslims (i.e., Mr. Jinnah) though they are bound to abuse us in the interest of keeping their place in the public eye and so safeguarding their reputation as good nationalists, have nothing to gain from the disappearance of the British connection or from a further weakening of that connection, and do not want any such weakening.*

## Chapter 9

### NWFP & the 'Military Crescent'

THE Khudai Khidmatgar movement in the NWFP proved a major hurdle in the British efforts to fan religious sentiments and to drive a wedge of distrust and hostility between the Muslims and non-Muslims. This movement fitted neither in Britain's internal policies in India nor its external objectives.

The big problem for the British was that Muslims in NWFP constituted some 92 per cent of the population, which was by far a greater proportion than anywhere else in the country. Compounding the problem was the fact that this concentration was located in a place which the British called the Frontier. Although the British Empire at the time was vast and the sun was said never to set on it, at this point it stood face to face with its real enemy; this place marked the limit of the British Crown, the representative of imperialism and colonialism. On the other side was the Russian border, where formerly Czarist rule had prevailed and which had extended its borders right up to the banks of River Amu in Afghanistan.

After the communist revolution of 1917, the dangers to their empire seemed to the British to have suddenly increased. A geographical border until now, River Amu became an ideological one too. To shield themselves from possible ideological inroads they wished to create a comparable ideological force in opposition to it.

During the First World War the British had concentrated on destroying the strength and unity of the Muslims. Earlier in India they had wrested control from the Muslims. They had come here by sea and had seen that from the Balkans in Europe to the frontiers of Africa to the Middle East, above all, Turk's Ottoman Empire was a stronghold of Muslim power. Britain calculated that until it could uproot this last mentioned citadel of Islam it could not reign in peace in India nor plunder its enormous wealth unchallenged. It set to work, and by the end of World War I it had carved up the Ottoman Empire into small pieces and planted its own people there.

Having accomplished the demolition of this focus of extraordinary Islamic unity, The British should have felt secure. But about this time there occurred a historic popular revolution in Russia. At first the British and other imperialist powers tried their best to defeat the revolution at the very start. But their conspiracy with the counter revolutionary forces didn't bear fruit. Then they tried to block the passage of Russia's trade with the external world so as to get an economic stranglehold on the new order but this strategy also failed. Their

final stratagem was the shrewdest of all – to pitch the might of Islam against this new ideological challenge. Hence by an irony of real politick the force Britain had earlier set out to crush by decimating the Ottoman Empire it now felt completed to prime up to serve as its own line of ultimate defence against a new power if felt more imminently threatened by.

But Britain also knew that Islam would be a challenge to it for both its being kafir and for its recent open hostility against the Muslim caliphate. Thus what suited the British instead was a kind of neo-Islamism that saw no harm in joining hands with imperialism and colonialism and serving as an ideological instrument in confronting revolutionary Russia. They wanted what they called the “military crescent” extending from the borders of China to the outer fringes of the Soviet Union to become a kind of halter that could be thrown round the Soviet neck.

This was the basis for the creation of communal distrust and disharmony within India. Britain found that as the first step in its grand strategy it was necessary that the north-western part of India close to the Russian borders should somehow be separated in the name of Islam. That would help defend the British Empire in India against the Soviets.

The empire-builders were clever people. They were looking out for elements which could aid them fulfil this design. A person like Bacha Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgar fitted nowhere into the scheme. They were not prepared on any condition to become an instrument against the Russians. They were firmly opposed to creation of communal hatred, and they could not brook the use of Islam in defence of imperialist and colonial objectives. On the contrary, their very struggle was to get the British to announce independence of India and transfer all power to the Indians so that the country’s wealth could be used for the good of the country’s own poor and needy. To this end had joined forces with people who were also striving towards the same objective.

The latter included the Indian National Congress which was a nationalist organisation comprising Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and others. It had a preponderance of Hindus, it is true, but that was basically because there were that many more Hindus in the country’s population. As Allama Iqbal had said in a famous couplet: Religion is no preacher of discord. We’re Indian and India is our common land. The Congress’ basic goal was national independence, the driving out of British rule.

The British thought hard and decided that their principal enemy within the country was Congress, which wanted them out, and which was working on the basis of single nationhood.

They calculated that they could use Islam not against their external foe – the Russians – but also internally against the Congress. On the one hand, it would act as an ideological shield, on the other it would help divide up the country's population on communal basis and thus dissipate the national challenge to them. The biggest hurdle in this course, as we have noted, were the Khudai Khidmatgars in the Frontier who were not prepared for the use of the good name of Islam for either end.

The Frontier was a Muslim majority area and along with it also lay the tribal area. Next to it was Afghanistan and in between the British had drawn the Durand Line to divide up the Pushtoons. Although they had fought several wars, the British did not feel fully reassured in relation to this sensitive region. In such circumstances the rise of a nationalist movement there was a disconcerting factor for them. They set about trying to isolate it from the central Congress movement and to crush it. They resorted to every kind of repression, incarceration, torture, seizing of properties, burning down of houses.

Local quislings were also used to serve their ends. The titled gentry, the Khan sahibs, Khan Bahadurs and Sirs, the jagirdars and honorary magistrates. The young ones from the latter families were employed as the goon force to harass and plunder the Khudai Khidmatgars and fill the jails with the latter's youth. The Haripur jail became the graveyard of these pious people.

But the Khudai Khidmatgars proved so resolute that they went through all this and still stood firm. They could neither be defeated nor put out of the way. Eventually the British were compelled to accord the Frontier the status of a province. And when under the 1935 India Act the first election was held there, even though not on the basis of adult franchise, the voters routed the serried ranks of the British loyalists. In that first contest the Khudai Khidmatgars could not obtain an absolute majority, it was nevertheless an achievement to secure 19 out of 50 seats.

This election proved two things. First, that apart from Khudai Khidmatgars, there was no force in the province that could context the election as an organised body. Secondly, Khudai Khidmatgar candidates were able to defeat some of the pillars of the colonial rule. The most abject example for the British was the trouncing of Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum by Abdul Aziz Khan, a Khudai Khidmatgar from Zaida village. Similarly, Nawab Sir Mohammad Akbar Khan lost to a family member, Amir Mohammad Khan, also a Khudai Khidmatgar, popularly known as Khan Lala. In Thekal Nawab Sheer Ali Khan was defeated by a young relative, Arbab Abdul Ghafoor. In kohat district,

another pillar of British rule, Khan Bahadur Quli Khan, was brought down by Khudai Khidmatgar Mohammad Afzal Khan.

The people who won against Khudai Khidmatgar candidates included three Nawab, two sons of Nawabs, two Khan Bahadurs and two Rai Sahibs.

Among the six winning Hindus, four were Rai Bahadurs and two Rais Sahibs.

Following the election, the British took stock of their strategy in the province. They realised that no matter how strong these titled elite may individually be, unless there was a strong political organisation at the back of them, they could not win against the Khudai Khidmatgars. But hard as the British tried to rally their loyalists, they couldn't make much advance. Until then, Muslim League had not remotely existed in NWFP; hence it did not have any representation at all in the Assembly. All the non-Khudai Khidmatgars were independents, owing allegiance to no political organisation.

The British knew that Pushtoons had two categories of leaders-spiritual and temporal. So far they had been banking on the latter group. They concluded that the Pushtoons, although very proud and courageous as a people, lacked the concept of collective action because of their tribal and Sardari system. They tended to be individualists.

They had their Khawanin and Malaks but their decision were not taken by any chieftains on the pattern of the Sardari system. They had the national jirga instead and since the elders of the jirga held themselves bound by the wishes of the community the British could not dare to try and entice them. They were advised to do something else --to create their own Khawanin first and try and supplant the traditional leadership with them. In other words, infiltrate their own henchmen in the tribal hierarchy. They could rest only under the shade of the trees they had planted themselves. The logic was simple: the newly created Khawanin would be wholly dependent on their British masters for their status, influence, powers and wealth. They would thus never be promoted to say or do anything that went against their parton's interests.

The British thus set about creating an army of Sirs without entitlement, Nawabs without a state, Khan Bahadurs bereft of courage, Khan Sahibs, jagirdars, and so on, whose families prospered on their generosity, and whose children had already joined the army and the civil services. This British - created anointed class became entrenched in official position. It made recommendations; it decided legal cases as honorary magistrate, even murder cases. The life and death and liberty of individuals came to rest in the hands of

these people. The British began to look on them as the nation's elite and intelligentsia. The prominent figures of the past, the elders who had traditionally enjoyed status and respect in the community, were no longer of any account.

The plan was that just as the Pushtoon society had been split apart, parts of Afghanistan, tribal areas and agencies and small states had been brought under the heels and large portions of them integrated with Baluchistan, so also the Pushtoon concept of collective life should be completely destroyed. The British were so determined on this objective that they were not prepared to admit any unity or collective action even on the part of the Khawanins and Nawabs they had themselves created. In fact their calculation was that the more the leading families, tribes and their heads were divided against one another the more each would vie with the other to prove his loyalty and subservience to them.

This scheme worked well for some time. But when the Khudai Khidmatgar movements started it began to attract the poor and deprived people into its ranks. At first the government tried to crush the movement through its appointed Khawanin. But after the election it became apparent that whatever influence and prestige these men enjoyed in their area individually, unless they were also able to act in concert, in a body, they would not be able to compete with a national movement.

The defeat of establishment figures like Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan and Sir Mohammad Akbar Khan Hoti at the hands of commoners caused the British to realise that the mutual differences of these official Nawabs were doing great harm to the British interests.

On the other side, the British, as we noted, had learnt that their objectives could be best served through a clever use of Islam. It is significant that the Muslim League was founded in the Frontier in Abbottabad in September 1937, at the hands of mullahs. The President of Jaimat-ul-Ulema, Maulana Shakirullah of Nowshera, was the leading figure in the ceremony who also became the League's first president, and the Jamiat's Secretary, Maulana Mohammad Shuaib of Mardan, became its first secretary. It is also noteworthy that the ministry of Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum formed in April 1937, broke up in September 1937 on a vote of no-confidence.

Later when Dr. Khan Saheb's ministry had been in existence in the province for a year and had despite its limited powers implemented some radical reforms it created concern in the British hierarchy and the Khawanin enjoying official patronage became worried about their future. These reforms included seizure of jagirs, honorary magistracy and abolition of local conscription. These

measures had an impact on British proteges who had become the channels through which the rulers held the people enthralled. The British had been forging them into a solid united force so that they could face up to the Khudai Khidmatgars. The latter had been attracting the poor into their ranks and since they were in massive majority, the electoral system was bound to invest only their representatives into power, and hence the Britisher's exhortations to their jagirdars, Khawanins etc., to join hands to face that threat.

The decision was taken to confront the national movement on two fronts. In September 1938 Maulana Shakirullah of Nowshera was replaced by Khan Bahadur Saadullah Khan as Muslim League president and thus provincial organisation passed into the hands of Nawabs, Sirs, Khan Bahadurs, jagirdars and honorary magistrates. It became the Britisher's instrument against Pushtoons.

## Chapter 10

### The Price of the Mullah

SINCE use to Islam became central to British machinations, it is important to take a close look at how they went about it. The diaries of NWFP Governor Sir George Cunningham reveal the variety of ways these heretics conspired to employ for their own selfish ends pious. Muslim leaders and the devotees of the Prophet of Islam (May peace be upon him).

The diaries are preserved in the India Office Library in London among his personal papers. They are available to anyone for verification or research. I obtained official copies of these on requests.

I am conscious that the diaries mention names whose exposure will cause deep hurt to their present descendants, but I consider it a duty to the nation that it be told of the tactics adopted by the colonial power to prolong its reign. The people should know this lest any other power in future tries again to usurp their right by using the sacred name of Islam.

When one reads the Cunningham diaries one is amazed how very respectable, angelic persons, even some who had been trained in as inspiring and ennobling an institution as Deoband, had allowed themselves to be used for the cause of the British. With Quran in hand and the Prophet's teaching around their necks they went and sold off their conscience and their faith in return for a few pieces of silver.

Creating communal and religious splits among Indians and using these for their own ends had been standard British practice. In NWFP, however, they were faced with the problem that the Muslims here were in such majority that they had no fear of non-Muslim ascendancy. Besides, the Pushtoons had such confidence in themselves that they could not conceive of ever becoming subservient to anyone. Those who had defied as powerful and ruthless a nation as the British couldn't be intimidated by any one else.

The British therefore adopted a special tactic here – in the province generally, in the tribal and Afghan areas in particular. It consisted in winning over the mullahs and making them their local support against the Russians. With the 1917 revolution in Russia the Czarist military legacy had acquired an ideological force as well. The later specially needed to be reckoned with. The British settled on Islam as an appropriate counterpoise.

There was a good precedence. When the British had first encountered real danger from Afghanistan in the form of Amir Amnnullah Khan they had successfully used Islam. It was used at that time against Muslims themselves and against the Pushtoon king of an Islamic country. Later, when war clouds began gathering over Europe, they again used Islam politically against threats to their power in India. There seemed no reason why the formula could not be repeated against an ideological conflict with the Russian.

As the situation began to get uncertain in NWFP, they found it necessary to get to work. On the one side they were collecting the Nawabs and Khawanin into the Muslim League fold to consolidate their support. Now, on the other, they set about rallying the mullahs. Not just within the province, but also in the tribal areas close by, and even within Afghanistan, the Islamic front had begun to be given shape and substance.

Cunningham relates that he assigned the task of liaising with mullahs to Khan Bahadur Kuli Khan. This ensured that a link could be established even with those clerics who were not yet ready to come out into the open in support of the alien rulers. The first of the hands that Kuli Khan recruited was Mullah Marwat, formally of the Khaksar movement. The sales pitch was that the British had no interest of their own; they were only concerned about protecting against its enemies, against the Bolsheviks; it was now necessary that all those who had the cause of Islam close to their heart should declare jihad against the 'enemies'. Writes Cunningham:

*Kuli Khan at once arranged secret meetings with tribal mullahs and others who would not come out into the open. With some mullahs he had to establish relations through certain persons in Hyderabad state...Through Mullah Marwat, Kuli Khan established relations with the office bearers of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema Sarhad and their supporters in India. These mullahs, many of whom had constantly been anti-British, began to speak and wail against the Russians and Germans on the platform and in the press. Subsidies were paid to all these mullahs through Mullah Marwat.*

The recruits were briefed to tell the Muslims that on one side were the British, recognised by Islam as the People of the Book, and with whom Islam even permitted intermarriage; on the other were the Bolsheviks who were not only among the people of the Book but, according to the British line of propaganda, were rank atheists. It followed that the British and Islam were on the same side; the common task was to fight against this new anti-religious threat. The mullah's were also required to keep emphasising to the Muslims that enlisting in the British army and fighting in support of the British was a great and noble service to Islam.

Cunningham writes that he had persuaded the leaders of Jamiat-ul-Ulema Sarhad to go to Faqir Ipi in Waziristan and tell him that his opposing Britain was no longer in the interest of Islam; now Britain was at war with Germany and Italy, and had taken up arms against kufr, which itself was a wholly Islamic objective.

This campaign of rallying Islam to Britain's support through letters, speeches, personal lobbying, etc., was being carried out with extraordinary secrecy so that nobody got a hint that Britain itself was involved in it. Cunningham, however, remained in constant touch. He was told of every bit of progress. When Faqir Ipi's aide, Mohammad Waris, wrote back to Jamiat-ul-Ulema Sarhad, he quickly learnt about it and was pleased. He noted the friendly tone and the lack of any sign of suspicion that the effort had been undertaken at British behest.

The outbreak of war in Europe led to differences within India between the British and the Congress. Congress ministries resigned in eight provinces and situation of confrontation began to develop.

The NWFP governor found it necessary that in addition to tribal areas and Afghanistan, mullahs' support in the province too should be organised. Since in the early years the war was only against Germany and Italy, the British thought it advisable to tone down their campaign here against the Soviet Union and to concentrate more on the two immediate enemies.

Cunningham had divided mullahs in three categories. The smaller ones he had left to the care of local Khawanin and trusted Khan Bahadurs. The middle rung group was made the responsibility of the deputy commissioners, while the top category the governor took in his own hands.

To begin at the lowest level, the governor writes that these were being tackled by Khan Bahadur Ghulam Haider Khan of the Sherpao village in Hashtnagar. He writes:

*I have not been in touch with any of the smaller mullahs myself. I have done it through the following agents with whom practically all my communication has been verbally as little is put on paper as possible.....Ghulam Haider of Sherpao....told me that he thought he could work through about nine or ten mullahs, including those of the following villages: Razzar, Kot, Tarnab, Tangi, Utmanzai and Umarzai.....later Prang and Charsadda.*

The governor asked Sherpao Khan to approach each of these mullahs himself separately and prepare them for the service of Islam. He should also

give each mullah 40 to 50 rupees and ask the latter to come again after four months to report what they had been doing. The Khan Bahadur was also asked to drop a hint that if the performance was satisfactory the allowance could be raised. The Khan Bahadur suggested (Cunningham notes in his diary) that some of these mullahs were not very reliable so why should he not call them over every month and also pay them on a monthly basis, that is around ten rupees each time. Cunningham writes that he gave Sherpao Khan a lumpsum of Rs. 600.

Similarly, the list of mullahs of Nowshera and Peshawar tehsils was made over to the deputy commissioner of the district, Sikandar Mirza.

The clerics of Swat, Bunair, Mardan and Ranizai were at the time in the care of the Prime Minister of Swat, Hazrat Ali. Writes Cunningham:

*The Wazir-e-Azam sent me a list of mullahs through whom he is working; he is paying them on an average Rs. 15 per month each.*

Wasn't this a bit unfair to the mullahs of Hashtnagar and Doaba that they got only Rs. 10 apiece while the other was paid Rs. 15.

The mullahs of Kohat had been entrusted to the deputy commissioner of the district.

Those of Bannu were assigned by the D.C. of Bannu to two persons – Nawab Zafar Khan and Taj Ali (the latter the son of Khan Bahadur Ghulam Haider Khan).

The D.C. of D.I. Khan Mohammad Aslam received Rs. 600 from Cunningham with the brief that Rs. 200 each should be given to Amakhel Faqir, Pir Musa Kharti and Pir Zakori. These mullahs too were told that if their performance proved satisfied, then their amounts could be raised.

About Syed Abdul Jabbar Shah of Satanay, Cunningham reports that his links were with the Prime Minister of Hyderabad Daccan, Sir Akbar Hydari, from whom he received a regular allowance. Cunningham was pleased that Syed would do the work for the British but would get paid by Hyderabad.

Later, Abdul Jabbar Shah reported to the governor that he had made arrangements for Swabi also. And for Bajaur too, where he had sent his cousin (Tarbur).

Maulvi Barkatullah, the mujahideen leader of Asmos, had been directly in touch with Cunningham for a long time. Cunningham notes:

*My arrangement until now with him has been that he comes to see me once or twice a year ..... Barkatullah said that he could also do a good deal through perhaps 10 or 12 maulvis in different places throughout Bajaur and Mohmand community.... I paid him Rs. 1,000.*

Cunningham then gives a detailed description of the performance of these mercenary mullahs, especially of Kuli Khan. It seems the Khan Bahadur had most of his work performed through Jamiat-ul-Ulema Sarhad.

The detail go into number of meetings held, resolutions passed, pamphlets printed, tours undertaken and contacts established. Cunningham also for the first time mentions the speeches made against the Congress: "Maulana Mohammad Shuaib toured Mardan district condemning Satyagraha....Pamphlet by Maulana Madaullah on war situation, anti-Congress" ...etc.

Having distributed money all round Cunningham now started wondering if the province-wide network of mullahs receiving the British largesse were also delivering the goods. He then sent out a team of trusted men to go and see whether the mullahs were preaching support for the British in their sermons in the mosques. He writes that the intelligence he received pleased him immensely. Animated by deep fervour these servants of Islam were ardently selling the nation at Rs. 15 per month.

Cunningham was also happy the activities of the Swat Prime Minister, Hazrat Ali ("Hazrat Ali.....is doing excellently in Swat and Bunair. He uses Pir Ziarat, and also Ghulam Haider Sherpao in his area....Hazrat Ali now covers the whole of Swat, Bunair and Mardan Border").

Amakhel Faqir of D.I Khan and the Pir of Musaze were also doing well. The latter had personally come to see the governor in Peshawar. The governor reports that the Pir co-coordinated with Sheer Ali and had also probably recruited the Pir of Tajori. Sheer Ali had even won over the Pir of Taunsa but, laments Cunningham, this Pir had got involved in some cases of moral offence.

It appears that the Faqir of Ipi was still giving Cunningham a bad time. He notes that word was sent through the faqirs of Thira and Amatile, the mullah of Karbaugh and Haji Akhunzada to the Faqir of IPI urging him to leave the British alone.

In Khyber, the political agent had handed over the responsibility of enlisting clerics to Mullah Abdul Baqi. He reported of him that he was a very useful, very reliable person and that he, the agent, had given him Rs. 1,000.

## Chapter 11

### The Purveyors of Faith

WHEN the war in Europe was going against the Allies and Hitler's forces seemed to be advancing on all sides, Britain got worried that Russia might take advantage of the situation to make gains in Asia. To safeguard against that, of all organisations, Jamiat-ul-Ulema passed a resolution in its annual conference declaring that if Russia invaded Afghanistan it would become incumbent on all Muslims to join in a jihad against it.

Later, when the British realised that there was no such danger, the next fatwa came from the governor, Cunningham. He records: "I advised Kuli Khan to moderate his anti-Bolshevik propaganda and to concentrate more on propaganda against Germany and Italy."

On the other side, as relations between the British and the Congress deteriorated the former started using the mullahs against the Congress.

But before we go any further the question is how could an Islamic scholar could or a true Muslim could be inspired with religious fervour in support of the British? The Englishman had been the historical enemy of the Muslims. From the times of Salahuddin Ayyubi right up to the sacking of the Ottoman Empire, the English had been chiefly responsible for the Muslim world's woes. Leave alone the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, even the holy Ka'aba came under gunfire from the Indian soldiers in the employ of these very British. And they were responsible for wresting the rule over India from the hands of the Muslim Mughals. The treatment they meted out to the last of the Delhi emperors, Bahadur Shah Zaffar, and his children is known to the whole world. Then look the way they dealt with the Pushtoon Muslim of Afghanistan before the eyes of the Pushtoons themselves. From Amir Dost Mohammad Khan and Amir Sheer Ali Khan down to Amir Amanullah Khan - all these Muslims were destroyed not at the hands of Russia or Germany or Italy but by the British themselves.

Leave that apart: what cruelty and torture did the British spare against the Khudai Khidmatgar from 1930 on? Where the mullahs unaware of that too? The bombing and killing they perpetrated in tribal areas - were those unknown too? Wazir, Mashud, Afridi, Mahmand and other Muslims were subjected to conscription not by the Russians or Germans or Italians. The same British carried on war against such true mujahids and followers of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as Haji Sahib Tarangzai and the Faqir of Ipi.

The fact is these mullahs were not really concerned with Islam or Quran, or the inheritors of the pious traditions. They had sold themselves to the British for ten or fifteen rupees a month. Their fatwa's were handed down by the British and the British were both their muftis and qazis. Their hands held the sword of Islam, but their eyes were fixed on the Englishman's nod. If the Englishman said Russia was kafir the mullah said so it was. If he said, no Russia wan" so bad, it was the Germans that were the heretics, the mullah dutifully echoed the judgement, even though the German believed in the same Gospel as the English and was as much the 'People of the Book' as the other. As for Italy, that was in fact the centre of Christianity. The Vatican occupied the same position for Catholics as Ka'aba did for the Muslims. The Pope, the Catholics' highest religious authority, himself lived there. But all that did not concern our mullah. His concern was the pleasure of the British.

When the British needed Islam for their internal purposes the mullahs were ready for that too-and at the same price!

However, here in the Frontier, the problem was that the opposers of the British were the Khudai Khidmatgars who were almost all Muslims and their leader was Bacha Khan, who was a Haji, who punctually offered all his prayers, who had set up Islami madrassahs, and who was devoted to the service of Muslims. But the Khudai Khidmatgars' crime was they wanted to free their land from the British stranglehold, and so these mercenary mullahs leapt into the arena against them.

There is nothing wrong with a religious leader adopting a political stance. That is everybody's basic right. But here these mullahs were springing to the support of the kafir British against the freedom fighters in the sacred name of Islam.

Cunningham records their doings in detail. For instance:

*Jamiat-ul-Ulema toured in Kohat district in Jun'42 and in Peshawar and Mardan in July doing intensive propaganda-*

- a. Anti-Axis, on the Islamic theme generally, and*
- b. Anti-Congress, particularly on the Pakistan theme.*

*Mullah in Peshawar and Mardan intensified the anti-Congress propogand during July - August'42.*

In other words the British had stimulated these mullahs in support of political work on behalf of the Muslim League. They were thus using this religious band exactly in accordance with the changing needs in the ebbs and tides of the War. They had so yoked the mullah to their subservience that whatever their requirement, the mullah was ready to deliver promptly finding a justification for it in Islam.

Thus when Britain felt reassured about the Russians, it diverted the mullahs to taking on the Khudai Khidmatgars. By August 1942 in Mardan alone the Swat Prime Minister had, according to Cunningham, employed 18 mullahs. Two were in the attendance of Pir Baba and were paid a monthly allowance of Rs. 30.

Cunningham also recalls:

*Maulana Mohammad Shuaib and Maulana Madarullah came to see me at Nathigali on 26th August and produced a long draft in Urdu of their pamphlet which they propose to issue both in the district and in T.T. (Tribal territory) – all good anti-Congress, anti-Japanese and anti-Axis stuff. They are extremely friendly.*

The English were careful about their own service to Islam by recording the names, addresses etc., of all these mullahs: 24 mullahs were from Peshawar tehsil, six of them from Peshawar city; 13 from Charsadda tehsil; three from Nowshera; 18 from Mardan and Swabi.

This process continued. Right until 1946, the names of every one of the mullahs that Cunningham hired is duly recorded in his diaries.

It causes deep shame and embarrassment reading this list and seeing how our mullahs and Khawanin sold their faith and honour and self-respect for a few pieces of silver and copper in order to fulfil the heretical purposes of the English overlords. And how, to that end, they denounced the mujahideen, ghazis and the fighters for national freedom with fatwa's of Kufr. The British cunning too has to be given high marks for discovering such people among Muslims and organising them so that they not only did not ask for any releases from their colonial and imperialist yoke, but in fact defiantly came out in full battle array against those who did.

One British tactic was to create support for themselves within the families that were fighting against them. Among the freedom fighters, Faqir of Ipi was backed by Dost Namwar, a Mashud mullah Powinda. Another was Mamandos Haji Sahib Taurangzai. The British were keen to undermine their resistance, and perhaps had their most crucial success in winning over the sons of these two

great mujahideen – Falza Din, the son of Mullah Powinda and Bacha Gul, the son of Haji Saheb Taurangzai.

Besides them, there was hardly anyone in the district or tribal elite of that time, hardly a mullah, pir, faqir akhunzada, and the chief of an educational institution, of any influence at all whom the colonial rulers had not in one way or another enticed to their side. After the demise of Haji Saheb Taurangzai and Mullah Powinds, the lone un-purchaseable mujahid left in the field was Faqir Ipi.

There is an interesting story of earlier days. At the start of German trouble – making in Europe, the British pressed the Afghan government to expel all Germans from their territory. To add to the pressure they let loose a Shami Pir in the tribal areas. His brief was to spread disaffection against the Afghan ruling family. After achieving their objective in Afghanistan the Shami Pir was brought over to Wana cantonment in Waziristan and paid a fee of £25,000. In England the Secretary of State for India liked the stratagem immensely, and wrote to the viceroy to try for a similar arrangement with Faqir Ipi. The viceroy wrote back to him on July 14, 1938 thus:

There is, I fear, no possible of dealing with him (Faqir Ipi) on the same lines as the Shami Pir. He is not only implacable but also completely incorruptible .... Who would ride me of this turbulent priest!

## Chapter 12

### Lending League a Hand

WE HAVE seen that the first stones of the Muslim League structure in NWFP were laid by the mullahs. Maulana Shakirullah of Nowshera and Maulana Mohammad Shuaib of Mardan became the Muslim League president and secretary respectively. Both these Maulanas had a direct link with the provincial governor Sir George Cunningham as revealed by the latter's own diaries.

Gradually, however, the British considered it wiser to separate the two fronts. The religious one they handed to mullahs and pirs and the political to the landed and titled aristocracy, the Khan Bahadurs and jagirdars. The latter by and by assumed the reins of Muslim League. They included Khan Bahagur Kuli Khan, Khan Bahadur Ghulam Haider Khan Sherpao, Nawab Zafar Ali and Taj Ali of Bannu. Among the mullahs, some, like Pir Saheb Manki Sharif and Pir Zakori Sharif, actually joined the Muslim League, but others decided to play Britain's political game from the religious platform.

There was one advantage for Britain in working through the latter. They could also operate in the tribal areas which were closed both to political workers and to political message through newspapers etc.

Seeing that he could use the mullahs whenever and for whatever purpose he liked, Cunningham set them up against the Khudai Khidmatgars. In a report dated August 24, 1943 he writes:

*As a result of this propaganda the Yousafzai mullahs, who used to be professionally anti-government, became first anti-Russia and anti-Germans and then anti-Japanese and natural consequence anti-Hindu and anti-Congress... The Muslim League successes in these by-elections are generally accepted as being a victory for the British government over the subversive elements in the country.*

The Khudai Khidmatgars were still creating problems for the British. When alongside the civil disobedience movement they also resigned from the provincial ministry, governor's rule had to be imposed here. Although this was predominantly a Muslim province, Muslim League hadn't existed here until the last election and thus had no member in the provincial Assembly. This was a big handicap for the British.

The viceroy wrote on January 16, 1940, that Mr. Jinnah had come to see him, and he had asked him whether following the resignation of Khan Sahib's

ministry there was a possibility of another government being formed. Mr. Jinnah had said he could give an answer only after consulting his colleagues. But he had also added that it would be best if the provincial governor took interest in the matter. After a month Mr. Jinnah met the viceroy again and reported that he had arrived at the conclusion that it was not possible for the Muslim League to form a ministry itself but if the governor gave help the chances could develop. The viceroy's letter dated February 6, 1940, went on:

Mr. Jinnah added that he was most anxious, if possible, to put this through, as he was convinced that there could be no more salutary lesson for Congress, and no better advertisement of the real position in India, whether before the country or throughout the world, than that a non-Congress ministry should be established in the NWFP. He was therefore most anxious to bring this matter to a successful issue.

The Muslim League and the British both wanted it to be accepted that the Congress was a Hindu organisation and Muslim League the sole representative of the entire country's Muslims. Obviously, this view got upset by the fact that NWFP had a Khudai Khidmatgar ministry which was non-Muslim league and therefore both wanted that the province was somehow placed safely in the League hands.

The viceroy reassured Mr. Jinnah and told him that he would have a word with the governor along the lines suggested by Mr. Jinnah.

This story is taken up by Sikander Mirza who was then the deputy commissioner of Peshawar. He relates an incident of March 1943 in his autobiography. He says that once he went on a hunting trip with the Nawab of Bhopal. On the way back they went to see Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan who asked Sikander Mirza to go and see the Quaid-i-Azam.

Sikander Mirza then gives details of this meeting with the Quaid-i-Azam. After establishing acquaintanceship the Quaid asked him if he was a Muslim. He replied that his Islamic antecedents sent to the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself. Then the Quaid asked if he recognised him as the leader of the Muslims. He replied in the affirmative. Then Mr. Jinnah said that whereas Muslim League did not have a government in a single province of the country, he had been urged to form one in NWFP. If he, Mirza helped him this could be possible. Mirza there upon pleaded that he was merely a deputy commissioner; the right person to ask for help would be the governor.

He says that he further pointed out that Muslim League had no existence at all in NWFP. Besides, the League leader there, Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, had a

very foul reputation. The Quaid replied that whatever Sardar Aurangzeb's qualities and regardless of the Muslim League's position in the province, it was duty to the Muslims of the country that a Muslim League ministry was formed in the Frontier.

Sikander Mirza recalls that the governor was away in Kabul at the time but as soon as he returned he called him over. He hadn't even sat down when the governor began saying that the government of India was pressing on him to have a ministry formed in the province immediately, and the aim was to prove that NWFP was not with the Congress. The moment was also opportune because several of the provincial Assembly members were at the time in jails following the quit-India movement. Seven of the Khudai Khidmatgar Assembly members were also under detention, and seven others had either died or been removed from the movement.

The road was thus clear for the governor, who, Sikander Mirza continues, asked Sardar Aurangzeb to try and form a government. Mirza was not happy with the choice. His own eyes were on only one man from Peshawar – Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, who was then in the Ahrar movement which was strongly opposed to the Muslim League, and by that token close to the Congress. Sikander Mirza recalls that Sardar Nishtar did not much like Mr. Jinnah at that time; in fact on one occasion in the Mahabat Khan mosque he had spoken to him very harshly of the Muslim League leader.

However, Sikander Mirza called over Nishtar and appealed to him in the name of Islam to cooperate. He eventually relented, resigned from Ahrar, joined Muslim League, and was taken as minister in Aurangzeb's ministry. Sikander Mirza relates how this same Aurangzeb once used to come and sit on the carpet before him, and got elevated to the seat of chief minister ship through his effort. About Aurangzeb, Cunningham also writes disparagingly in his diaries. Thus on July 19, 1943:

*Aurangzeb is extremely amenable and anxious to do as I want. He seems to have forgotten that the function of a minister is to advise the governor. Nearly every file comes from him with a note, "I solicit the advice of H.E. the Governor."*

The fact is Aurangzeb and his men knew that they were in the government through the courtesy of the British. Forming a Muslim League government when there was not a single Muslim League member elected to the Assembly could be the handiwork only of the British and their deputy commissioner. However these Muslim Leaguers were deeply divided amongst themselves. In connection with the minister formation, Aurangzeb and the president of the provincial Muslim League, Khan Bahadur Sa'abdullah Khan, fell foul of each

other. The governor himself got deeply worried over the mutual bickering. He wrote on May 27, 1944:

*There is no doubt that the name of the Muslim League administration is simply mud nowadays over the scandalous way in which they buy votes.*

Muslim League had been in office for a year. Cunningham, somewhat assured of its position, began releasing Khudai Khidmatgars from the jail in ones. However, the League had become bitterly divided against itself. One was the government faction led by Aurangzeb Khan; the other comprised the deprived ones headed by Khan Saadullah Khan. The rivalry came to the point that "In November 1944 Saadullah Khan informed Jinnah that he could no longer support the ministry and that if a no-confidence motion was moved he would vote in favour of it" (Erland Janson, *India, Pakistan or Pukhtoonistan*, P 131).

The governor was doing his best so that the ministry held together. He went to the extent of not convening the Assembly's 1944 autumn session on the plea that there was no business to dispose of. The secretary of the Congress' parliamentary party presented a memorandum signed by 20 Assembly members to the governor to call the Assembly into session so that a no-confidence motion could be debated. But the governor turned it down. Eventually when the avoidance tactics could no longer be persisted in and the house met for the spring session of 1945, sure enough the Aurangzeb ministry fell. Khan Bahadur Saadullah, true to his warning, voted against the Muslim League government.

Cunningham and his men knew that the Aurangzeb ministry was causing a sharp rift in the Muslim League ranks and was earning a very bad name for the party. But the British could not at any cost afford to give the impression that only the Congress or the Khudai Khidmatgar enjoyed support in the province. The British now started working directly through their own officials in the province and the tribal areas.

Election in NWFP was held in February 1946. Congress obtained an absolute majority. Not only that. What disappointed the British even more was that the Congress won even the traditional Muslim seats. The Muslim League as usual won all its support from Hazara where it obtained 8 out of 9 seats. The British had worked on its behalf everywhere. Several of the Government officials were open in their clumsy canvassing for the League. The deputy commissioner of Bannu, for instance, toured the whole district with his wife, and when invited to receptions he would say, give dopatta to my wife, which was supposed to mean, vote for Muslim League'. Besides, a lot of money poured in from the

country's princely states; so did all the effort of the mullahs and the Khan Bahadurs. It was in a way the British's own defeat that from the entire Mardan district, only Nawab Hoti Sir Mohammad Akbar Khan won a seat for the Muslim League; Peshawar also yielded only one seat; Bannu came up with no more than two dopattas; and Kohat gave none at all.

The defeat had a particular edge in that the League campaigning had largely been done in the name of Pakistan, and the vote had even been made a contest between Islam and kufr. All the pir and mullah partisans of the British were canvassing for Pakistan in the name of Islam.

See that they could not prop up the Muslim League through constitutional and democratic means the British started thinking of other methods.

Jamiat-ul-Ulema had two of its members elected in Dera Ismail Khan. Including these two, Dr. Khan Sahib got the support of 33 members, as against 17 of the Muslim League, and thus had to be asked to form the ministry.

About this time Sir George Cunningham completed his long tenure of governorship and was replaced Sir Olaf Caroe. Caroe has been the deputy commissioner of Peshawar during the trying period of 1930, when he had dealt harshly with the Khudai Khidmatgars. After that he had gone to Delhi and for several years remained secretary in the department of external affairs at the centre.

In Delhi too a change had taken place. Lord Linlithgow had yielded place to Lord Wavell. While leaving Linlithgow had said:

*I think I can claim to be handing over to Wavell a pretty well set stage so far as the political position is concerned, though one that would need constant attention and a careful handling.*

It was true that during his viceroyalty Linlithgow had substantially determined the political fate of the country. When in June 1945 Lord Wavell called a conference of the political leaders in Simla the objective once again was to demonstrate to the world that Hindus and Muslims could not resolve their differences so whom the British could hand over powers to. The conference in other words was not expected to ensure a settlement but to aggravate mutual rift.

## Chapter 13

### Search for a Solution

THE Simla Conference first of all approved Lord Wavell's proposal that a central federal ministerial council be set up. Lord Wavell's view from the start was that there should be equal representation of Muslims and non-Muslims on the council.

Mr. Jinnah, however, adopted his usual stand that except for Muslim League no one had the right to claim to represent Muslims – and therefore no one except the Muslim League could nominate Muslim members to the ministerial council. This meant that there had to be parity between Mr. Jinnah's nominees on the one hand and the representatives of the country's rest of the population of Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis etc.

India's population at the time was 40 crore (400 Million), of which Muslims were only 10 crore (100 Million). Besides, of the 11 provinces in the country Muslim League did not have a ministry in a single one, whereas Congress had control over eight. Even so the Muslim-majority provinces, in Bengal the league held just 40 of 117 seats, in Punjab just one of 84 seats, and not even that in Sindh and NWFP. Yet Mr. Jinnah's insistence about the Muslim ministers in the central ministerial council, according to Wavell, was:

*They must all be nominated by the League and must all be Leaguers....None except himself as head of the Muslim League could nominate the Muslims on the new council..... In face a communal veto.*

The demand went even further. If a Muslim objected to any proposal in the council, the decision it should require a two-thirds majority.

On the other hand, the first right to name Muslim ministers was claimed by the Unionist chief minister of the Punjab, Mr. Khizar Hayat. The congress for its part included two Muslims in its own list since it had NWFP with it and Sind was led by the nationalist ministry of Khan Bahadur Allah Bakhsh. Mr. Jinnah, however, was adamant about his right to name an equal number himself. Wavell was puzzled.

*If he really meant this it shows that he had never at any time an intention of accepting the offer. It is difficult to see why he came to Simla at all. The root cause of the failure was of course Jinnah's intransigence and obstinacy.*

It needed to be asked of Mr. Jinnah that the Congress had just given enormous sacrifices: thousands had died, tens of thousand were still rotting in jails - and he was now claiming a right to not just his but others' share as well. It was a case of one person sowing and tending the crop and another reaping it.

Look at the viceroy's own attitude. He recognises the unreasonableness of the demand and yet he rejects the rights of the elected chief ministers Khizar Hayat of Punjab, Elahi Bakhsh of Sindh and Dr. Khan Saheb of NWFP, and allows the conference to collapse in failure because of an unjustified insistence of Mr. Jinnah. Does it not again confirm that Britain's game was that there should be no resolution of the differences, that it could always have lack of agreement between parties available to it as an excuse for continuing its own rule? Even H.V. Hodson, generally partial to the Muslim League point of view, writes in his book 'The Great Divide':

*A minority party with unsupportable claim had been allowed to veto the whole project for advancing India's self-government.... Some observers thought that Lord Wavell's sudden abandonment of his plan was the decisive move which made the partition of India inevitable.*

Before this Sir Stafford Cripp's own proposals had the clear provision that when after the war the constitution assembly of India sets to draw up a constitution for the country.

*Any province would be free to keep itself out of the proposed union and to retain its prevailing constitutional position. If such non-acceding provinces so desire they could have their own separate union analogous to the proposed Indian Union.*

This was clearly the first step on the ladder to Pakistan, and its ultimate guarantee.

Thus, Lord Wavell dissolved the Simla Conference on the point that the conference should accept Muslim League as the sole representative of the entire Muslim population of the country. Dr. Khan Saheb, the chief minister of NWFP was present at the conference. He put it to the Viceroy that he was the head of a Muslim-majority province and he was not a Muslim Leaguer, so what was his position. Wavell had no answer. Despite the results of the British held election of 1937, which, as we have seen, had allowed the League only a minority position in just one Muslim province and virtually eliminated it from all others, the British Viceroy was insisting that Congress accept the League as the exclusive body of the country's entire Muslim population. How could Congress do that in the midst of its own electoral victories and its own proven support of large sections of the Muslims?

The viceroy wasn't of course concerned about the interests of the Muslims or the Muslim League. His sole preoccupation was the advancement of British rule. The outcome of the Simla conference was also a kind of British notice to all Muslims that if they wished any official recognition they had to join up with the Muslim League.

If the British were at the time thinking in terms of a 'Pakistan' I am certain that it was not out of sympathy for Muslims but because they needed a Muslim state to complete their Islamic shield against the Soviet ideological challenge, extending from Turkey to the borders of China. If Pakistan meant not so much a partition of India as a partition of Muslims, they were not bothered, so long as that served their own colonial and imperialist objectives.

So once again Britain turned its thought to its idea of a Military Crescent.

It had seen that Congress was strong in the rest of India and it wouldn't accept British rule much longer. It thought: why not then return the Pushtoon areas to Afghanistan? The idea commended itself on two grounds. First, India would thus lose the hilly areas in the north-west which had constituted a natural physical boundary. History had taught the lesson that India could never rest in peace if it did not have the north-western passes in its control. Their loss would thus make the country weak. It would continually remain concerned and dependent. Secondly, restoring those areas to Afghanistan would make the latter feel obligated to Britain and this could be beneficial in the future.

The Soviet victory in Europe, however, turned the scheme to dust. Britain quickly retracted, and set to thinking of ways to face the Soviet danger. Wavell's diaries throw great light on the British dilemma of the time.

In fact it is impossible to fully understand the British policies of the time without going through these diaries. Even a person as politically aware and acute in understanding people as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was deceived by Wavell's appearances. The fact is that Wavell pursued the design laid down by Linlithgow - in fact, I think he even exceeded his predecessor's ambitions - but he was so shrewd that the Congress president Maulana Azad was misled and spoke well of his sincerity and integrity in his book 'India Wins Freedom'.

Before taking over as Viceroy of India, Wavell was the commander-in-chief of the Indian Army. He looked on Congress as the sworn enemy of the British and had tried to create great problems for Britain during the War. It had chosen that time to start a movement against the British and had tried to create innumerable hurdles in the latter's way. It also had the support of a body of

nationalists Muslims, including a large number of religious scholars of standing who had dared to challenge the British.

Wavell's letter to his private Secretary of August 10, 1946, reproduced in his book on pages 330-332, details his 'Breakdown Plan'. He wrote that as soon as a deadlock would develop in the negotiations with the Congress and the Muslim League the British government would send for him, and he would then present his own plan. He asked his Secretary to set up a committee of five senior officers to prepare a confidential report for him on how his plan would be implemented.

Wavell's analysis was that the Muslim League and the Congress were mainly quarreling over areas that lie on the borders. The proposed Pakistan comprised two parts, one in north-east and the other in north-west, both with Muslim majorities. The plan in brief was that the provinces with clear Congress majority should be handed over to them and given full independence. The British, with all their Army, their officials and the latter's families should transfer to the provinces of Muslim majority.

Being a professional soldier Wavell knew that one the north-west (NWFP, Sindh, and Punjab up to Delhi) and north-east (Bengal and Assam) were separated from India and the British took full control of them the defense of the rest of India would become a problem. He was sure that the Muslim League would have no objection: "In fact the Muslim League would presumably welcome the Plan," he wrote. He actually called over Sir Feroz Khan and asked him to sound the League leaders. Noon's report was that they were willing.

When one reflects over the scheme one is amazed at the mentality of these British. The Congress was being punished for its opposition to colonial rule. It was being sought to be deprived of its natural geographical frontiers, with China to one side and the Soviet Union to the other. If partition had taken place on that basis and in an atmosphere of such hostility how could the inhabitants of India have defended themselves?

The scheme to another aspect - that if the British were helping or supporting the Muslim League in any way it was not out of consideration of the Muslim good but for the promotion of their own imperialist and colonial interests. Says Wavell: "I pointed it out that Pakistan issue affected not only India, but the whole Empire."

Britain's pursuit of its political strategic objective is possible to understand, but the greater surprise is the attitude of the Muslim League leaders. The party might never have been too concerned about the country's independence, nor

worked hard to get out of Britain's yoke, but if the country was anyhow going to get its independence as a result of the struggle of the Congress and the nationalist Muslims, were the Muslim League area going to remain under British tutelage? How could they allow the British to convert their defeat into victory, and allow the fruit of independence to become confined only to the non-Muslim majority areas while letting the Muslims remain the slaves they were?

The third points emerging from the Wavell plan want the reason why the Pushtoon Frontier and the Khudai Khidmatgar was such an irritant for the British. Among all the Muslims, the Khudai Khidmatgar was the single body of people who understood the British machinations and who supported the Congress in order to get out of the British stranglehold. This was particularly irksome to the British since, firstly, although this was a province with as big a Muslim majority as 93 per cent it was not only not supporting the Muslim League but was opposed to the British; and secondly, the province was located at a point where Britain had planned to raise an Islamic shield in protection of its interests against the Soviet Union.

This explains why Britain was expending so much effort to crush the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. And why it was mustering in its support the Khwanin, Sirs, Khan Bahadurs and Khan Sahibs on one side, and the mercenary mullah's pirs, faqirs, akhunzadigan and head of madrassahs on the other. It prepared for the assault on the Khudai Khimatgars both from the temporal and the spiritual fronts.

The ultimate objective was of course simply to crush all opposition to Britain and to make the province safe for Muslim League so that the latter could be used in the promotion of Britain's imperialist interests both internally and in foreign relations.

When Germany had invaded Russia and kept advancing until Moscow was short way ahead, Britain felt free of the Soviet danger. It thought that the Soviets would no longer be in a position to threaten its rule in the Indian subcontinent. On the other side when it had begun losing its colonies one by one to the Japanese onslaught until Burma was gone and Calcutta came under daily raids from the air, it was safety in mending its fences on the west. The Pushtoon areas that it had separated from Afghanistan in 1893 by drawing the so-called Durand line could well fall into Japanese or German hands, so why not earn the Afghan good will by restoring them to Afghanistan while this was still possible, it thought. Thus a correspondence began with Kabul and a propaganda campaign was started in favour of Afghanistan through such people as Haji Saheb Turangzai's son, Bacha Gul, who had been an agent of

Cunningham. It is not without significance that even while Britain was still ruling the country, the Friday Khutbas in the mosques here were being read in the name of King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan.

However, when events took yet another turn, when Russia retaliated and chased the German forces right up to the borders of Berlin in the same way that Napoleon's armies were once made to beat a retreat, the British once again took alarm and began to worry about the Soviet threat in India. Surely if after a total devastation of its cities and annihilations of 20 million of its citizens the Soviets could turn back on their tormentors the way they had done they couldn't be taken lightly.

## Chapter 14

### Federation Defeated

AFTER the end of the War general election was held in Britain. The Conservatives lost and the Labour formed the government, with Clement Attlee replacing Winston Churchill as the prime minister.

Here in India too, Wavell announced an election. The hope was that following the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps and the end of the Simla Conference, the Muslim League would be able to do well at the polls.

It was also known in certain quarters that the British had almost decided to concede the demand for Pakistan and they were not prepared to accept any Muslim representative except through the Muslim League. Moreover, when it was decided to have separated rather than join electorate (Muslim voting for Muslim candidates, non-Muslims for non-Muslim) the way seemed cleared for the Muslim League. The result was every businessman, industrialist and capitalist rushed to the League; the Muslim princes became keen to extend their patronage to the League for their future safeguard; and the official began openly to work for that party. Wavell himself directed his Secretary of Interior "to impress on everyone that to back Congress at the expense of loyalists was not my policy". Thus is his view there were only two parties in fray, the Congress and the loyalists.

After the election, Britain sent out a three-member Cabinet Mission, comprising the secretary of State for India himself, Sir Stafford Cripps, and Mr. A.G. Alexander. They set to work immediately, and first resolved to bring Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru together. Wavell writes in his book:

*"Cripps and the other ministers thought that there ought to be a meeting between Jinnah and Nehru, not with any hope of agreement, but purely for publicity value, to show that we had our best to secure agreement". (Page-248).*

This again fully exposed the British dishonesty.

For the second Simla Conference they invited only the Congress and Muslim League members. The Congress delegation consisted of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabh Bahi Patel and Bacha Khan. Muslim League had Mr. Jinnah, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar. There were thus two Hindus and six Muslims at the Conference.

The beginning was not very auspicious. According to Wavell, when on arrival Maulana Azad stretched his hand to greet Mr. Jinnah, the latter remained motionless. He refused to shake hands with a fellow Muslim, though he was ready to greet the Kafir British deferentially and had had no objection in shaking hands with Hindus or with ladies.

Mr. Jinnah showed full consciousness of the fact that he had a crucial role. His refusal to agree had caused the collapse of the first Simla Conference. He was now even more firmly resolved on his stand. He wouldn't discuss anything short of Pakistan, while the Congress wasn't yet ready to contemplate partition of the country. This conference failed on the issue that the Muslim League wanted to be accepted as the exclusive representative body of the Muslims. The Cabinet Mission had given notice that if the Congress and the Muslim League did not agree on a settlement between themselves they, the Mission, would offer a proposal of their own. Accordingly, on May 19, 1946, they announced the following formula.

First, that India would be a federation with just three federal subjects: defence, external affairs and communications.

Second, that the federation units would constitute three groups:

- A- Made up of six provinces: Bombay, Madras, Bihar, Orisa, and U.P. & C.P.
- B- Comprising Punjab, Sind, NWFP and Baluchistan
- C- Comprising Bengal and Assam.

The newly elected provincial assemblies were to elect members to a central constituent assembly which would draw up a constitution for the federation and would also be the representative body working out with the British Government the details of independence and transfer of power.

The constitutions for the provinces were to be drawn up by the provincial assemblies. If the provinces concerned so wished, the different groups could combine and have a common constitution making body. Besides, every province was allowed the right of secession from its group after ten years.

If these proposals are closely examined it would seem that they had met the demands of both the parties. Congress desired the continuation of Indian unity, and this was guaranteed through a weak federal government. The Muslim League was suspicious of the Hindus' numerical superiority and so the zonal division took care of that fear. Provincial autonomy had also been ensured. In

fact except for the three federal subjects the formula virtually conceded Pakistan.

The Cabinet Mission also recommended that an interim government be set up at the centre headed by the Viceroy at the same time as elections are held to the constituent assembly.

One problem that the plan posed for the Muslim League was that its entire top leadership came from non-Muslim majority provinces, which would leave them in the grouping of the provinces. That included Mr. Jinnah and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan themselves. According to Wavell the first clarification that Muslim League sought was whether a person of one province could be voted to a constituent assembly of a different group of provinces. After that difficulty was removed these leaders, who belonged to Bombay and U.P., were elected from seats allocated to Bengal.

The distribution of constituent assembly seats among Muslims and non-Muslims of different provinces in the three groups was as follows:-

Group - A

	Non-Muslim	Muslims
Madras	45	4
Bombay	19	2
U.P.	47	8
Bihar	31	5
C.P.	16	1
Assam	9	0
Total	167	20

Group - B

Punjab (+4Sikh)	8	16
NWFP	0	3
Sindh	1	3
Total (+4Sikh)	9	22

Group - C

	Non-Muslim	Muslim
Bengal	27	33
Assam	7	3
Total	34	36

The Muslim League at once saw that the 34:36 ratios in Group C were a precarious one. If even one or two Muslim Members were at any time won over by the other side the balance would be upset. In Punjab also the 12 to 16 division did not make for a very comfortable position. There was another difficulty in this province. The election three was won by the Unionists and that party included Hindus and Sikhs as well as Muslims.

The Mission had made emphatically clear that any part that did not fully accept these proposals would be left out of the government. Muslim League knew that if it held out it would be left behind.

The Muslim League working committee held a meeting to consider the Plan, and announced its acceptance of it on June 6, 1946. This meant that it had accepted the idea of a federal India and had relinquished its demand for a sovereign Pakistan.

The League was however convinced that the Congress would reject the proposals. It would object to the composition of the groups and the arbitrary assigning of the provinces to one or the other group. But three weeks later, on June 25, 1946, the Congress too announced its acceptance. Wavell was among those most disappointed. His Breakdown Plan had been denied its chance. He writes about the day of the Congress announcement:

The worst day yet... Congress has accepted the statement of May 16... Now Cripps having assured me categorically that the Congress would never accept the statement....

Congress manoeuvres have now put us in a very difficult position, both with Mr. Jinnah and the formation of an interim government... unless we decide that the Congress is dishonest, as it is in fact, and refuse to regard this as acceptance....

We then discussed the Congress letter of acceptance, which is really dishonest acceptance, but it is so cleverly worded that it had to be regarded as an acceptance (*pp.* 303, 304, 305).

Wavell thus felt deeply frustrated. The Cabinet Mission, that included the minister concerned with India himself, had clipped his wings. They had assumed the initiative themselves. They were disregarding Wavell's counsels and taking their own decisions. But Wavell hadn't lost heart. Once the mission went back he would again be the master of himself. When the Muslim League abandoned the Pakistan demand under the take-it-or-leave-it ultimatum of

the Cabinet Mission, he was greatly upset. He declared that they would have an impact on the British Empire itself. He had been assuring the Muslim League that if it refused to reach an agreement, the government wouldn't be handed over to the Congress. But the Mission had adopted a wholly different position – that it would be the party not agreeing that would be left out and the scheme would go right ahead. That displeased him immensely and he even threatened to resign. According to Hodson, “The viceroy was not prepared to carry on if they gave way to Congress demands” (The Great Divide, P. 51). He kept insisting that the Congress had not accepted the proposals in good faith. He then suggested that he be allowed to form a government right away while the question of its political composition could be resolved afterwards. ‘But he was overruled on that too.

A distraught Wavell then wrote to Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Jawararlal Nehru on July 22, saying that the interim government would have 14 ministers – six of these from the Congress, including one Harijan; five from Muslim League, and a Sikh and two others would be nominated by the Viceroy.

The congress asked for certain assurance. First, that the cabinet should be independent and Viceroy should have no power of veto – in other words that the Viceroy should only act as a constitutional head.

The Congress also had reservations over the nomination of members of the minority communities, but, it seems that the real crunch came over the right of the smaller provinces. The Congress argued that within the three provincial groups, the bigger province with its larger number of votes would always outvote the smaller ones. Thus in Group C Assam could never have an independent opinion against Bengal, and in Group B Punjab would always outvote Sindh and NWFP together. The solution the Congress pressed for was that approval of each province should be considered necessary. The Muslim League however insisted on voting by groups.

Mr. Jinnah summoned an All-India council meeting of his party in Bombay to review the whole situation. The meeting passed a resolution on July 27, 1946, which complained that since the Congress had an absolute majority in the central constituent assembly it was in a position to take whatever decisions it liked. It went on to make a series of criticisms of the Cabinet Mission plan. The council was also said to have authorised its working committee to launch ‘direct action’ for the achievement of its political objectives. Mr. Jinnah apparently looked around him and noted a line-up of Nawabs, Nawabzadas, Khan Bahadurs, and Khan Sahibs etc. So it was also decided that the Muslim Leaguers would renounce all the British-awarded titles and decorations.

Mr. Jinnah objected to the composition of the interim government also. For one thing Muslim League had not been given equal representation with the Congress. Secondly, Congress had not been barred from nominating a Muslim from its side. Thirdly, communal voting—which is to say, an issue concerning a particular community would be decided only by representatives of that community—had not been provided for.

Who could have admitted these objections? Muslims constituted a population of 10 crore (100 Million) against 30 crore (300 Million) non-Muslims. Besides after the election Muslim League got only two provinces. Sindh and Punjab went to the Unionists and Nationalists. The rest were with the Congress. How could there be a parity, in the central cabinet? Similarly it was strange logic that the Congress should not nominate a Muslim—Which to say that just because Mr. Jinnah said so the Congress should accept that it was a party only of the non-Muslims! Besides, one with a genuine concern for Muslims should have welcomed a Muslim being made a minister from the other side as well.

The fact is, the Muslim League was in a quandary. After the first Simla Conference it had deduced from Wavell's attitude and assurances that Pakistan had been decided upon. Secondly, drawing the necessary inferences from the British declaration that they accepted only Muslim League as representative of the Muslims, the merchants, industrialists, princes and Muslim government officials had come out openly and unstintedly in support of the Muslim League expecting open-handed opportunities of profit, promotions etc, once Pakistan was formed. The Cabinet Mission Plan and the acceptance of the federal principle sent their hopes crashing. Thirdly, since 1940 Muslim League had talked of little outside the context of Pakistan. It had given it a completely religious, rather than merely political, halo. Now with the apparent relinquishment of that demand all that talk of two nations, all those passionate, speeches and endless debates had been forgotten. What had continually been dinned as a religious compulsion, as an immutability and suddenly been bargained away for political reasons. The Muslim League had fought the election on the demand for Pakistan. How could it face the electorate now when it seemed to have given up that vision of paradise that it had conjured up?

The fact was that Muslim League had not acquired any basic political, national or organisational strength of its own. The prominent people within it were almost all beneficiaries of British favours or awards. Its strength still essentially derived from the British support. The moment that support weakened it began wobbling.

The British too were now in a dilemma. They had spent the past several years arguing that since the various Indian communities were not agreed

amongst themselves they were obliged to keep power in their own hands. But now that plea was lost. The Cabinet Mission proposals had been accepted by both sides. The 'Breakdown Plan' was left in a limbo.

After the Cabinet Mission left for home, Lord Wavell set up a central government of officials to carry on as in the past and keep the two parties engaged in talks. But Whitehall was insisting that since the Muslim League had rejected the Plan, Congress also should be invited to form government. Wavell wrote back:

I would say that HMG have the fullest intention of handing over power to Indians... But they do not recognise Congress as representing all India, and have no intention of handing over power to Congress alone. (P 323)

It was a strange double-faced tactics. There were two measures, one for the congress and other for the Muslim League. The objection Britain rose against Congress it never leveled against the League. Experience had shown that whenever the British became firm Muslim League relented—even to the extent of abandoning the demand for Pakistan.

However, the constitutional deadlock created unrest in the country. Strikes began to be called. The rulers found it imperative to make up with one of the parties. Wavell called Jawaharlal Nehru to talk with him about interim government. He pressed for his reaching some accord with Muslim League also even suggested that its seats on the cabinet should be left vacant. He was helpless. He had to invite the Congress to form the ministry. He wrote:

I dislike the idea of having an interim government dominated by one party, but I feel I must try to get Congress in as soon as possible... Secretary of State Cable approving my proposed approach to Nehru. I don't like it. (PP 324.329).

Being a political organisation Muslim League had the right to adopt whatever policies it considered best to obtain its demands. But before deciding on "direct action" it ought to have pondered the basic difference between itself and the Congress movement. The latter had been directed at the independence of the country, whereas the Muslim League move was not really aimed against the British, but against the Congress and that too not the Congress as a national organisation but as a supposed body of the Hindus only.

All the Muslim League speeches, statements and propaganda had been so devised as if all the powers lay in the hands of the Hindus and it were they who were denying the Muslims their share in them. The British had barely figured in the League confrontation. It was natural therefor that the direct action would

pit the Indian communities themselves against each other. Thus, in logical consequence of the British policies of the past, Hindus and the Muslims were now to advance from political warning to the state of direct confrontation in a situation of virtual civil war.

August 16, 1946, was fixed as the day of direct action. There wasn't much that the Muslim League could do anywhere save Bengal, where it had its ministry with Mr. Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy as the chief minister. (In fact the assembly there had 25 British members, but for whose support the Muslim League could not have attained the necessary majority to stay in power.) The provincial government thus itself announced direct action, and declared complete holiday on that day so that the whole government machinery could take part in organising meetings and processions it was an odd situation that the local administration itself was setting out to create a law and order problem. If the action was to cause Hindu-Muslim friction, its fires were bound to spread to the rest of the country. What would then happen in the provinces where Muslims were in a minority? It was characteristic of Muslim League politics that the party was strongest in the non-Muslim majority areas. Who would gain by communal riots there? And who would lose?

The Bengal chief minister thus himself led the direct action in his province – and it had its predictable consequences. Riots started. The Muslims had lit the fire, the Hindus fanned it, and the Sikh caused widespread devastation. Muslims were in a minority in Calcutta. Sikhs had virtual control over the city's transport. Almost all taxis were run by them. According to Hodson:

*Whole streets were strewn with corpses – men, women and children of all communities – impossible to count, let alone identify. If the Muslims gave the provocations and started the holocaust, they were certainly its worst victims for they were in a minority in the city.*

Being a commercial centre, Calcutta was filled with migrant labour and trading classes from different parts of the country. It was especially a magnet for the people from the poor and backward neighbouring province of Bihar, a majority of who were non-Muslims. When this mix of migrants fled to their homes in the wake of the communal riots and carried tales – no doubt exaggerated in the telling – of arson, loot, rape and murder, the fire of hate and revenge spread to all corners and it caused an outburst of incredible barbarism.

It was obvious that such incidents could benefit no one except the British. Their communal oriented policies of a hundred years bore fruit. It caused Muslims and non-Muslims to slit each other's throats.

On the same August 16, 1946, While Mr. Suhrawardy was causing the outbreak of Hindu-Muslims riots in Calcutta, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru was proposing that if Mr. Jinnah co-operated an interim government could be set up comprising six ministers from the Congress, five from the Muslim League and one each from the minority communities of Sikhs, Christians, and Parsis. Mr. Jinnah was however firm on his stands that apart from the Muslim League nominees there would be no Muslim representative in the cabinet. Without this guarantee there could be no advance, he ruled.

This was the only issue on which the whole thing collapsed. It was strange logic. After all, Punjab too was a Muslim-majority province. NWFP had the largest Muslim concentration-of 93 per cent-and it was represented not by the Muslim League but by Khudai Khidmatgars. How could the Muslim League chief then claim the right to nominate a representative on behalf of this province?

The basic fact was that the Muslim League was being accorded its share-in fact more than its share-of seats at the centre. How could it then place a binding on the Congress that the latter should name no Muslim in its own quota of seats? If the Congress had claimed that since Muslim League had a majority only in two provinces, Bengal and Sindh, it could not represent Punjab and NWFP, what would Mr. Jinnah's legal mind have said to that? If one looks at the situation more closely it would appear that Mr. Jinnah's principal focus was not the Muslims as such but the establishing of Muslim League's exclusive domain over all Muslims.

The person most worried was the Viceroy, Lord Wavell. His 'Breakdown Plan' was coming to grief. He first pressed on Mr. Nehru to leave five of the cabinet seats vacant against the possibility of Muslim League joining in later. But when Nehru refused on the basis that it had been a condition of the proposal that which over party did not accept it would have to stay out. Wavell himself set out to argue with Mr. Jinnah and wasn't rested until Mr. Jinnah left no door open.

Having failed in this, Wavell called over Gandhiji and Jawarharlal in a bid to create new snags in the way of Congress setting up a ministry by itself. The government of India, however, reprimanded him against these efforts and thus on August 24, 1946 the first interim government of India was announced under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Jawaharlal left two Muslim seats vacant in his cabinet for the representatives of the two Muslim League provinces, Bengal and Sindh. Oddly, in his broadcast

of that day, even as the new cabinet was being announced, Wavell again urged the Muslim League to join in and offered it the original terms.

The setting up of the Congress ministry caused Wavell to virtually lose all restraint. He openly began to argue with his government on Muslim League's behalf. The Secretary of State Lord Pathick Lawrence pulled him up several times, but he persisted in the special pleadings. One manifestation of this was his procrastination in calling the constituent assembly into session. The Congress kept pointing out that after the formation of the interim government it became obligatory for him to convene the elected assembly, but without effect. Wavell knew that once that was done the Cabinet Mission Plan would have been completed and it would have become unavoidable to transfer all power to that assembly, it would have also meant Britain's putting the final seal on the country's federal unified structure. As Hodson wrote:

*"The Viceroy, who was being pressed by the Congress to call the constituent assembly, felt that he would rather lose their cooperation than go ahead with constitution-making on a one-party basis." (P-169).*

Wavell's concern was not the interests of the Muslims or the Muslim League. His fixed conviction was that the good of Britain and the British Crown lay in the division of India, and he was resolved on pursuing that course as long as he could help it. His effort now was to create a political crisis that would lead to a constitutional stalemate. And then, Whitehall would be forced to ask him to proceed with his 'Breakdown Plan'. The subcommittee he had set up to study the plan—which had proposed that if the British were forced to leave India they would later return to the Muslim province—sent it to the British government. The reaction of the authorities in London was strong. As Wavell recorded:

*The proposals greatly perturbed them and they concluded that they could not justify to parliament so drastic a policy and that on this ground alone his plan was impossible. They said that if withdrawal from India became unavoidable than withdrawal should take place from India as a whole. (P-345).*

However, Wavell was not the one to admit defeat. He continued working on the two alternatives, namely, that the Muslim League should somehow be brought into the interim government, and that the convening of the constituent assembly should continue to be postponed for as long as possible. In other words his effort was that what the Cabinet Mission had offered to the Indians should not reach them. London kept pressing on him to move forward, but he kept putting it off.

However, if on one side Wavell was worried that the Muslim League might's slip out of the hands, on the other League hierarchy of feudal and capitalists and British-honored grandees felt concerned about losing all the favours it had enjoyed. The party largely comprised people who looked to their personal interests. That had been the reason for their trying to remain on the right side of the colonial rulers. Such people have no principle: their loyalty is only to those who hold power. The danger now was, that if these people became disillusioned with the British and the Muslim League while the Congress held power, there was the great likelihood of their crossing over and going and setting on the Congress' ministerial benches.

So when Wavell once again invited Mr. Jinnah to press him to join the government he noted that "Jinnah was less aggressive and aggrieved than I had expected had expected and easier to talk to" (P-251). However, Wavell's action was open to question. When the Congress had agreed to form an interim government it was decided that the viceroy would not interfere in cabinet matters. The latter had even been snubbed by London and told that since Muslim League had withdrawn its acceptance of the May 16 proposal it could not now be brought into the Cabinet. Wavell had also been told that if any further negotiations were to be done with Mr. Jinnah that was now the responsibility not of the Viceroy but of the head of the interim government, Nehru. Accordingly, Nehru later raised the issue with the British cabinet. As Wavell noted, he "complained that the approach to the Muslim League to join the interim government had been made over his head" (P-390).

The upshot of it all, however, was that Muslim League agreed to withdraw its rejection of the May 16 plan and accepted the principle of unified, federal nationhood, and on the basis to join the interim government. Thus, in order to get the ministries the Muslim League made a non-too-dignified retraction, and the Pakistan demand too again fell by the wayside. Also the bone of prolonged unsavoury contention, that no Muslim could be nominated to the centre except by the Muslim League, was also unceremoniously buried. Barrister Asif Ali remained on the central cabinet from the Congress side. Although, at the same time, the Muslim League too made a principled move - among its five nominees for the ministries posts it included a Hindu. Mr. Jogindernath Mandal was actually a Harijan chosen to represent the Muslim League.

Thus on October 15, 1946, Muslim League joined the interim government. Three members of the Nehru cabinet, Sarat Chandra Bose, Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, and Syed Ali Zaheer, made way for them by resigning their seats. The new Muslim League ministers included Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan, Mr. I.I. Chundrigar, Raja Ghazanfar Ali and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar.

Being a political organisation Muslim League had the right to adopt whatever policies it considered best to obtain its demands. But before deciding on “direct action” it ought to have pondered the basic difference between itself and the Congress movement. The latter had been directed at the independence of the country, whereas the Muslim League move was not really aimed against the British, but against the Congress and that too not the Congress as a national organisation but as a supposed body of the Hindus only.

All the Muslim League speeches, statements and propaganda had been so devised as if all the powers lay in the hands of the Hindus and it were they who were denying the Muslims their share in them. The British had barely figured in the League confrontation. It was natural therefor that the direct action would pit the Indian communities themselves against each other. Thus, in logical consequence of the British policies of the past, Hindus and the Muslims were now to advance from political warning to the state of direct confrontation in a situation of virtual civil war.

August 16, 1946, was fixed as the day of direct action. There wasn't much that the Muslim League could do anywhere save Bengal, where it had its ministry with Mr. Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy as the chief minister. (In fact the assembly there had 25 British members, but for whose support the Muslim League could not have attained the necessary majority to stay in power.) The provincial government thus itself announced direct action, and declared complete holiday on that day so that the whole government machinery could take part in organising meetings and processions it was an odd situation that the local administration itself was setting out to create a law and order problem. If the action was to cause Hindu-Muslim friction, its fires were bound to spread to the rest of the country. What would then happen in the provinces where Muslims were in a minority? It was characteristic of Muslim League politics that the party was strongest in the non-Muslim majority areas. Who would gain by communal riots there? And who would lose?

The Bengal chief minister thus himself led the direct action in his province – and it had its predictable consequences. Riots started. The Muslims had lit the fire, the Hindus fanned it, and the Sikh caused widespread devastation. Muslims were in a minority in Calcutta. Sikhs had virtual control over the city's transport. Almost all taxis were run by them. According to Hodson:

Whole streets were strewn with corpses – men, women and children of all communities – impossible to count, let alone identify. If the Muslims gave the provocations and started the holocaust, they were certainly its worst victims for they were in a minority in the city.

Being a commercial centre, Calcutta was filled with migrant labour and trading classes from different parts of the country. It was especially a magnet for the people from the poor and backward neighbouring province of Bihar, a majority of who were non-Muslims. When this mix of migrants fled to their homes in the wake of the communal riots and carried tales – no doubt exaggerated in the telling – of arson, loot, rape and murder, the fire of hate and revenge spread to all corners and it caused an outburst of incredible barbarism.

It was obvious that such incidents could benefit no one except the British. Their communal oriented policies of a hundred years bore fruit. It caused Muslims and non-Muslims to slit each other's throats.

On the same August 16, 1946, While Mr. Suhrawardy was causing the outbreak of Hindu-Muslims riots in Calcutta, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru was proposing that if Mr. Jinnah co-operated an interim government could be set up comprising six ministers from the Congress, five from the Muslim League and one each from the minority communities of Sikhs, Christians, and Parsis. Mr. Jinnah was however firm on his stands that apart from the Muslim League nominees there would be no Muslim representative in the cabinet. Without this guarantee there could be no advance, he ruled.

This was the only issue on which the whole thing collapsed. It was strange logic. After all, Punjab too was a Muslim-majority province. NWFP had the largest Muslim concentration-of 93 per cent-and it was represented not by the Muslim League but by Khudai Khidmatgars. How could the Muslim League chief then claim the right to nominate a representative on behalf of this province?

The basic fact was that the Muslim League was being accorded its share-in fact more than its share-of seats at the centre. How could it then place a binding on the Congress that the latter should name no Muslim in its own quota of seats? If the Congress had claimed that since Muslim League had a majority only in two provinces, Bengal and Sindh, it could not represent Punjab and NWFP, what would Mr. Jinnah's legal mind have said to that? If one looks at the situation more closely it would appear that Mr. Jinnah's principal focus was not the Muslims as such but the establishing of Muslim League's exclusive domain over all Muslims.

The person most worried was the Viceroy, Lord Wavell. His 'Breakdown Plan' was coming to grief. He first pressed on Mr. Nehru to leave five of the cabinet seats vacant against the possibility of Muslim League joining in later. But when Nehru refused on the basis that it had been a condition of the proposal that which over party did not accept it would have to stay out. Wavell

himself set out to argue with Mr. Jinnah and wasn't rested until Mr. Jinnah left no door open.

Having failed in this, Wavell called over Gandhiji and Jawarharlal in a bid to create new snags in the way of Congress setting up a ministry by itself. The government of India, however, reprimanded him against these efforts and thus on August 24, 1946 the first interim government of India was announced under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Jawaharlal left two Muslim seats vacant in his cabinet for the representatives of the two Muslim League provinces, Bengal and Sindh. Oddly, in his broadcast of that day, even as the new cabinet was being announced, Wavell again urged the Muslim League to join in and offered it the original terms.

The setting up of the Congress ministry caused Wavell to virtually lose all restraint. He openly began to argue with his government on Muslim League's behalf. The Secretary of State Lord Pathick Lawrence pulled him up several times, but he persisted in the special pleadings. One manifestation of this was his procrastination in calling the constituent assembly into session. The Congress kept pointing out that after the formation of the interim government it became obligatory for him to convene the elected assembly, but without effect. Wavell knew that once that was done the Cabinet Mission Plan would have been completed and it would have become unavoidable to transfer all power to that assembly, it would have also meant Britain's putting the final seal on the country's federal unified structure. As Hodson wrote:

"The Viceroy, who was being pressed by the Congress to call the constituent assembly, felt that he would rather lose their cooperation than go ahead with constitution-making on a one-party basis." (P-169).

Wavell's concern was not the interests of the Muslims or the Muslim League. His fixed conviction was that the good of Britain and the British Crown lay in the division of India, and he was resolved on pursuing that course as long as he could help it. His effort now was to create a political crisis that would lead to a constitutional stalemate. And then, Whitehall would be forced to ask him to proceed with his 'Breakdown Plan'. The subcommittee he had set up to study the plan—which had proposed that if the British were forced to leave India they would later return to the Muslim province—sent it to the British government. The reaction of the authorities in London was strong. As Wavell recorded:

The proposals greatly perturbed them and they concluded that they could not justify to parliament so drastic a policy and that on this ground alone his

plan was impossible. They said that if withdrawal from India became unavoidable than withdrawal should take place from India as a whole. (P-345).

However, Wavell was not the one to admit defeat. He continued working on the two alternatives, namely, that the Muslim League should somehow be brought into the interim government, and that the convening of the constituent assembly should continue to be postponed for as long as possible. In other words his effort was that what the Cabinet Mission had offered to the Indians should not reach them. London kept pressing on him to move forward, but he kept putting it off.

However, if on one side Wavell was worried that the Muslim League might's slip out of the hands, on the other League hierarchy of feudal and capitalists and British-honored grandees felt concerned about losing all the favours it had enjoyed. The party largely comprised people who looked to their personal interests. That had been the reason for their trying to remain on the right side of the colonial rulers. Such people have no principle: their loyalty is only to those who hold power. The danger now was, that if these people became disillusioned with the British and the Muslim League while the Congress held power, there was the great likelihood of their crossing over and going and setting on the Congress' ministerial benches.

So when Wavell once again invited Mr. Jinnah to press him to join the government he noted that "Jinnah was less aggressive and aggrieved than I had expected had expected and easier to talk to" (P-251). However, Wavell's action was open to question. When the Congress had agreed to form an interim government it was decided that the viceroy would not interfere in cabinet matters. The latter had even been snubbed by London and told that since Muslim League had withdrawn its acceptance of the May 16 proposal it could not now be brought into the Cabinet. Wavell had also been told that if any further negotiations were to be done with Mr. Jinnah that was now the responsibility not of the Viceroy but of the head of the interim government, Nehru. Accordingly, Nehru later raised the issue with the British cabinet. As Wavell noted, he "complained that the approach to the Muslim League to join the interim government had been made over his head" (P-390).

The upshot of it all, however, was that Muslim League agreed to withdraw its rejection of the May 16 plan and accepted the principle of unified, federal nationhood, and on the basis to join the interim government. Thus, in order to get the ministries the Muslim League made a non-too-dignified retraction, and the Pakistan demand too again fell by the wayside. Also the bone of prolonged unsavoury contention, that no Muslim could be nominated to the centre except by the Muslim League, was also unceremoniously buried. Barrister Asif Ali remained on the central cabinet from the Congress side. Although, at the same

time, the Muslim League too made a principled move - among its five nominees for the ministries posts it included a Hindu. Mr. Jogindernath Mandal was actually a Harijan chosen to represent the Muslim League.

Thus on October 15, 1946, Muslim League joined the interim government. Three members of the Nehru cabinet, Sarat Chandra Bose, Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, and Syed Ali Zaheer, made way for them by resigning their seats. The new Muslim League ministers included Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan, Mr. I.I. Chundrigar, Raja Ghazanfar Ali and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar.

## Chapter 15

### Wavell's Bid for 'A Bit of India'

THE Viceroy was so keen on Muslim League's joining the interim government that he did not even press the latter to fulfil its commitment to withdraw its July decision against the Cabinet Mission Plan about a united India. That had been a pre-condition to League's entry into the cabinet. Wavell had assured Nehru that Muslim League would presently call a meeting of its working committee for the purpose. As Hodson writes.

*Jinnah had undertaken..... to call a meeting of the Muslim League Council and to reverse its decision against the statement of May 16. The working committee was not summoned until more than three months later, and then it declined to call the League council to reconsider the decision of July 1946. (P. 174).*

Another oddity was that while the League had joined the government it was still involved in its direct action against the government! The viceroy didn't consider it necessary to point to the anomaly of the situation and ask the League to rescind its anti-government call.

On the congress' suggestion of convening the constituent assembly, Mr. Jinnah promptly came in with the negative view. He wanted the interim government to settle down first. The viceroy too no doubt wanted a respite to compose him self. He was now in the happy position of not having to face the congress directly. He could fire his shots from the League's shoulders.

The more pressing tragedy was that while the congress and the Muslim League were busy sharing out ministerial posts, the country was burning in the flames lighted by the 'direct action'. In the multiplicity of minor riots, a major Hindu-Muslim flare-up occurred in October in Noakhali in eastern Bengal; Thousands of innocents were killed or wounded. If the Hindus were under siege in Bengal, neighbouring Bihar saw massacre of Muslim men, women and children. The barbarity, which was carried through November, was devastating. The whole country got caught up in the wave of communal hatred.

This suited the British books. Wavell calculated that the more the communal lines hardened the greater would be India's need for British presence. Wavell's own plan of Britain winding up and later coming back to The Muslim parts of the country was also Best served by these events, which Furthermore tended to prove the League Thesis that it was no longer possible for the Hindus and

Muslims to live together in the Same house, of which the inevitable answer Was its partition into two parts.

The congress proposed that the differences between the two parties with regard to the grouping system to the May 17 plan could be referred to the federal court for adjudication and resolution. But Mr. Jinnah merely wanted acceptance of his own point of view, and the viceroy went along. As the latter him self recorded:

*“They (the congress) were apparently prepared to agree that the question of whether the sections make the constitution for the provinces, or the provinces make their own constitutions should be referred to the federal court, but this Jinnah would not accept (p. 371).*

Meanwhile the spread of the communal fire was causing concern to the congress and the central government. Nehru told Wavell in very strong terms that while the riots were spreading; Muslim League was sitting in the interim government agitating for equal representation and pursuing the politics of ‘direct action against the government. The League should be finally told, urged Nehru that it should either declare acceptance of the May 16 plan and join the constituent assembly or leave the government. If it doesn’t do either then the congress would have no choice but to resign itself and hand over the country to Wavell and the Muslim League. The congress also urged the viceroy to call a session of the constituent assembly.

Wavell was thus left with no option. On Nov. 20, 1946, he summoned the assembly for December 9, 1946. Mr. Jinnah immediately announced that Muslim League would not participate. He also came out with the declaration that Muslim League was reverting to its rejection of the cabinet mission plan. This placed Wavell in a difficult position, for no justification was now left for the League to continue in the interim government. But, oddly, he did not consider it necessary to point out to the League that it had entered the interim government on the clear undertaking that it would withdraw its repudiation of the cabinet plan.

What Wavell did was to compile a detailed report on the conditions of the country for the benefit of the British government. The operative part, in Hodson’s view, was: “If he agreed and they (H.M. Government) surrendered to the congress point of view, the result would be something approaching civil war, threatening the break up of Indian army and chaos throughout India,” (p.176).

His recommendation was that two representatives each from the congress and the Muslim League should go and have the issues directly resolved with the British government.

Mr. Jinnah and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan accepted the invitation but the congress declined. The latter argued that Britain's concern wasn't an equitable resolution of the issue: It was playing with the future of the country just in order to please one of the parties. The British prime Minister made a personal appeal to Mr. Nehru to come, and the latter then agreed, although Mr. Vallabh Bhai Patel still held back. An interesting side was that Mr. Jinnah there upon insisted that he too should hear directly from British prime Minister. According to Wavell, "perhaps he thought that as Nehru has had a personal appeal from the P.M. it behooved his dignity to have one too." (p. 385)

Wavell's concern in all this was of course that Muslim League should somehow be kept within the interim government despite the fact that Mr. Jinnah's repudiation of the cabinet Mission had knocked all bases out of it. But Churchill's last advice had kept echoing in his ears. The 'British prime Minister had sent him off on his assignment in India with the parting counsel: "keep a bit of India". And that is what he had been trying to do, even in the conception of his "Breakdown plan".

The party leaders along with Wavell reached London on December 3. Wavell immediately presented his detailed note to the cabinet. He concluded on the point that there was no possibility of reaching any compromise with the congress and that the imminent result would be a confrontation.

The only course to avoid it, wrote Wavell, was to act on his Breakdown plan. In other words, that the majority provinces of the congress should be granted independence and the British along with their army, their bureaucracy and their families should shift to the Muslim majority areas. The congress leaders, he said, "are not ready yet for an open breach with HMG. Such a breach is however a possibility and we can only face it if we have a definite policy and a breakdown plan" (p. 388)

It seemed obvious that Wavell had brought the congress and Muslim League leaders to London only in order to get his own scheme decided upon by the government and then make these leaders accept it. He expected easy acceptance by the government since it aimed at saving a part of India for the British, a part, too, that could block the Soviets on one side and contain China on the other. This way independent India could also be kept under control. The Muslim League appeared willing and the problem seemed more or less resolved since there could be no reconciliation between the Muslim League and the congress.

In the event, however, the conference ended in failure. The leaders departed. Wavell intended to stay behind to try and push his scheme with the HMG but the latter sent him back too. He left his secretary George Abell behind so that he could canvass his proposal with the government and keeps him informed. Eventually, however, on January 8, 1947.

*“George Abell telegraphed to say that the cabinet at home has gone back completely and refuses to have anything to do with the Breakdown plan, so he is returning at once. Wavell, p. 408”.*

What the British government did as a result of the conference was to accept the Muslim League point of view with regard to the grouping system. The provinces' individual was ended and it was ruled that they would take decisions collectively within their groups. In effect thus, the preponderant Punjab became the will of Group-B, with Sindh and NWFP tagging along all its decision willingly or unwillingly. Similarly, in the east the powers were delivered to Bengal with Assam an ineffective partner.

As scheduled, the constituent assembly of the country met on December 9 Muslim League did not participate. The session passed an objectives resolution which laid down the directive principles and the policy with regard to the provinces and the princely states. Except for three federal subjects all powers were transferred to the provinces. Committees were set up for the different departments and vacancies were left in them for the Muslim League.

On January 5, 1947 the All-India congress Committee held its meeting. It declared acceptance of the British government's announcement of transferring powers to the groups rather than to the provinces.

This created a new snag for the Muslim League. Its objection over the groups vs. the provinces was also resolved. The party called its working committee meeting on January 29, 1947 in Karachi. Lengthy grievances, doubts and suspicions were retailed and the final decision announced. It was said that since the congress had not accepted the cabinet Mission plan with an open heart, the Muslim League was no longer willing to approve it. Accordingly, went on the Muslim League declaration, since the plan had failed, the government should immediately bring to an end all actions taken in pursuance to it and should dissolve the country's elected constituent assembly.

It remained as an anomaly that while the league had rejected the cabinet Mission plan, refused to sit in the national constituent assembly, demanding that it be dissolved, and called for all actions springing from the plan to be

declared null and void, and yet it was unabashedly occupying its seats in the interim government which too was a product of that plan. Lord Wavell too kept his eyes closed to the contradiction in the situation.

## Chapter 16

### Subduing Punjab and NWFP

FOLLOWING the Muslim League's demands, while it was occupying seats in the interim government, that the elected constituent assembly should be dissolved and all steps taken in pursuance of the Cabinet Mission Plan should be reversed, the Congress asked that the Viceroy immediately call for the resignation of the Muslim League minister or it would be compelled to review its own position.

The British government summoned the Viceroy to London for consultation. The latter, busy pursuing his own designs, kept ignoring the calls, until on February 4, 1947, a special envoy from the British Prime Minister delivered him his marching orders. He was to be replaced by Lord Louis Mountbatten. The appointment was also accompanied by the historic announcement that the HMG had decided that by June 1948 all power would be transferred to India and the British government would divest itself of all responsibility.

As to whom would be the recipient of the power, there were two alternatives, if the existing elected constituent assembly came to be accepted by all parties, well and good. Then Britain could transfer power to it. But if there was no agreement on one assembly and one constitution then Britain would have to think whether the transfer should take place to one government or to the various existing provincial governments, or devise some other means acceptable to and in the best interest of the people of India.

The Muslim League apparently had some foreknowledge of the British thinking, which was why it sought to foreclose the first option by refusing from the beginning to participate in the joint central assembly. That seemed to be the first essential step to wards Pakistan.

The alternative of handing over power to the provinces had been the British hint to the League that where it wanted to set up Pakistan it should try and assume political control there. In other words, if it wanted Punjab and NWFP it had to contrive and replace the Unionists and the Khudai Khidmatgars there.

The British announcement came on February 20, 1947. After that the Muslim League and its friends started concentrating on those two provinces. Its objective was to somehow set up its own governments there. It had lost the elections in both the places, so the only way it could now insinuate itself there was through some unconstitutional, undemocratic means. Punjab was less of a

problem since any outbreak of communal riots would scare the Hindus and Sikhs away. The problem was in the Frontier, where even if the non-Muslims were some who dispensed with, the majority among the Muslims would still remain with the Khudai Khidmatgars.

Wavell during his viceroy ship had been trying to convince his government that the only course serving British interest lay in his Breakdown Plan. Sir Olaf Caroe, now the governor of NWFP, was in Wavell's time the foreign Secretary in New Delhi. And the foreign Secretary under the British rule in India had but one concern; he had to keep his eye on the country's north-west frontiers with Afghanistan. For, the British always thought that the only danger to them came from the direction of Russia. Their unwavering objective was to keep Russia confined to that side of River Amu, within its own geographical and ideological boundaries.

Since Russia had only just suffered heavily in they were with Nazi Germany the only fear from it remained ideological. And since the British were using Islam for their defence against the Soviet revolution their problems as that the province and all its passes that provided a link between India and USSR through Afghanistan were not fully under British's way. The Wavell Plan too could not have been implemented until this Muslim majority province situated in the most sensitive part of the country could not be subdued. Every effort was made during the election, but the province remained outside Britain's control. Besides, the Khudai Khidmatgar movement had created such political awakening in these parts that all the titled proteges and stooges of the British had been made to flee the political field, and the broad masses, the poor and the deprived ones, had become politically more effective.

However it was important for the Muslim League to gain control of this province. The elections and the communal riots having failed to change the situation on the ground, another rather dangerous scheme was devised, the details of which have been recorded by Sikander Mirza in his autobiography.

Sikander Mirza had been transferred from NWFP and was at that time joint secretary in the defended department in New Delhi. He writes that he received a telephone call from Mr. Jinnah some time in February 1947, who asked him to come and see him. The Quaid began by asking him if he accepted the Quaid as the leader of the Muslim, and whether he would do what he, the Quaid, asked him. Sikander Mirza writes, he could only say yes. Recalling that meeting with the Quaid, Mirza continues:-

He then went on to say that he was afraid he was not going to get Pakistan unless some serious trouble was created, and the best place to do this way

NWFP Province with the tribes. In his view it was important to demonstrate Muslim anger before the British handed the country over to Congress. If Pakistan was not conceded by negotiations we must fight...He wanted me to resign from service, go into the tribal territory and start a jihad.

This is worth pondering. It was February 1947. Wavell had been dismissed. The British government had announced that it would hand over all powers to the Indian by June 1948; Wevall's going had caused legitimate concern for Mr. Jinnah. He didn't know what would happen next. Communal riots were going on. He thought of something very dangerous, and that too for NWFP. He bluntly told Sikander Mirza, in the latter's words, that "according to his information I could achieve this if I really tried."

This shows how Mr. Jinnah has established contacts with government officials, and also that how the employees of the British rulers could arrange "jihad" for him. Sikander Mirza writes that he reflected on the various aspects of the proposals. As he understood:

This could only take the form of raids on border villages... yet I decided to fall in with Quaid-I-Azam's plan... I have no desire to be branded as a man who was found wanting when the time for action came...With the liberal expenditure of money I would be able to cause some trouble in Waziristan, Tirah, and Mohmand country. I gave my estimate of money as one crore (10 Million)....

There had also to be some formal excuse for his suddenly leaving Delhi.

Mr. Jinnah had already anticipated these requirements. He had the cover and the money ready. The cover was an appointment with H.H. the Khan of Kalat and the treasure was provided by H.H, the Nawab of Bhopal.

Sikandar Mirza went to see the Nawab of Bhopal the same day, and was immediately handed a sum of Rs. 20,000. According to him, Mr. Jinnah had also given him the assurance that if anything untoward happened to him, his family would be taken care of.

Mirza recalls that he immediately got to work. He sent for some of his trusted men from Dera Ismail Khan, Peshawar and the tribal areas. After long discussions a plan was drawn up. He was to collect all the people he knew well and then initiate action in Waziristan, Tirah and Mohmand. However, before he could proceed any further the circumstances changed.

Early in May, the Quaid-i-Azam sent for me again and told me that as Pakistan would be conceded, the Plan would be abandoned.

Mirza goes on to record his opinion about the Quaid. He says that he was the kind of leader who made his own decisions and accepted no counsels. He quoted the Quaid himself on this after Pakistan was born and the Quaid was its governor general. He had made bold to suggest to the Quaid:

That we must try to be considerate to the Muslim League as after all they had brought in Pakistan. Jinnah immediately replied: "Who told you that Muslim League brought in Pakistan? I brought in Pakistan - with my Stenographer.

The whole episode thus shows how top-most employees of the British government were ready to render assistance to the Muslim League; and also that how having failed through constitutional and democratic means Mr. Jinnah was prepared to initiate a jihad against India just in order to bring down the Khudai Khidmatgar government in NWFP. Thirdly, it is also obvious how the government functionaries had maintained liasion with the tribal areas and their leaders, to the extent that the latter were ready to wage a war on their own country at these officials bidding. Also, how the princely states were generous in giving assistance - in crores (in Million) of those days!

Toppling the Unionist ministry of Khizar Hayat in Punjab was much less difficult a proposition. If on one side Muslim league started a civil disobedience movement against it, on the other communal fire broke out. Arms and ammunition flowed inform the Frontier and the tribal areas. Muslim Leaguers' going to jail following the civil disobedience was a joke in itself. The Punjab Muslim League President Mian Iftikharuddin, for instance, used to get the choicest food from home. It used to be like a feast. He was even permitted to go and attend parties, and even to spend the nights at home!

In short, if on the one hand the communal riots removed the Hindu and Sikh members of the assembly out of the way, on the other the civil disobedience compelled Khizar Hayat to tender his cabinet's resignation on March 3, 1947. Since the Muslim League was in no position to form the government itself the powers to rule were seized by the British Governor himself under Section 93.

The Hindus and Sikh soon realised that the British were trying to pave the ground for the Muslim League to come in the province. They started protest demonstrations. That further inflamed passions, and the communal loot, arson, killing and abduction of women soon assumed horrendous proportions.

NWFP, remained the only province out of the Muslim League's wings. Here again there was communal rioting and thousands from the tribal areas took place. The point sought to be made was, if the province government was not capable of maintaining peace it should resign. If on the other hand, it resorted to strong measure outcry could be raised in the press and from the platform that it was perpetrating tyranny on the Muslim population of the province.

The difference between the Punjab and the Frontier was that the Unionists were a ministerial party, they did not have political roots; but here in the Frontier those in control were Khudai Khidmatgars who were a bold, disciplined organisation.

Muslim League tried all the tricks in its bag to dislodge the latter. Top leaders from the rest of India were sent on tour to the Frontier. Real and imaginary tales of Hindu-inspired riots were spread—especially those of Bihar—in order to inflame Pushtoon sentiment. There was no limit to the money poured in. And student delegation came out from Punjab and Aligarh.

A military officer from Punjab who resigned from the service came stalking the province and triggering disruptive activities. Until now Khudai Khidmatgars were maintaining exemplary self-control, carrying on their brave campaign against the British on the principles of non-violence. But the Muslim League agitation now led to bomb explosions and even to the killing of non-Muslims. There were recorded confessions in this respect, cited by Erland Janson in his book *India, Pakistan or Pukhtoonistan*.

For instance, the chief instructor of the Hangu Police School used to supply bomb and give guidance for their use. Alam Khan admitted to Janson that he was well paid for doing this by Pir of Manki Sharif. All the government officials in the province were also aiding the Muslim League in the agitation. The President of the students federation told Janson that a Captain in the Police Faizullah Khan, kept a close liaison with them, and whatever decisions were taken about the agitation at official meetings were promptly disclosed to them. During public demonstrations the police took care that their lathis fell everywhere except on their persons.

The Muslim Leaguers sent to jail for civil disobedience and violation of Section 144, were sentenced for three months, but they were mostly free to roam the streets during the day and even spend the nights at home. A friend borrowed my car for a night. Later it transpired that a friend of his, a Khan from Mardan, used the cart to go home for the night and return to the Jail the next morning.

About that time, the NWFP assembly had a session. Maj. Khurshid Anwar arranged that a procession should be taken to the assembly building and it should create such a racket that the session would be disrupted. The procession included students and followers of Pir of Manki. Khurshid Anwar asked the students to stay behind and let the others be in front. The police indicated to them the limit beyond which they should not proceed. But the students pushed the Pir's followers beyond the line where upon police opened fire, and some got hit. Khurshid Anwar said, the job was done, all could now disperse.

The mission is completed. He wanted to shed Muslim blood, now it has been done - *Erland Janson. P-169.*

Miscreants like Khurshid Anwar kept themselves active throughout the province, untouched by government agencies. Hindus and Sikhs were harassed, robbed and even killed. The British were clearly following a partisan policy. The British governor, Sir Olaf Caroe, and his subordinates were keen that somehow the ministry should be made to collapse.

About Caroe, the Viceroy, Wavell, had himself written; "Caroe himself has never yet reconciled to the idea of our leaving India" (P.329). Caroe was still hoping for Wavell's Breakdown Plan to come through, and NWFP, with the tribal on one side and Afghanistan and the Soviets on the other, was a crucial link in that plan. The British here were concerned wholly about the interests of the throne and the crown. They felt that Muslim League could be an instrument in the promotion of those interests.

When the British saw that neither through communal riots nor through the Muslim League's campaign of civil disobedience could the ministry of Dr. Khan Sahib be dislodged, they turned to yet another game plan.

## Chapter 17

### Mountbatten Gets to Work

THE new Viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, plunged into political negotiations soon after his arrival. His first meeting was with Gandhiji, the latter suggested that since Mr. Jinnah had reservations about the interim government it could be dissolved, and Mr. Jinnah given the powers to form a new government in its place and include, whoever he likes in the Cabinet. The purpose, and Gandhi, was to show to the world that we Hindus and Muslim have resolved our issues among ourselves and are ready to co-operate with each other to begin the life together in a new independent India. Gandhi asked in return that on the formation of Mr. Jinnah's government the British responsibility would be to try and safeguard the majority community's interests!

When Mountbatten next met Mr. Jinnah and told him about Gandhiji's proposal, Mr. Jinnah replied that the malaise had now gone so deep that there was no cure of it short of surgery.

There was reason for this stiffness in the Muslim League leader's tone. The departure of Wavell had caused apprehensions in his mind that the chances of the British granting Pakistan had receded, but later a new development had taken place. It will be recalled that when serious differences had occurred between the British and the Congress and the latter felt constrained to launch a movement, the Americans had kept pressing on the British to find a way for political settlement. The U.S had thus started taking deep interest in Indian affairs.

The same interest led to two senior Americans calling on Mr. Jinnah at his residence on May 1, 1947. One was Ronald A. Hare, head of the division of south Asian affairs, and the other Thomas E. Weil, second secretary of the U.S. embassy in India. The details of this meeting were sent the next day by the U.S. charge d'affaires to his Secretary of State in Washington.

#### **According to this account Mr. Jinnah:**

*Sought to impress on his visitors that the emergence of an independent, sovereign Pakistan would be in consonance with American interests. Pakistan would be a Muslim country. Muslim countries stand together against Russian aggression. In that endeavour they would look to the United States for assistance, he added. –*

*Vinkataraman. American Role in Pakistan*

This exactly coincided with the longstanding British scheme to use Islam as a halter round the Soviet neck. The other danger that Mr. Jinnah pointed out to these Americans—that the Congress wouldn't be ready to protect Western interests in the Middle East and the Gulf—also squared with the thinking of the colonial power.

Jinnah coupled the danger of "Russian aggression" with another menace that Muslim nations might confront. That was "Hindu imperialism". The establishment of Pakistan was essential to prevent the expansion of Hindu imperialism to the Middle East, he emphasised.

– *Vinkataraman. Op. Cit.*

The idea was conveyed that it was vital for American's own interest in the region that India was divided and a Muslim State established there. It appears that a commitment on Pakistan had been reached in this meeting since it will be remembered that Mr. Jinnah had later in the same month, in May, told Sikandar Mirza that he might drop the scheme of mounting a tribal jihad against India since Pakistan was coming anyway: Thus, it appears that the Americans had filled in the void created by Wavell's going.

The fact is both Linlithgow and Wavell had given the communal issue such a turn as to vest the initiative in Mr. Jinnah's hands. Three alternatives had emerged for him: a united India; an India divided in three groups under the Cabinet Mission Plan; and Pakistan. It would not have been difficult, if they had so wished to ask Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League to devise a way so that the rights of the Muslims in the non-Muslim majority area could be fully protected. For the real problem was the latter's. These League leaders had in fact been elected by these same minority provinces just in order that they could ensure safeguards of their interests. In the event, however, Mr. Jinnah was offered the choice either of a vast Pakistan with some restraints, or a smaller Pakistan without any restraints.

For when the Muslim League finally rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan and demanded Pakistan, it was told that if India was partitioned, the two Muslim majority provinces, Punjab and Bengal, would also have to be partitioned. Mr. Jinnah demanded the reason for this, and Mountbatten replied that it followed exactly the same logic as in the making of Pakistan, the arguments he had used for seven years to press for Pakistan would have to be applied to the provinces also, for the provinces were administrative units and the parts of them that had non-Muslim concentration had to be separated. Mr. Jinnah countered by saying that he would then demands the Sylhet district of the Assam province, and Mountbatten agreed.

Mr. Jinnah wasn't on the whole happy with the division of the provinces. He

....

*Admitted the apparent logic of this but begged Lord Mountbatten not to give him a "moth-eaten" Pakistan. The demand for partitioning of Bengal and the Punjab was all the bluff on the part of the Congress to frighten him off his claim for Pakistan. But he was not so easily frightened.*

*Hodson. The Great Divide.*

Mountbatten was still apparently trying to persuade Mr. Jinnah to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan. He kept pointing out the possible consequences of partition, especially the destruction that might follow. He found that Mr. Jinnah had not seriously considered all the aspects of his proposal. As he wrote, "He gives me the impression of a man who has not thought out one single piece of the mechanics of his own scheme and he really will get the shock of his life when he comes down to earth."

When Mountbatten saw that Mr. Jinnah was immovable, he invited Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and explained to him that if Muslim League and Mr. Jinnah kept insisting on Pakistan they would only get what Mr. Jinnah had himself characterised as a crippled, Moth eaten state, and which he had earlier refused to accept. Mr. Liaquat Ali promised to discuss this with Mr. Jinnah and other colleagues. When he came back the next day, his message was, "If your Excellency was prepared to let the Muslim League have only the Sindh desert I would still be prepared to accept it" (*Hodson, P-224*).

Meanwhile, in Bengal itself the thinking was running in a different direction. The possibility that the province will be divided along with the country caused no joy. The Muslim League Chief Minister, Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suharwardy, asked the Viceroy for time. He wished to talk to both the Congress and the Muslim League and persuade them to let the province stay undivided and not join Pakistan or nor wanting it remains in India.

Mountbatten himself mentioned Suharwardy's proposal to Mr. Jinnah. As he reports it, without hesitation Mr. Jinnah replied, "I should be delighted. What is the use of Bengal without Calcutta? They had much better remain united and independent." (*Hodson, P-246*).

One sometimes wonder what all this bargaining, this give-and-take of territories, was really in aid of. Was the concern for the poor, suppressed Muslims really the driving consideration, or was it something else?

The most problematic link the chain was NWFP with its 93 percent Muslim population. It had rejected the Muslim League politics and the demand for Pakistan in 1946. The British were particularly interested in this province and in the tribal passages that led through Afghanistan to the borders of Russia. The governor of the province, Olaf Caroe, proposed that the election that had taken place that year should be annulled and a new one held so that the responsibility of determining the future of the province should devolve on the newly elected member.

Mountbatten sent of the chief secretary of the province, De la Farque, who was about to proceed on home leave. He asked him two questions – first, what was likely to be the outcome of a new election; and, second, why were the provincial ministers unhappy about their governor. (On the latter point, Dr. Khan Sahib had told the viceroy that since he was keen on meeting the Muslim League president of NWFP, he needed to go no further than his own governor, for Olaf Caroe was virtually the Muslim League president!).

According to Hodson (P-283), the replies given to the Viceroy was as follows:

*Lt. Col. De la Farque, chief secretary to the NWFP government held the belief that a free and clean election in the province was more likely to return the Congress to power than the League, even if Section 93 government had been interposed. That the Governor though having great knowledge of the Frontier was biased against his Congress government, and that his continuance in office was menace to British prestige.*

After this confidential report from the chief secretary, Mountbatten dropped the idea of a fresh election.

Incidentally, the thinking of the Muslim officers of the Province can be gauged from what Campbell Johnson reported in his book 'Mission with Mountbatten.' He had gone with Mountbatten to Peshawar and at the governor's dinner that evening he was seated beside the deputy commissioner of the city, S.B. Shah, who spent the whole evening arguing with Johnson that the British should not leave India. Johnson writes that he was greatly surprised that while he and Mountbatten, both members of the British ruling class, were keen that India should be given its independence here was an important Indian passionately arguing against it.

Having turned down the governor's proposals for fresh election, since it would have once again brought the Khudai Khidmatgars to power, Mountbatten had to think of other ways whereby the Muslim League could emerge as the predominant entity.

The difference between the governor and Congress had led to another problem. When the head of interim government, Jawaharlal Nehru expressed the wish to tour NWFP, visit the various agencies and hold jirgas with the tribal brethren on the future of Indian and their place in it, Olaf Caroe felt disturbed. He wasn't prepared for this direct communication. He had been giving the central government the impression that the tribes were all deadly opposed to the Congress and backed the Pakistan demand. In support of this he would have to prove that the tribal leaders who went to see the government were not the true representative of their people.

The servants of the British had directly and through mercenary mullahs, pirs and faqirs done a lot of work in the tribal area and were still active one Masud Malak Gulab Khan wrote a letter to Mr. Jinnah on April 20, 1946. He said:

*I on behalf of all the Masuda of S. Waziristan Agency beg to assure you of our armed help for the achievement of Pakistan whenever so ordered by the Muslim League High Command. We have full faith in your leadership in the critical time.... I am also ready to send Masud armed escort as your body guard if so ordered. Pakistan zindabad.*

*Quoted in Erland Janson. P-175.*

This Malak is thus ready for armed conflict for Pakistan. Against whom? Against the British? No one can believe that a Malak from South Waziristan would write to Mr. Jinnah in Bombay to offer to fight for his politics against the British. He couldn't have written what he did except for the favour of the political agent and other officials, as anyone who knows anything about these agencies, their malaks, and their relations with political agents would easily understand. Apart from the fact that Malak Gulban Khan knew how to address Mr. Jinnah, as Quaid-I-Azam, the odd thing is that a Malak of South Waziristan should want to enter into a political pact with a leader of India and assure him of full support for the achievement of Pakistan on behalf of the entire Masud Agency, and Mr. Jinnah even replies to him: all supposedly without the knowledge of the political agent and of other official institutions on the other hand, about the same time a Salar of the Khudai Khidmatgar, Yaqub Khan, was languishing in jail and was being threatened with hanging only because of an accusation that a lieutenant of Faqir Ipi had written him a letter, although there was no proof that such a letter existed, not a witness to attest to the charge.

It wasn't just a question of Waziristan. A Shinwari Malak of Khyber Agency, Bawar Khan, sent a telegram to the members of the Cabinet Mission saying, "Khyber Agency tribes have full confidence in Jinnah, Muslims cannot accept anything except Pakistan" (Khyber Mail, April 5, 1946). Malik Gulab Khan might have sent his message secretly, but this Shinwari Malik Bawar Khan had

dispatched a telegram and even got it printed in an English daily of Peshawar. Yet the British displayed not a hint of worry or displeasure.

The examples only serve to show why Mr. Olaf Carore wasn't happy over Jawaharlal's going to the tribal areas. Both he and the Muslim League wished to prevent the visit. The Pir of Manki Sharif himself toured the different tribes and sent out mullahs to that region to mount an opposition to the Hindu Jawaharlal's coming. It was said that he was coming to bring their independence to an end and to make them the slaves of the Hindus. Caroe made a detailed mention of these efforts in his weekly report to the centre - that Pir Manki was touring Khyber, Mohmand and Malakand; that in Peshawar Muslim League had held a public meeting addressed by barrister Qayyum; etc. Declared Mr. Qayyum:

*The Hindu Congress is on the warpath. In the tribal belt we have an immeasurable reservoir of strength. You must organise and unite from Gilgit to Quetta. The hour of trial is coming. Be prepared. Islam in India needs your help in this hour of trial. Tell Pundit Nehru that if he wants to talk he should go to Mr. Jinnah. There is no sense in talking to the tribal.*

*Dawn October 13, 1948*

## Chapter 18

### Groundwork for Pakistan

WHEN Jawaharlal Nehru did come to NWFP without the governor's go ahead he received a reception from the government and its functionaries. Erland Janson has quoted a number of officials and malaks on what actually happened. In South Waziristan the Masud Malak Gulab Khan himself told Erland that the assistant political officer secretly guided him and others about what to do.

*Malak Gulab Khan paid Rs.200 to snipe at Nehru's plane when it would land at Razmak. The assistant political officer, one Abdul Manan, was particularly helpful and would encourage and guide them secretly.....*

The situation is cleared and further explained by the dialogue this man had with Faridullah Shah. Faridullah Shah, then was the A.P.O. Khyber while Col. Khurshid was the political Agent. According to Faridullah Shah's statements:

At that time col. Khursheed was Political Agent of Khyber Agency. Two or three days before Nehru's arrival Khursheed sent for me and told me Nehru was coming to Khyber. He said that if the tribal should receive him in a docile way, all Mohammadans of this part of the country will go under the suzerainty of the Hindus. As Muslim I should do something but at the same time he warned me not to tell him of the action I would take. Do you know why? He was a religious man and if he was asked anything he could say he did not know. I went straight to Jamrud. I contacted a certain Kukikhel Malak called Swati Khan. The only question he asked was what would be the reaction of the Political Agent. And I told him, don't worry. I very strongly told him that nobody was to be killed. They should resort to very heavy sniping. On return from Jamrud I contacted Mullah Sahib of Manki Sharif. He had then a lot of disciples among the Shinwaris and Mollagories. So he also went on tour to Landikotal and Mollagor areas.

*Erland Janson, op. Cit., p. 185-86.*

In the event, however, I think the British bungled the game for the tribal in Malakand. Nehru and his party were attacked there and wounded, and that gave away the whole conspiracy.

The rest of the agencies are geopolitically different from Malakand. They lie adjacent to the tribal areas on one side and to Afghanistan borders on the other. Malakand has Mardan district on one flank and Swat and Dir on the others.

Obviously, the malaks in Malkand were much more amenable to the wishes of the political agent than those in the other agencies. Besides, the political agent in malakand at the time, Sheikh Mehboob Ali, was involved in a bribery suit. During the war days he was deputy commissioner in Kohat and was accused of misappropriating a lot of government money allocated to the construction of underground bunkers in Tal. Apart from enormous amounts of cash, he was reported to have taken from here the entire construction material-cement, bricks, iron bars etc. -for the building of his own bungalow in his village in Sheikhan. With such a background he was more than normally eager at that time to please his masters.

Thus became attack on the Nehru party in Malakand. In any other agency, the government could have shaken off responsibility, since people there did have a measure of their own will. But in malakand everyone knew that far from throwing brickbats, nobody could have cast even a feather at Nehru without the political agent's nod.

The object of sabotaging Nehru's visit was to show that the Khudai Khidmatgars were on the wane in NWFP and that the politics of the Muslim League was now gaining popular acceptance among the Pukhtoos.

The British thus showed their ignorance even in their cunning. They did not realise that the khudai Khidmatgar movement belonged to the settled areas of the province. Its leaders were not even permitted into the tribal belt. Its assembly members came only from the province. The election was held only in the districts, and the tribal don't have any vote at all. It was confused logic that the demonstrations against Nehru's visit in the tribal areas would show that the khudai Khidmatgars had lost their popularity in the settled parts.

In fact this was not so much a confusion of logic as an attempt at political shrewdness. The British, their chief secretary De la farque, knew that the province remained solidly behind the khudai Khidmatgars. They had no choice but to activate their quisling Malaks and mercenary mullahs and pirs through their political agents to stir up trouble in the name of Islam and then to use this to discredit the popular ministry in the province. That would somehow create a way for toppling the khudai Khidmatgars and handing over the control to the Muslim League- a prerequisite for the justification of the division of the country.

There was once another charade. The Muslim League was asked to hold a public meeting. People were brought in by the truck-load from every corner of the province. The viceroy, Mountbatten, was also invited to view the spectacle

at the Cunningham Park in Peshawar. Governor Olaf Caroe conveyed the impression to him that a public meeting of this scale could only be organised by the Muslim League, which was a clear proof that the people in the frontier were switching over their loyalties in masse from the khudai khidmatgars to the Muslim League. The viceroy was also told that the Cunningham park gathering was an extremely resolute mass of people. They were about to set off for the cantonment and the governor house. No police or armed force would be able to bring them to the heel. But just a word from Mountbatten would work as a charm. They would promptly disperse.

### **Dominion status and Commonwealth**

Muslim league remained adamant in all negotiations in Delhi. The British efforts of years were bearing fruit. The view of both Linlithgow, the Viceroy, and Amery, the Secretary of State for India, had been that the wider the divide created between Hindus and Muslims the Greater would be the opportunity for the British to play the mediator's role in a final settlement. It seemed that that time had now arrived.

The British insistence on the inclusion of Muslim League in the interim government at any price had led many people in India to become convinced that Britain stood firmly on the side of the Muslim League; that it had decided on the partition of India. As the days passed the communal bitterness, hatred and hostility kept mounting. Riots had spread throughout the country.

When the Muslim League joined the interim government it obtained the department of finance, for it self in the distribution of the portfolios. There were two clever Muslims in that department at that time, Malik Ghulam Mohammad and Chaudhri Mohammad Ali. They knew that the non-Muslim owned much of the country's commercial and industrial wealth. When they prepared the first budget for Liaquat Ali Khan they proposed heavy taxes whose burden naturally would fall on just these moneyed classes. It was difficult for the Congress to raise any objections since its political objective all along had been to improve the lot of the poor masses. The result was that even these capitalists and industrialists began to feel that it would be best if the political dispute was resolved once for all, the Muslim League given the Pakistan it was demanding, and the daily bricking finally ended.

It was also begun to be said that if the Muslim League was prepared for the division, of Bengal, with Calcutta and Bengal's steel and coal going to India and the Muslim League satisfied with the ponds and the barren and saline lands to the east, then why was the congress objecting? Similarly, if, in the west, the parceling of Punjab was acceptable to the League, why not agree to Pakistan?

Thus. Even among the non-Muslim in India, public opinion began to get converted to the idea of a partition of the country.

The time had come for the final move. After the decision on partition the British concern was to find a way of keeping both the countries in a dominion status and within the British Commonwealth. There was no question of any objection to it from the Pakistan side. In fact Mr. Jinnah had long ago offered that bait to Lord Mountbatten while persuading the latter about the virtues of Pakistan. He had suggested to the latter that the new country would remain within the commonwealth. At that time Mountbatten had made light of the suggestion. He later noted that Mr. Jinnah was surprised that he had not shown particular interest in the idea and had merely remarked that when the time for it would pass it on to HMG. Mr. Jinnah had himself thought he was making a grand gesture to the British.

The British main concern was however about the other emerging country, India. When the undivided constituent assembly had met it had decided on republication rather than dominion status for future India. However there was also the view that the Indian government would be a successor to the British rule and so there had to be some continuity with the past. This would also imply that the separation of certain areas to form Pakistan would fall under the definition of secession. There was another difficulty India had over six hundred princely states. These had direct treaty relations with the British Crown. So if the now government didn't come in as a successor to the British there were bound to be complications in this area also.

All considered, then India had to decide on staying in the Commonwealth. That cleared the last hurdle for the British. It only remained to make amendments in the rules so that apart from dominions, a republic could also join the body.

Britain was thus satisfied. Its communal politics had reached its logical conclusion. It had pursued a policy of divide and rule. Now that there was no way for it to continue to rule, it could at least divide and leave behind a trail of horrendous communal bloodshed involving hundreds of thousands people, and an intensity so pervasive and deep-running that it will leave its mark on generations to come. How better could it show its split for the nationalist and anti-imperialist forces that had caused its defeat?

## Chapter 19

### The Referendum

THE seeds sown by the British were bearing fruit. The Communal insanity in the country had reached such a point of mutual mayhem that, as Mr. Jinnah had said there was no longer a cure save a surgery. India where Hindus and Muslims had lived in harmony for centuries and which had also seen centuries of peaceful Muslim rule, that same India was today being prepared for carving by the sharpened knives of the British. It looked to us at the time not just a division of India but a division of the Muslim of the country.

On June, 2 Lord Mountbatten invited three members each of the congress and the Muslim League and one of the Sikh communities.

Earlier, Mr. Nehru had pointed out that since Mr. Acharya kripalani had just assumed the presidentship of the Congress and only he could speak on behalf of the party, his presence too was necessary at any presentation of Mountbatten's plan besides that of himself and Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel. When Mr. Jinnah learnt of this he also asked for an invitation for a Third member of his party and proposed the name of Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar.

Mr. Nishtar's position was a curious one. When the Muslim League had proposed his name for Minister Ship in the interim government, the Congress had objected. It asked how he could be a nominee for NWFP when just then, in 1946; he had lost an election in his home constituency, Peshawar: how could a person not able to obtain votes for representation at the provincial level assume that role on the national scale? It was eventually resolved that the Viceroy would ask the Khudai Khidmatgar leader khan Abdul Ghaffar khan if he had any objection. When the matter was referred to Bacha khan he said that the Sardar was after all a pushtoon and so he wouldn't object.

To return to the Viceroy's meeting, he presented the details of his independence plan to this Congress-Muslim League-Sikh Jirga. The plan stipulated division of Bengal and Punjab, and referendums in the district of Assam and in NWFP to ask if the people there wished to join India or Pakistan.

A boundary commission was set up for the partition of Bengal and Punjab. It was provided that its decision would be final and neither party could withhold acceptance. It was also announced that although June 1948 had been fixed for transfer of power, the effort would be to make it possible even sooner.

In outlining his plan Mountbatten said that he would not press for an immediate answer. The parties could call a meeting of their working committees and then let him know their decision. Mr. Jinnah pointed out that his working committee did not have the powers to decide on such a major issue and that he would have to convene a session of the party's national council and that would take time. The congress thought that it was Mr. Jinnah's practice to delay his decision until he knew of the congress response and then to react in the light of this.

Accordingly it asked the viceroy to fix the same time for a reply from both sides. Mr. Jinnah then agreed to let the viceroy know of his party's decision by the same evening.

However, as Mountbatten reported, Mr. Jinnah called on him at the middle of the night and reverted to his earlier plea that he was only a constitutional head of his party and the decision could only be taken by the Muslim League council. Mountbatten remonstrated in the strongest terms and said that this time there was no way that the congress would agree; it demanded a clear answer from the League. Mr. Jinnah did not relent. But nor did Mountbatten who declared:

Mr. Jinnah, I do not intend to let you wreck all the work that has gone into this settlement. Since you will not accept it for the Muslim League, I will speak for them myself.

*(Campbell Johnson. Mission with Mountbatten)*

Mountbatten went even further, he said that when all the leaders would gather the next morning he would announce acceptance of the plan by the Muslim League, and with that he would look at Mr. Jinnah and the latter should then nod his head to show agreement.

It is thus clear that the June, 3 partition plan was not in fact endorsed by either the Muslim League or its leader, but that it was approved on behalf of the League by the viceroy lord Mountbatten himself. Whether the authority to do so was conceded to him by the Muslim League or he had assumed it himself is not known, but the fact that he exercised it is a matter of Britain's own official records.

With the announcement of the referendum proposal, there was strong opposition to it in N.W.F.P. If the idea was to the view of the people that had been demonstrated just a year earlier when the Khudai Khimatgars had defeated the Muslim League on the basis not only of the entire population but that of Muslim electorate as well. What had happen in the space of a year to

make a renewed reference to the people necessary? The central leadership of the Congress had also agreed in the light of the stand of the province to oppose referendum.

At that time Mountbatten went to Simla and invited Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru there. On their way back, the announcement was made that the referendum would go ahead. Jawaharlal said that he had a detailed discussion with the NWFP chief minister Dr. Khan Sahib and the latter had agreed to the idea.

Khudai Khidmatgars' first objection was that since the Congress and the Muslim League had both agreed on Partition, and since they considered themselves bound by the Congress decisions (Bacha Khan himself used to represent Khudai Khidmatgars in the Congress working Committee), and since the Congress had accepted that NWFP had to be part of Pakistan, then why hold a referendum? The exercise would only exacerbate the existing communal and political tension and create an atmosphere of confrontation.

The fact was that the Muslim League and the British had their own purpose behind the design. Muslim League was keen to convey the impression that Pakistan was formed its demand and its demand alone; and that the Khudai Khidmatgars had opposed Pakistan which was why a referendum had become necessary. There was in other purpose in singling out NWFP for a different treatment from other provinces. In the rest of India only the assembly members of the Muslim majority provinces were asked to give their vote. Bengal and Punjab assemblies voted for the partition and thus the provinces were divided. Sindh assembly was asked to vote for Pakistan. Why not then NWFP assembly also? The reason was obvious. Here the Khudai Khidmatgars were in Majority in the assembly. If they for Pakistan the decision would have been the Khudai Khidmatgars. The Muslim League was not prepared to concede that credit. Nor were the British.

Besides the Muslim League also knew that the Khudai Khidmatgars were apposed to the referendum and would not participate in it. That guaranteed a decision in favor of Pakistan. But the announcement of the result the League would have the opportunity to cry from the house-tops that the policies in the province had taken a complete turn and that the Khudai Khidmatgars ministry should for that reason resign, and if didn't the Viceroy should dismiss it and present the reins of government to the Muslim League.

For their part the Khudai Khidmatgars decided that if the British were insistent on holding the plebiscite despite the general acceptance that NWFP would go to Pakistan, then following the same principle of self-determination

the province should also have the freedom to a third option, of an independent Pukhtoonistan. Mountbatten, however, refused to include this alternative. The Khudai Khidmatgars then decided that since between the available two options the decision had already been taken and the referendum was there fore pointless they would boycott it.

The Britishers' double standards and the Muslim league leaders' lack of principles ought to be noted. When the Muslim league leader in Bengal, Mr. Hussain Shah Suhrawardy proposed that Bengal should stay united and independent, Mr. Jinnah happily agreed. But when in NWFP the Khudai Khidmatgars asked for the same option they were termed anti-Islam and traitors to Pakistan. It is also worth remembering that in undivided Bengal the ratio of Muslim to non-Muslim was 54:46. There could be a danger there that if the non-Muslim won over just a few Muslim Legislators the government would pass into the hands of non-Muslim. In NWFP on the other hand no possibility existed at all of non-Muslim ever forming a ministry, since Muslim here constituted 93 per cent of the population. Besides, any government in an independent Bengal would have always been dependent on non-Muslim whereas no such situation existed in the frontier.

In the ends, thus, one keeps coming back to the same conclusion that the British were keen on putting an Islamic halter round the socialist order in the north and were not prepared to permit any hurdle, Khudai Khidmatgars' or whatever, in their way. In fact they were convinced that unless they removed all the nationalist and anti imperialist forces from their path would not be able to consummate their design.

The Khudai Khidmatgar leaders were, however, convinced that the abrasiveness of the Muslim League leadership would mend once Pakistan was made. Otherwise they would have had no problem charting out a course for themselves. In fact there was simple course available to them as I had then myself pointed out. If the Khudai Khidmatgars were determined on Pukhtoonistan and the British remained opposed to it, the constituent assembly, with an over whelming majority of congress, could have been asked to pass a resolution that if NWFP voted to join India, India, would then grant it complete independence and guarantee safeguard of that independence too. The people of NWFP could then have been told that if they wanted independent Pukhtoonistan they should vote to join India. But it seems to me that the Muslim League's appearances of decency, humanity, Islamic spiritedness and our own considerateness deceived us all.

A Muslim League friend of mine visited me at the time. He said gleefully: "see how we have cornered you. You have got left out here and India is on the

other side. Punjab lies in between. Even in the referendum you cannot now say you want to join India." I laughed and said: "That is just like you Muslim Leaguers. Cutting up countries and parceling them suits you and your British masters. We believe in construction not destruction. Don't forget that you have made a country that is split 1,500 miles apart, and in between lies what you consider a heretical enemy-land.

If we were like you - why, our borders with India are not even miles away, and next to us are Punjabi Muslim brothers."

Anyway, the government of India started preparing for referendum. Olaf Carore was replaced by Sir Robb Lokhart as the NWFP governor and the vote was held under his supervision. Although the Khudai Khidmatgars had announced boycott of the exercise and its result had been a foregone conclusion, yet the Muslim Leaguers made extraordinary efforts. They brought their leaders from all corners of the country including students from the Aligarh University, who all fanned out in the province to incite hatred against the Pukhtoons.

For all that, on the polling day they resorted to such rigging that it is hard to find a parallel. Ballot boxes were freely stuffed and even the votes of Khudai Khidmatgar leaders were cast. Let me cite two instances, one told to me by Sikandar Mirza himself who was former deputy commissioner in Hazara. Touring the polling booths he reached the one at the gullies. The staff proudly told him: "This is mountainous area. We have just 200 voters on the list here. But, Sir, we have already polled 210."

Another instance is even more interesting. When several years later as a result of the 1970 election the National Awami Party formed the government in NWFP and several Muslim Leaguers came and joined us, one of the Muslim League ladies told me that she had herself cast 51 votes in the referendum. I told her: When casting your own vote you must have identified yourself as the wife of your own husband. But what about the other 50? You must have sworn to the polling officer that you are the wife 50 others. What happens then to you wedding vows to your own husband? And to those of the others you named? What if even one of those others had accosted you and said you had yourself owned him as your husband?"

However, despite all the rigging by the British and the Muslim officers of the government, the result was as follows:-

Number of votes	5,72,799
Polled votes	(51%) 2,92,118

For Pakistan	(51.5%) 2,89,244
For India	2,874

Thus despite all the fair and unfair effort the votes claimed for Pakistan were no more than 51.5 per cent of those cast. It should also be remembered that at that time there was no adult franchise; voting was restricted. That is why there were only six Lac (0.6 Million) voters in a population of 35 Lac (3.5 Million). The referendum had in fact been confined only to six districts. The six tribal agencies adjacent to the province were excluded. Even excluded were the states of Swat, Dir, Chitral and Amb. All of them included would have made a population of 70 to 80 Lac (0.7 to 0.8 Million). Less than three Lac (0.3 Million) actually voted. According to international practice any self-determination of this kind earns credibility if the votes in favour are two-thirds or three-quarters of the total.

Thus if the Khudai Khidmatgars were so minded they had the moral and legal right to raise objection. But since they regarded the exercise as altogether irrelevant to begin with, they did not bother. Instead they hoped to calm down sentiments and to disentangle themselves from all the bitterness unnecessarily generated. Now that their untold sacrifices were at last bearing fruit and the British were feeling compelled to transfer power they thought it was time to end all mutual confrontation and to join hands to reconstruct the society, to make good the deprivations inflicted by the aline rulers on the Pukhtoos, and to provide a new life for the generation of hungry and destitute children.

But, as was expected, with the announcement of the referendum result the Muslim Leaguers began an outcry that the people had expressed no-confidence in the government of the provinces and so it should immediately resign. They chose to ignore the fact that the question of confidence did not come into it; the vote was on the question of India or Pakistan, and the provincial government took no part in it at all one way or the other. Besides, the issue of confidence was related to the members of the assembly.

The Muslim Leaguers knew that while the prevailing constitution gave to the Viceroy in Delhi the powers to dismiss a provincial ministry, under the constitution announced by the British for the future those powers had exclusively been awarded to the provinces. So the Muslim Leaguers' objective was either that the ministry should itself resign, or, if it did not, the Viceroy should act while he still had the power. Mr. Jinnah himself broached the subject with the Viceroy. But Mountbatten replied that the referendum result had nothing to do with the legitimacy of the provincial ministry, and if the Muslim League wished the ministry changed they should adopt the constitutional means to have the assembly vote against it. He added that he was helpless and

that the Leaguers could do what they liked when power came into their own hands.

## Chapter 20

### The Choice of Governors General

A FEW things happened in Delhi about these times that were unexpected for the British. One of these concerned India and the other Pakistan.

In India the power was transferred to the nationalist movement there, represented by the Congress. The latter comprised the revolutionary leadership that had for years crusaded for the country's independence. They had been pitched against British imperialism, and naturally they had bred deep bitterness among them, especially after the Congress had launched the Quit-India movement and the British response had gone to the extent, among other things, of aerial bombardment. The British understood that these nationalist leaders had gone through an ordeal of fire. They were bound to feel even further embittered now that the colonial power was leaving behind a trail of bloodshed and communal hostility. The British were thus not surprised when the India constituent assembly rejected dominion status and opted for making the country a republic. But the surprise came when they heard that India would nevertheless want to remain member of the British Commonwealth, with the British queen at its head. They realised that the Congress leaders had, obviously much against their personal impulses, taken that decision in the higher interests of their country.

They had an even greater surprise in store when the Congress decided that Lord Mountbatten would remain the country's accredited governor general over a transitional period. This surprised even outside world. At a time when far-reaching decisions had to be taken and when there was no dearth of front-rank, national leaders the Congress decision to bestow all post-independence powers on a Briton did seem out of the ordinary.

Decisions like this could only be taken by a wise and far-sighted political leadership which was not influenced by personal feelings of bitterness or sense of grandeur but was driven solely by considerations of the country's good.

According to Mountbatten's secretary, Campbell Johnson, an assurance had also come from Mr. Jinnah that the outgoing viceroy would be invited to act as governor-general of Pakistan as well.

*Provisions had been made in the act on Mr. Jinnah's suggestion for Mountbatten to be Governor General of both dominions and for sometime it seems as if this might be acceptable, but at the last moment Mr. Jinnah decided otherwise.*

*Campbell Johnson, Mission with Mountbatten.*

Apparently, the British government was also informed of this proposal. And on receiving the approval Mountbatten informed Mr. Jinnah about it. Mr. Jinnah, however, started hedging, saying that he had yet to consult his colleagues. Campbell Johnson says that Mr. Jinnah was advised by his colleagues to go along with the original decision since a lot of transitional issues had to be resolved, such as the partition of the provinces, the division of assets, and it would be a help to have Mountbatten's mediatory authority for this process.

According to Campbell Johnson, Mr. Jinnah did not take a decision for several weeks, and then when he did, he announced that he would himself be the Governor General of Pakistan: "He has at long last come clean; Jinnah's verdict goes in favour of Jinnah."

Mountbatten says that when he learnt of this decision he tried to explain to Mr. Jinnah that it would cause problems for him and his new country. Mr. Jinnah's reply however silenced him.

*Jinnah solemnly assured me that he realised all the disadvantages of giving up the common governor general... but he was unable to accept any position other than the Governor-General of Pakistan on 15th August.....*

*Hodson, the Great Divide.*

Mountbatten argued that the governor general was merely a titular head while if Mr. Jinnah wished to exercise control and power he should consider the role of the Prime Minister.

*His answer was significant. He said, 'In my position it is I who will give the advice and others who will act on them'.*

*Hodson, Op: Cil.*

The viceroy made a final bid.

*I asked him, 'Do you realise what this will cost? He sadly said, 'It may cost me several crores (Several Million) of rupees in assets, to which I replied some what acidly, 'It may well cost you the whole of your assets and the future of Pakistan'.*

*Hodson, Op. Cil,*

Obviously, this decision of Mr. Jinnah's struck as rather odd to the 'British and to most others. For it was Pakistan that more needed a non-Partisan man at the top for an equitable distribution between the now divided parts of the country - and who could be more appropriate than a responsible Britisher?

That now refused, it was natural that the British in their disappointment should start bitterly criticising Mr. Jinnah. Mountbatten was particularly annoyed. He had even conveyed it to his government that he was by common consent going to be the joint governor general. He now felt personally rebuffed and insulted.

What probably happened was that when Mountbatten proposed the idea of a common Governor General Mr. Jinnah accepted it on the assumption, held by most others as well, that India would refuse it: how could the Congress nationalists reconcile themselves to the idea of starting their independence presided over by a member of the community against which they had so long been at war? Mr. Jinnah might thus have calculated that by agreeing to the idea he would have earned the goodwill of the British while, after Congress' refusal, he would be free to withdraw the commitment without any loss of face.

The Congress came out rather well from this episode. Comparing the past of the two parties, it was seen that Congress had for years been engaged in open conflict with the British, suffered jail terms, exiles and violence of all kinds, which should naturally have bred among its people hatred against the British, but now they had put all that aside for the larger good of the country and demonstrated rare vision and large-heartedness in making this gesture to the British, their former foe. That certainly left an excellent impression on the British and independent India started off under very favourable conditions.

On the other hand, the Muslim League had neither much involved itself in the independence struggle nor challenged the British rule. It was generally known that but for the British there would have been no Pakistan. It was the British who had greatly helped the Muslim unite under the Muslim League flag. Similarly that had provided Mr. Jinnah with the support to claim equality with the Congress. At least in return for all this if not out of consideration for the future of Pakistan, they could have made a show of good will to the British. But they didn't and their decision did no good to the image of Pakistan and offered a sharp contrast between considerations of personal grandeur on the one hand and of national good on the other. It is possible that the British too felt a sense of betrayal by the Muslim League decision, although there is no question that what they had done for the party and Mr. Jinnah in the past was not out of any consideration for them but in their own colonial and imperialist interests.

The authors of 'Freedom at Midnight' have pointed to another aspect. Mr. Jinnah had long been suffering from TB and the knowledge, long concealed from him, had just been disclosed. The doctors had also told him that he had a

maximum of two or three years to live. It is possible that too played a part in Mr. Jinnah's not wanting to let Mountbatten have supremacy even over a brief transitory period. Besides, Mr. Jinnah was the kind of person who could not have relished the idea of occupying a subsidiary position to Mountbatten's.

If the leaders were busy in the give-and-take of power in the palaces of Delhi, the rest of the country was caught in the communal fire. The Hindus and Sikhs were, doubtless, relatively prosperous. Several of their community owned industries, business houses and landed property. In the Frontier and particularly in Punjab, communal riots led on to the looting of their properties and to their being driven out of their houses their wealth left behind. When these Sikhs did flee, they duplicated the same savagery back in East Punjab and Delhi, and that caused a chain of arson, murder and loot and even abduction of women. According to estimates, in Punjab alone 30,000 to 40,000 women were abducted. This was Britain's parting gift to the people of this subcontinent - the same people who for two hundred years had starved their own children to keep the British children well-fed, had sacrificed their sons for the protection and greater glory of the British empire, had not hesitated even to attack the Holy Kaaba.

Yet today, as a result of Britain's policy to divide and rule, the nation had become so blind that the British enemy had become a friend and the neighbours and friends of generations had turned into objects for annihilation. The madness went to extraordinary lengths. There was at least some method in wanting the Hindus and Sikhs to flee and leave behind their properties. But what is to one make of incidents like one Muslim Leaguer in Murree collecting his friends and setting fire to 128 refugee houses? These houses had been abandoned by their owners, they had become the undisputed property of Pakistan, what was then the logic of setting fire to Pakistan itself? But when does insanity have logic?

There were people looting for power, for property, for kingship or minister ship, but for the common people the dream was turning into dust. Their houses were being looted, their young ones killed, home burnt, women raped, and the survivors made to abandon every thing and flee for life. Even before the formal partition of Punjab, the province had begun to be divided up. History books used to tell of kings abdicating thrones and taking refuge elsewhere. But now we were to witness the extraordinary phenomenon of the subjects being obliged to flee the land of their ancestors and find sanctuary in the neighbouring land. This was the first fruit of independence. The surprise was, what was all this for? Wherefore this despoliation, this bloodshed? Independence has been announced. Partition and the creation of Pakistan had been agreed. To what

end then this lunacy, this transformation of lifelong ties of love into relations of hate?

## Chapter 22

### Road to Pakistan

AS in previous years I had gone to Kashmir for the summer. Sheikh Abdullah was there in jail on account of his criticisms of the Maharajah's government. The Congress was working hard to have him released because of the critical situation. While I was there, thousands of riot-affected Hindus and Sikhs of Hazara reached there. Gandhiji was also in Kashmir then to persuade the Maharajah to set Sheikh Abdullah free. I used to visit him daily.

I noticed then that the freshness and light-heartedness had gone out of Gandhi. He was no longer prone to occasional small talk or relaxed banter. One day I ventured to ask him about it directly. I said that appeared to me for several days as someone with a burden on his heart. The British were going. His and his colleagues' long political struggle and sacrifices were bearing fruit and the country was about to attain independence. They were going to be among the few in history who saw the result of their lifelong crusade in their own time. The why they had rescued the 40 crore (400 Million) people of the country from the dungeon of slavery and deprivation should be a matter of great joy and satisfaction to them. Finally, on a light note, I recalled that he had said that he would be happy to live up to 125 years of age, and added that that would enable the liberated country to benefit greatly from his wisdom and experience.

Gandhiji used to talk to people according to their age and taste. My remarks made him very quiet and thoughtful. He said at length, "Until now I wanted to live up to 125 years. Not now. My life's mission was not just independence of India, but also freeing the country of all the ills that two hundred years of slavery to the British had created among the people. I was particularly keen that the gulf created by the communal politics of the colonial rulers would be converted into such a bond of mutual love and goodwill that together the people would work to banish poverty from the land and fill it with all the bounties of which the British had deprived us. But since I have not been able to achieve this ambition, to ensure good relations between the Hindus and Muslims this independence is incomplete for me. Today when Hindu and Muslim homes are divided and when this division has assumed the form of permanent separation, I can not but consider this as my political and spiritual defeat. That leaves me with no desire to live any longer..."

Then, turning his face up to me, Gandhi added on a personal note: "Do you think it was a day of rejoicing and independence for me when I was saying

goodbye to your father Bacha Khan at the Delhi station? We have been travelling companions, partners in the trenches. Independence has come to separate us probably never to meet in this life. Tell me what joy has this independence brought me?"

Gandhiji had not yet finished.

"Look at the situation all over India. All the open grounds and bazaar of Srinagar are crowded with Hindus and Sikhs who have fled from the NWFP. Look at Bengal or Bihar. See what is happening to the Muslims in Delhi. Above all, take Punjab on one side are the caravans of Muslims, on the other processions of Sikhs and Hindus. Even these fleeing masses of helpless people are not left alone; humanity has been so possessed by bestiality. Every caravan is raided by organised hordes. Genocide is rampant. Man or woman, young, old or infant, there is no discrimination. Was this why we wanted independence? Now you tell me, if I could not end this hatred between Hindus and Muslims and if I could not create amity and love between them in the name of God and religion, then what is the purpose of my Life? I will now be happier to die than to live."

There was great truth in this. Those whose vision was clear and who were not blinded by narrow motives would have done things very differently. If the partition of the country was necessary and unavoidable then they should have sat down and sorted out things in an orderly, sensible manner. There are other countries which were one once but decided later to separate. Take Norway and Sweden. They were together, but decided to part, and like civilised people drew a line in between. They did not set about killing or robbing each other. Later too, like grown up cultured neighbours, they have lived in neighbourly harmony and peace, doing nothing to interfere in each other's affairs. But here, sheer insanity took control. Here, in Peshawar, some one killed a Hindu; his relatives went to Delhi and hacked down innocent Muslims; the latter's kinsmen then came to the areas allocated to Pakistan and wiped off a number of unconcerned Hindus. Similarly if somebody seized a Sikh's property here and drove him out, he went and did the same to a Muslim there. This was an unending chain, one fire caused another, and that a third. Worst of all, this went on in the name of religion. In the name of Allah the beneficent and merciful did the massacre of human beings go on and on.

### **Partition of Provinces**

I consider it necessary to dispel a false impression. The Muslim League leaders pleased that the partition of province was the doing of the British. This is untrue. Looking at the precarious balance of Muslim and non-Muslim

population in the Punjab and Bengal the League leadership had realised that other things remaining the same if elections were held there the Muslim League ministries might constantly face problems. The statistics compiled by the Cabinet Mission had made it clear that in Group C that is in Bengal and Assam the ratio between Muslims and Non-Muslims was 36:34; in Punjab it was 16:12. Thus in both the provinces the Muslim ministries depended on two or three members. When Mr. Jinnah was pointed out these problems, he had even then suggested ceding some of the non-Muslim portions, which is on record in the documents on transfer of power released by the British government.

Indeed, Lord Wavell writes in his diary dated February 1946:

*Aga Khan came and talked of the necessity for Pakistan and the impossibility of Hindus and Muslims agreeing. He said Jinnah was willing to concede Amritsar, Ambala etc, in the north-west and the Hindu districts of Bengal and Assam. (P. 215).*

Another proof of this is that Muslim League was keen on not letting go Punjab. According to Wavell, the Sikh leader and a minister Sardar Baldev Singh, "said that Jinnah did not want settlement (with the Sikhs). He had had discussions with him in London, but had got nowhere, and Jinnah offered no assurance to the Sikhs even if they supported Pakistan." (Wavell, P. 149).

This shows too many that Muslim League itself was not keen to keep Punjab united. The objective seemed to be that so long as Muslim League had full supremacy over it, it did not matter how small or moth-eaten Pakistan was.

That also apparently was behind the effort to drive off the non-Muslims from all Pakistan provinces. No body stopped to bother about what would happen to Muslims on the other side when these people, robbed of everything and bathed in blood, would reach there - to the Muslims whom the League had sacrificed in pursuit of its politics and which it had caused to be left behind in an atmosphere of hate and communal insanity.

There is another incident worth recalling. The Khan of Kalat had for some time been engaged in litigation with the British over Quetta and areas around it. Mr. Jinnah was fighting the case for him the case for him. When the partition was announced, the Khan raised the point that the position of Kalat would have to be like Nepal's since it was not a part of India. He produced documents in support of his contention, concerning the agreement reached by the British with his forebears. In his book on the history of the Balouch and their Khawanin, the Khan recalls the incident.

A meeting was called to consider the issue. On the one side were Khan of Kalat and his legal adviser Sultan Ahmad Khan On the other were the governor-general designate and prime minister designate of Pakistan. Mr. Jinnah and Khan Liaquat Ali Khan. At the head was the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten. The discussion finally ended in an accord whereby it was agreed that:-

(a) On August 15, when the British rule would come to an end, the state of Kalat would revert to its position of 1838, the position just prior to its agreement with the British.

(b) If by then no agreement was reached between the Khan of Kalat and the Government of Pakistan then the state would have the right to accede to Afghanistan.

This accord was signed by the Khan of Kalat, Mr. Jinnah and Lord Mountbatten.

One is amazed at these League leaders who approved of Suhrawardy's proposal of a sovereign independent united Bengal, then divided up Bengal and Punjab, reconciled themselves to just one district out of the whole of Assam, and allowed the Khan of Kalat the right to accede to Afghanistan. All of this leads one back to that plea of Liaquat Ali Khan's to the British - that if they let the Leaguers have just the desert of Sindh, even that would be acceptable.

When we used to tell the Leaguers that they were not partitioning India but partitioning the Muslims of India that what the helpless Muslims left on the other side would do when all the Muslim political leaders and government officials had migrated here, they would reply that the non-Muslims left in Pakistan would be our hostages. If the Muslims in India faced any hardships, the non-Muslims here would be put under pressure. That would help keep the Indian Muslims safe. Now we asked these Leaguers how that mechanism would work since all the Hindus and Sikhs had been driven out. Who would be the hostage?

The truth is, that time no one was interested much either in Islam or the Muslims. The Muslims left in India were nobody's concern here. Here the houses, shops and factories of Hindus and Sikhs were being looted and their jobs, whether in the civil or military, were being coveted. Even in this business of appropriation, if any one had a right to the properties of the non-Muslims it were the Muslims coming over from the other side robbed of what they had there. Alternatively, those evacuee properties belonged to the state of Pakistan so that the whole nation could benefit from them.

Government ought to have made it clear that in this division of the country and the nation, the priority in all matters would go to those selfless people who had spent their lives sacrificed all they had, accepted the rigours of jail, struggling for independence of the country and fighting against the tyranny of the British.

Especially deserving of attention were the families whose elders were incarcerated and their little ones left behind without the assurance of a piece of daily bread. They had had no opportunities of education and upbringing.

Even more deserving were the dependants of those young ones who had offered their lives for the freedom of their country, who had sacrificed their and their family's happiness for the sake of their nation.

Deserving too were the young women who in the fight for independence had followed their husbands to the front, the husbands who never returned. Deserving were those mothers who offered the lives of their children so that the nation could live in dignity.

These martyrs and mujahids, these men and women had put the country under their eternal debt. It was for a grateful nation to try as its foremost obligation to repay some of this debt that it owed to its devotees and faithfuls.

But here the war was won by the British. These British had been unhappy with the Khudai Khidmatgars because it was the Pushtoons alone, besides the Ulema of Deoband, who as a collective entity had raised their voice against them. The Pushtoons could expect no reward for their pains even after the British had left. Here it was the same rewarded of the British, the sirs, and the Nawabs and the Khan Bahadurs, the jagirdars and the tail-bearers who were to be seated on the thrones. It was they who could faithfully pursue the policies the British had laid down for these parts in return for their personal gains. The spirit that the Khudai Khidmatgars had created among the common people, of pressing for their rights and for their self-respect, suited the new rulers no more than it did their masters, the British.

## Chapter 23

### The Loss of Kashmir

ONE-FIFTH of the area of India comprised the princely states. Some two-fifths of the Indians, or 16 of the 40 crore (160 Of 400 Million), lived in those states. In all, there were about six hundred states of various sizes. The Congress and the Muslim League held almost opposite views on the determination of their future. The congress had declared that the decision on a state's accession to India or Pakistan should be made according to the wishes of the people of the state. The Muslim League said no, that decision should lie with the ruler of the state.

If we look at the map of British India, almost the whole country would seem divided up among these princedoms. There were large areas ruled by the rajahs and Maharajhas, princes and Nawab. There was one as big as Nizam's Hyderabad Deccan-it was the size of Italy, and had a population of almost two crores (20 Million).

Muslim League had in mind such states, as Hyderabad, Bhopal and Rampur-ruled by Muslims but with a majority population of non-Muslims. There were also the Kathiawar states of Junagarh, Manavdar etc, of similar character. These states had no common boundaries with Pakistan, yet they were not as far off as Dhaka was from Karachi. So, according to the League logic, there was nothing to bar them from acceding to Pakistan.

About its other view that it should be the rulers not the people who should decide the fate of the states there could no surprise. The Muslim League had never pressed for people's rights even against the British; it couldn't now be expected to give precedence to the wishes of Hindu subjects over Muslim Nawabs. Indeed, it had once sought to impress of the British that the Muslims did not wish them to leave India, but wanted them to stay on for some years. As Wavell noted about Khan Liaquat Ali Khan:

*He said that in any event we should have to stay for many years yet and that the Muslims were not at all anxious that we should go.*

*Wavell: P/207*

A majority in the Muslim League consisted of People who had been siding with the British against the national aspirations. They were not much concerned about the right of self-determination for the common people. The curious thing was that even this issue of accession of states was given a religious angle. It

didn't occur to them that in giving the rulers the last word they could be faced with a problem in Kashmir. The maharajah there was a Hindu but the majority of the populace was Muslim. Would there then be two standards, one for Hyderabad Deccan, Bhopal, Rampur etc., and to another for Kashmir?

In respect of Kashmir, the Indian too had a problem. Their boundaries were not contiguous with the state. But that problem was resolved for them by the Muslim League when it agreed on the partition of Punjab. When the boundary Commission announced its award, it was seen that the Gurdaspur district has been given to India. Thus India was provided a boundary with Kashmir. Since both the Congress and the League had accepted the condition that they would raise no objection about the commission's award, there was no way that the decision over Gurdaspur could be called into question. And when the Maharajah of Kashmir would declare his state's accession to India, at least the Muslim League would be in no position to denounce it as unacceptable. It had itself declared that the rulers of the states had the right to decide on accession. Thus it was the Muslim League itself had cleared the ground for Kashmir's fate, and had, as it were, made a present of that state to India. This was another Muslim majority area that the partition of Muslims had caused to be lost for Pakistan.

### **Communal Politics and the Muslim League Ideology**

Muslim League had emerged claiming to be the guardians of the rights of India Muslims. The panacea it had proposed for all the deprivations and hardships of the Muslims was separate state for them, one which would not just be a Muslim state but an Islamic one. There had to be a distinction between the two. There were scores of Muslim states in the world, states where Muslims were in a majority. An Islamic state on the other hand was one where Islamic rule would prevail. The existing Muslim states had different forms of government: there were kings, emperors, and dictators, as there were political parties and parliamentary rule. The Muslim League had made the claim that it wanted Pakistan to enforce a truly Islamic system of justice and equality governing all social and economic relations, and thus offer a model for the other Muslim countries of the world to follow.

In support of its demand for a separate state Muslim League argued that India had not one but two nations. It was thus for the first time that the view was pressed that religious beliefs constituted the basis of nationhood. Hindu and Muslims were two nations because their beliefs were different, and so they must be partitioned on the basis. Mr. Jinnah had offered that principle in explanation of the Pakistan proposal in his speech of 1940.

*The Hindus and Muslims belong to different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conception... to yoke together such two nations under a single system must lead to growing discontent and finally to destruction of any fabric that may be sewn up for the government of such a sate.*

*Chaudhry Mohammad Ali. The Emergence of Pakistan. P-39.*

Until now the concept of nation had been related to state. A state might have a number of communities, but the nation as a whole drew its definition from the boundaries and the soil of the state. Take Britain. People of a variety of faiths and communities live there. They are all called British. Similarly everyone living in the U.S. regardless of his belief, his origin, his community, is considered an American, ditto in France, Germany, Italy etc. Even in the Middle East, all the various religious groups are part of the nation that is identified with their land. Lebanon's is a striking example where Muslims and Christians have continued to live as Lebanese. Why go any further than Iqbal himself who is credited with the concept of Pakistan. In one of his couplets he has emphasised that religion does not preach mutual hostility-we are all Hindi and our country is Hindustan.

Let us go a little further and see what steps the Muslim League adopted to have its views accepted, and what kind of conditions it wished created in the country so that a state was formed in which the rights of the Muslims were safeguarded and a bright future assured for them. It was important for the latter objective to first find out the causes for the Muslims' backwardness and deprivation; in other words to identify the enemy.

The Muslim League had assumed the Hindu to be its enemy, and it was on him that all its attention was concentrated. The honest fact, however, was that the enemy of Muslims were the British. The first historical reality was that it was the British who had seized the country from the Muslims. And so, since the Muslims had been guilty of insufficient care in maintaining the independence of the country it was their responsibility to be vigilant against the usurpers until they could take back the country from them and restore its freedom. Thus instead of Hindus it should have been the British who should have in the Muslim eye been the hostile element in the country.

Secondly, Britain had not wronged the Muslims only in India. It was chasing them all round the globe. Wherever it could, it destroyed them. From the so-called crusades against Salahuddin Ayubi it had fixed on the Muslims as its quarry. It had just split up the Ottoman Empire and parceled it out amongst its own proteges.

Besides, after having seized India had the British wronged only the Hindus? Made only Hindus their slaves? Snatched only the Hindu child's share of bread to feed their own children? The fact was, the whole nation was getting equally ground in the colonial millstone. Hindus could not be separated from the Muslims. It thus looked strange to students of politics that a political party had emerged on the national scene which did not consider the British as the foe but the Hindus who were themselves being crushed under the weight of alien. Not only that. An atmosphere was created so that the imperialist power was even being considered a friend and well-wisher, and there was a readiness to do its bidding, even to the extent that a Muslim soldier felt no qualm in training his gun at the Holy Ka'aba at the behest of the British master.

One corollary of this anti-Hindu attitude of the Muslim League was that all those opposed to the British became suspect in the League's eye. On the one side were those ghazis and mujahideen who, blessed by the teachings of Deoband Darul Uloom and the light of true Islam, were lined up in jihad against the heretical British. On the other side were the nationalist Muslims who, fired by the nationalist spirit and the country's interests, were fighting to wrest freedom from the foreign rulers. Both these categories were denounced by the Muslim League as traitors and were declared ousted from the pale of Islam.

This was thus the first flaw of Muslim League's communal politics-it erred in identifying its enemy; its diagnosis of the ailment was wrong. Naturally, the advantage of it all went to the British.

The Muslim League leaders claim in support of their two-nation theory that its basis was laid by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who had founded the Aligarh Muslim University in opposition to the Islami Darul Uloom of Deoband. But a little research would reveal a different view. Several of his speeches are totally opposed to that theory. Some of these speeches may be found in Makhdoomzada Hassan Mehmood's book 'A Nation is born'. On page 339 there is this address of January 27, 1884, in Gurdaspur.

*We, that are Hindus and Mohammandans, should try to become one heart and soul and act in Unison...*

*In old historical books and traditions you'll have read and heard, and see it even now, that all the people inhabiting one country are designated by the term one nation.*

*The different tribes of Afghanistan are termed as one nation and so the miscellaneous hordes peopling Iran distinguished by the term Persians, though abounding in a variety of thought and religious, are still known as members of one nation. Remember that the*

*words Hindus and Mohamman are meant for religious distinction, otherwise all who reside in this country are all in this particular respect belong to the same nation.*

*These are the different grounds upon which I call both these races which inhabit India by one word, that is, Hindu, meaning to say that they are the inhabitants of Hindustan.*

Thus Sir Syed went to the extent of abandoning even the term 'Mohammadan' and declaring that whoever lived on the Indian soil, no matter what his faith, could be described as Hindu.

A similar view is also taken by Sir Mohammad Iqbal. He calls everyone 'Hindi' and the land as 'our Hindustan', and points out that religion does not teach discord amongst people of the same soil. Religion and religious teachings do not change: such at least is the faith of the Muslims, who believe that after the Holy Prophet our religion had been completed. How then could religious belief change with political views?

This presents the model of the unity and amity he wanted to see prevail between Hindus and Muslims. He envisaged the zinar, the Holy thread worn by the Hindus across their shoulder, threading the beads of tasbeeh sacred to the Muslims. That is the kind of religious tolerance and co-existence he had in mind for two communities and went on to add that anyone who looked on these symbols of the two religions separately from each other had no sight in his eyes.

The fact however, is that the Muslim League through its various resolutions and through Mr. Jinnah's numerous speeches had made the two-nation theory the basis of its politics. Thus the party had confined its politics to only the Muslims; the rest of the Indian were not its concern; in other words it did not claim to be nationalist in the Indian context.

The diagnosis in sum was that Hindus not British were the enemy of Muslims and the cure was that following the two-nation theory India should be divided and Pakistan formed. This was supposed to answer all the problems of the Muslims. It should now be asked how well in actual fact this diagnosis and the prescription proved a cure for the ills of the Muslims.

## Chapter 24 The Disinherited Ones

IT is a historical fact that Muslim League's movement was the strongest where Muslim was in minority. The provision elections of 1937 established this beyond any doubt. On the other hand, of the four provinces where Muslims constituted a majority, far from obtaining any representative role, the Muslim league wasn't able to get a single member elected in two of them, namely in Sindh and NWFP. In the Punjab, out of 84 Muslim members elected only one belonged to Muslim League.

In all these Muslim majority provinces, however, the control anyhow was in the hands of the Muslims; the foremost leaders there were also Muslim-Sir Sikander Hayat Khan in Punjab, Maulvi Fazlul Haq in Bengal, Khan Bahadur Elahi Bakhsh Soomro in Sind, and Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum in NWFP. Thus protection of Muslim rights in these provinces was no issue; it was an issue only in the provinces where non-Muslims were preponderant. It was also here, as we have just noted, that the Muslim League had its greatest appeal, and it was from here that the entire Muslim League leadership was thrown up for the parliament, for the provinces, and generally for the national level politics.

It ought to be coolly, not emotionally, considered how well the Muslim League's later successes helped in all eviating the hardship and deprivations of these minority Muslims provinces. Muslim League's successes came in the form of the partition of India and creation of Pakistan. It is natural there fore to ask how well these Muslims who had provided almost the entire support and strength for the Muslim League benefited from its eventual achievement.

The areas that were asked to be made into Pakistan had been in the hands of the Muslims anyway. The only difference was in the nomenclature-they were not then known as "Pakistan". For practical purposes, then, the Muslim League's two-nation theory was irrelevant to them. If it had any maternal relevance it was for the down-trodden Muslims of Bombay, Madras, Delhi, U.P., Bihar, C.P. and Orissa. How were they benefited in the event? The suffering Muslims belonged to Bombay and Luck now, but Pakistan was made in Lahore and Peshawar; they lived in Bihar and Orissa, Pakistan went to Dhaka.

It is not just for the minority Muslims, who had to keep living where they were, to ask the question, but it is for those in Pakistan also to demand of the Muslim League leaders as to what good the prescription they had devised for

the freedom and prosperity of Muslims has done to those five crores (50 Million) who were left behind in India.

It is also a fact that at the creation of Pakistan the whole of the subcontinent was engulfed in communal fire. Local populations set to cutting one another's throats. When the surviving riot-ravaged refugees used to reach the other side, their condition would become so much more oil on the burning fire. There was hardly a corner of the land where communal lunacy was not rampant. The hatred and hostility between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs had broken all barriers of morality, even basic humanity. They didn't even spare each other's women.

Amidst such circumstances, consider the mental and psychological condition of the helpless Muslims compelled to live along with the Hindus and Sikhs in the aftermath of communal insanity. Add to it the fact that all those who were the leaders of the Muslims transferred themselves en masse to Pakistan, leaving the most devoted party of their following bathing blood and burning in fire. The Muslim government servants, whether in the civil or the military service, from whom the Muslim population could have hoped for succor or at least moral support in their dire straits, they too abandoned ship as it were, and transferred themselves to the safety of Pakistan.

Did it ever bother the conscience of the Muslims League leaders that these poor mass of Muslims who had, at their bidding, given donations, taken out processions, pressed demands, raised slogans and earned the enmity of their friends and neighbours, these people they had in the final outcome left at the mercy of the enemy? Where were the elected leaders at whose behest they had made all the sacrifices? It is a question these leaders have no answer for.

Apart from the political leaders and government officers, the Muslim industrialists, traders and other entrepreneurs also migrated to Pakistan and thus the small Muslims left behind in India found that economic opportunities had also suddenly shrunk for them. The small business and employment that the traders and factory owners used to provide them with became non-existent.

The Indian Muslims were thus left without a shred of religious, political or economic security. The entire prevailing atmosphere was hostile to them. The country was in the grip of fanaticism. Although hundreds of thousands had migrated to Pakistan, there were still five crore (50 Million) Muslims left in bondage to the Hindus, sacrificed to the politics of the Muslim League. They were now at the mercy of their enemy, with almost none of their former leaders remaining there to speak up for them.

Almost the only person who stay behind, who declared that he was not prepared to leave his Muslim brethren in that condition and that he would want to live and die beside them was Nawab Ismail Khan of Lucknow. All the rest saw safety- and prosperity - in travelling, family and all, to the comfort of Pakistan, and leaving in flames the land of their ancestors, their friends and brothers, their Political companions, their faithful servants.

Many of the Muslims left behind were also later compelled by the savagery of non-Muslims to keep trekking to Pakistan in bedraggled caravans, physically and mentally mauled and devastated.

It was obvious, however, that the whole Muslim population in India could not transfer itself to Pakistan even if they could no longer live in the burning inferno and saw the only hope for their life and honour in distant Pakistan. What happened to the ruined mass of people who did seek their sanctuary here is an other story. Those who were rich and resourceful had it made for them: they were soon taking possession of the non-Muslims properties, their bungalows, shops and factories. For the others who had lost their all, who arrived bathed in blood and scorched by flames, Pakistan proved a very different entity.

From the point of view of the Muslims in India, it must look that a political problem was unnecessarily turned into a religious one. Thanks to the Muslim League, the political battle was set on a communal course. If the course adopted were really a political one and had Muslim League's been a political movement, then with the partition the whole issue should have stood resolved. The congress was asking for India's independence. It got it. The British had left. The slavery had ended. The Muslim League was demanding Pakistan. It too got that. So that should have been the end of it. But what actually happened was, because the Muslim League had given religious colour to a political issue, it left the Muslims who remained in India the legacy of a permanent problem. The communalist Hindu was forced to take note that India had been divided on the basis of religion, but crores (Million) of Muslims had still been left in the divided India. For those Hindus, then, the solution of the problem remained incomplete. Which is why the communalism there still refuses to cool off? The Muslims there were in a way made worse off: earlier they were at the mercy of the non-Muslim majority; now they have to contend with the latter's anger and hostility.

The conclusion must be that as the representative of the Muslims of India's non-Muslim majority provinces, the Muslim League could not correctly diagnose their affliction. .

When the diagnosis is wrong, the cure cannot be right. The Muslim League politics should have helped improved the condition of those Muslim. In fact it worsened it, to the point that they are now permanently locked in the state of dependence, deprivation and inequality.

## Chapter 25

### Muslim League's Contradiction

WHILE Muslim League's communal politics had left the country ablaze, there were also forces that set to work among the Muslim and non-Muslims to douse the fire. At a time when virtually the whole nation was roused to lunacy and had reached the level of animals, anyone talking of peace and amity between the Hindus, Muslims and Sikh did admitted seem, if not irrelevant, certainly a bit naive and unrealistic.

Among the Muslims an organised effort in this direction was made by the Khudai Khidmatgars. When the Muslim League bid to break Khudai Khidmatgar ministry intensified, when active sabotage was for the first time introduced in NWFP, politics through Major Khursheed Anwar, and when the tradition of public disturbance and rioting was established here, it became apparent, on the one hand, that the way was opened for anti-national elements to harass and rob people and seize factories and trading establishments through the spread of communal killing, and on the other, that the officials were not particularly concerned about their obligations in this regard, that they were not doing all they could to protect the non-Muslims.

The provincial ministry then requested the Khudai Khidmatgars to volunteer themselves for protection of the life and property of the non-Muslims in Peshawar city. Some six thousand of us came forward. Although some Muslim League workers and certain good-for-nothing louts used to taunt and sneer at the Khudai Khidmatgars for their pains or remind them of Bihar riots or the rampage of Muslims at the hand of Punjab Sikhs, it can be denied that they greatly succeeded in safeguarding the honour and life and properties of the non-Muslims.

However, the British effort was to impress on everyone that the Hindu and Muslim separation was so conclusive that there was no question of their living together. The object was to free the province of non-Muslim population. This suited the Muslim League also. Apart from enabling the seizure of the non-Muslim properties, the flight of the Hindus and Sikhs, who held several seats in the provincial assembly, suited the purposes of both the British and the Muslim League. Thus all the non-Muslims were gathered in the Balahisar fort in Peshawar and then sent off to India.

In India, the Congress leaders, especially Gandhiji, also set to putting off the communal fire. Gandhiji went to the extent of staking his life on it. He went on

a fast-unto-death against the anti-Muslim riots in Calcutta. The example of personal sacrifice created such an atmosphere that apart from the common Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, even the government policemen were deeply affected and broke into tear, and Gandhi eventually ended his fast and embraced thousands of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in the Calcutta ground.

However the communal flames had taken such a hold that if they were put off at one point they broke out at another. Gandhi kept rushing from one place to another determined that they should somehow be ended. It was Calcutta now, Delhi next; East Bengal at one time, Bihar at the other. It was the same Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy who as chief minister of Bengal had led the Muslim procession in pursuance of the Muslim League call for Direct Action; and it was the same place where the communal fire has been first fanned. That Suhrawardy at that place was now setting off with Gandhi to quash the flames of communal politics!

We have seen that when the Muslim League had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan and the idea of a federation based on the concept of three zones and a central government, it had relinquished its demand for Pakistan. And since that place was now founded on the basis of the two nation theory, it had logically also given up its faith in that theory.

The Muslim Leaguers had chosen religion as the basis for their politics. They sought justification for every thing they did in religion. Now religion admitted no tampering. The Muslims in any case believe the prophet (PBUH) to be God's last messenger who had left a complete code of life for the faithful which permitted not a little of addition or deletion. These Muslim League leaders had raised the slogan, "Pakistan ka matlab kiya, La ilaha illallah." What bothered us at the time was how after making the demand for Pakistan synonymous with the basic tenet of Islamic faith, the same Muslim Leaguers could abandon that demand. Religion in no case allowed that a movement started on the basis of the kalmia on one day should be dropped on the next. Did it not then mean a retraction from the kalima itself?

This is the basic problem that any organisation or party that uses religion for advancing its political objective is bound to face. On the one side are the organisations that are purely religious and launch movements that are also guided by religious objectives-such as the one comprising the dedicated scholars belonging to the Deoband University. They considered it their religious duty, yakin to jihad, to conduct a movement to drive out the heretical British imperialism. On the other hand were parties, especially the Muslim League, who pursued their political objectives in the name of religion. They were bound to face difficulties since the course of religion is clear and

straightforward. It permits no compromises, no maneuverings, and no veering or holding back from the main course; though in politics all of this is inherent.

Thus the people who mix politics with religion are destined to face dilemmas like the Muslim Leaguers, who at one stage had to so change their political stance as to give up their demand for Pakistan. Since they had made Pakistan an article of religious faith, it was right to object that they had back tracked not on their political but their religious belief.

A characteristic of Muslim League politics was that its leaders said different things to different people. When Mr. Jinnah came to NWFP he met religious leaders here, among other people. He wrote to the pir of Manki Sharif, Mr. Aminal Hasanat, that Pakistan would be an Islamic state ruled by the Shariah of the prophet Mohammad (PBUH). On the other hand, Sikandar Mirza recalls in his book a dialogue he had with the Quaid-I-Azam on the eve of the departure from Delhi to Karachi:

Before we all left Delhi, I said to Quaid-I-Azam one day, 'Sir, we are all agreed to go to Pakistan; but what kind of government are you going to have? Are you going to have a type of government with accent on Islam?' "No nonsense," he replied, "I am going to have modern government."

Muslim League had on one hand presented Pakistan as the mullah's paradise with streams running with milk and honey, houris and slaves without number, lush fruits of all varieties, no worries about cultivating crops and everything available for the asking. The promise to Pir Manki Sharif about Shariat-I-Mohammadi has been noted. When Muslim League was allowed to join the interim government, one of the ministers it named on its panel was Jogindarnath Mandal, who was a Hindu and a Harijan. This too was a surprise. A self-avowedly religious movement which had assumed the responsibility of safeguarding the interest of Muslims only, names a minister from another community which according to it, was a separate nation, one with which Muslim could not live in the same state!

Let us go further. When the Muslim League succeeded in its mission and the country was divided and Pakistan formed under the two-nation theory, Mr. Jinnah, just three days before the formal announcement that is on August 11, 1947, made a rather detailed declaration of the principles of state policy in the Pakistan constituent assembly. He said:

If you change your past and work together in a spirit that every one of you, no matter what community he belongs to, no matter what is his colour, caste or

creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this state, with equal right, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make.....

I cannot emphasise it too much. We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all those angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis, and so on, and among the Hindus you have Brahamins, Vishanuas, Khattris also Bengalis, Madrasis, and so on will vanish....

You are free to go to your temple, mosques, or any other place of worship. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the state.....

We are starting with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens, and equal citizens of one state.....

Now I think that we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state.

G. Allana, Historic Documents P. 545-546

It is worth noting that this speech was not delivered at a press conference, or at a public meeting or a reception. This announcement was made before the members of Pakistan's constituent assembly, whose responsibility was to draw up a constitution for the Islamic state of Pakistan and to lay down the fundamental rights of its citizens.

The position of Mr. Jinnah should also be kept in mind. He was, on behalf of the Muslims of the subcontinent, the formal president of the Muslim League organisation. He was also the Governor-General of Pakistan; and the elected president of the constituent assembly.

Thus, there was no representative body of which Mr. Jinnah was not then the Guiding spirit.

Finally, this was a written speech. As a veteran barrister and parliamentarian, it was perhaps the first time that he was reading from a prepared text. He apparently understood, and wished to be understood, the historic importance of his enunciation.

## Chapter 26

### Famous First Words

NOW let us consider the various aspects of Quaid-I-azam's address to the Pakistan constituent assembly of August 11, 1947.

The first point is that Mr. Jinnah used the words "communities" instead of "nations" for Hindus and Muslims—'majority community' and 'minority community' and 'Hindu community' and 'Muslim community.' This seems to me the central point of the speech. The rest is only a paraphrasing and amplification of it.

An other notable point is, when he mentions Muslims' he also goes on to refer to Shias and Sunnis and Punjabis and Pushtoons; similarly 'Hindus' are said to include apart from Brahmins, Shudras and Khatrias, Bengalis and Madrasis also. In other words, people are identified not only by their beliefs and sects but also by their cultural environs and geographical locations. Thus Mr. Jinnah negates his own earlier argument that a religious body of people needs a separate place for themselves. He also eliminates the distinctions of castes and creeds.

He sums up the essence of his postulate at the end in the words that "Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense.... But in the political sense". He lays this down as a principle, as an ideal. This exactly points to the basic difference that had existed between the Khudai Khidmatgars and the Congress on the one hand and the Muslim League on the other. That was just what we used to say—that religious status and personal belief was an individual's concern; politically all the inhabitants of India stood on the same plane. Only after Pakistan was made on the basis of the Muslim League contention that Hindus and Muslims were two nations, here was Mr. Jinnah telling the members of Pakistan's constituent assembly with the fullest sense of responsibility that Hindus and Muslims were not two nations but only two communities and that the state made no distinction between them.

The question is, if in deed that was Mr. Jinnah's view, why then all this bloodshed and rioting, this despoliation of hundred of thousands of homes, this creation of communal hatred and insanity, which had involved such a mass of people and had left such lasting scares that mere speeches could make no amends for?

It proves only one thing. As Mountbatten had said, the frenzy created in the country by the Muslim League showed that the latter had not stopped to

consider the many aspects of its demand for Pakistan. It was not even prepared to listen to anyone else who drew its attention to the implications.

However, now that Pakistan was made and its government handed over to the Muslim League, these people felt compelled to take the issue of nation and nationality, state and statehood seriously. And thinking seriously, they saw the contradiction of their politics. If religion was to remain the basis of statehood then there was no justification for the various Muslim states to maintain their separate entities. Secondly, the non-Muslim population of a Muslim state had then to seek its home elsewhere.

Such anomalies made Mr. Jinnah think of a logical way out. He saw that Pakistan, especially its eastern wing, had a vast non-Muslim population. With the emergence of Pakistan all these people also had to be considered Pakistanis and part of the same one nation of the country, since it was not possible that only the Muslim citizens were counted as Pakistani and the others as constituting another nation. This showed up the stark inadequacy of the former concept. So the easy solution was, whereas, according to the Muslim League's earlier contention, Muslims and Hindus were the once two separate nations and they could not live together on the common soil of India, now in the land called Pakistan, where the numerical strength was reversed and Muslims were now in a majority, the two nations had become one and they could all be designated as Pakistanis, and to distinguish them on religious grounds they could now only be referred to as communities.' The odd thing was this Pakistan was formed on part of the same land of India, only the name had been changed. And just this had caused all the contradictions between the Hindus and the Muslims to be ended, the argument that their different beliefs did not permit their living in the same country no longer applied!

In the discussion on ideology and other basic flaw has to be pointed out. With all its drum-beating about Pakistan ideology the Muslim league sought to create the impression that a country needed to have its own ideology. The fact is, a state, a country, a territory as such has no ideology. Land has nothing to do with any ideology; only individuals, organization parties do. And the latter's ideology applies to a land only so long as they reign over it. For instance, the landmass of Russia has had no fixed, ingrained ideology. It was once ruled by the czars. When a revolution swept them away and power came into the hands of the Bolsheviks a socialist order came to be established there. Similarly in India, the crores (Million) of its population had been the slave of the British. That order ended with the leaving of the British and the independence and partition of the country.

Pakistan as such too had no ideology; it was the Muslim league ideology that applied to the country. It will continue to apply as long as the Muslim League continues to hold sway here. When ever another organisation with a different ideology replaces the league it will apply its ideology here, and Pakistan's ideology will become that of its new rulers'.

But here, the curious thing was Mr. Jinnah did not even wait for the coming to power of other party. On August 11, 1947, Muslim league abandoned its two-nation theory and virtually adopted the non-communal concept of state which in political terminology is called secularism. Muslim League leaders might be asked about the ideology they subscribed to following this speech of Mr. Jinnah, who now, at the start of the new country's journey, specifically urged the League leaders to break away from the past and said that there would now be a new concept of the state. It is only logical that whoever considers Mr. Jinnah as his leader, pledges faith in his political acumen, his wisdom and perception, should also accept what he says. He should recognise that the Muslim League's two-nation concept was no longer that of Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan, but that after that declaration, he had committed the country to secularism or non-communalism. It should in fact be recognised that India was divided following the communal politics promoted by the British, and once the British left, their politics also came to end. The whole situation however is a true illustration of the Persian line.

*"A stupid man will do what the wise man does, but only after a lot of damage has been done".*

One point to note is that the British had adopted the policy, accepted by the Muslim League, that when the Indians would exercise their right of vote it would be on the communal basis of separate electorate- that is, Hindus would vote for Hindus and Muslims for Muslims. The Congress on the other hand had favoured joint electorate. Following Mr. Jinnah's clear declaration that in Pakistan there would be no distinction between the citizens on the basis of castes and creeds, it was logical that the Muslim League too should have adopted the principle of joint electorate.

Freedom from the British bondage was drawing close. But the country was in flames on all sides. People were out in hunt of one another. None was safe from the savagery of fellow humans-neither the old nor the infant; neither men nor women. The entire population was out to cut throats, suck blood. Homes were being looted; refugee camps were spilling over with people; children and young daughters, used to treading on carpets, were now rolling in blood and dust. Indeed all human values, all decency and compassion lay ground in the earth.

The irony and the pity was that pity was that this sudden descent to inhuman depths occurred at the moment of the nation's victory in its freedom struggle. The leaping flames, the overflowing streams of blood and the screams of resounding anguish were accompanied by drumbeats, military parades and guards of honour, by singing and dancing and illuminations to celebrate independence. In the city of Karachi, on the one side was the blood and dust-covered caravans of refugees dragging themselves after a journey through fire and blood, and the roadsides and open spaces teeming with people who once didn't often even walk on the ground. On the other side were the rejoicings of independence, the declaration of the day as the historic day of the nation's independence.

Lord Mountbatten along with his wife arrived in Karachi. As the representative of the British crown he was to administer oath to Mr. Jinnah as the governor general of Pakistan and to formally announce the end of the British Raj.

Surprisingly, neither Mr. Jinnah nor even Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, who had been designated as the country's prime minister, went to receive him. The person who went on behalf of the government of Pakistan was the governor of Sind, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. The Muslim League leaders were afflicted with a curious mentality. They made only minor details a matter of their prestige. They saw their bigness only in the belittling of others.

There was another interesting episode. Mr. Jinnah said that since he was Pakistan's governor general and the president of the constituent assembly, he should sit on the highest chair and Mountbatten should have a lower one. But the British were one better at the game. They said that Mr. Jinnah would become the governor general only after he had been administered the oath and the powers transferred to him. Until then he was like any other person. To drive the point further home, they added that even a governor general Mr. Jinnah's position would remain lower than the viceroy's.

After the issue of the size of the chair was resolved, another problem cropped up. It was rumoured that some Sikhs had planned to throw a bomb at Mr. Jinnah's car while he would be on his way for the oath-taking. Soon on his arrival Mountbatten was asked whether in view of these reports he would like the programme, to go ahead as planned. Mountbatten said that that was up to the Pakistan authorities; it was entirely their show and their responsibility. He was told that Mr. Jinnah had left the decision to him. He replied that in the case his view was that since he would also be with Mr. Jinnah in the motorcade it was unlikely that the Sikhs would carry out their scheme, since that way they

would not just blow up the governor general of Pakistan but also the governor general of India. The procession was thus taken out as planned and when after the ceremonies the two dignitaries arrived back Mr. Jinnah remarked to Mountbatten, "Thank God I have got you back alive". Mountbatten immediately rejoined, "Thank God I have got you back alive". It was in these circumstances that the country got its independence, all state power were assumed, the British were made to wind up, and the union Jack was brought down after 200 years and the Pakistan flag hoisted in its place.

## Chapter 27

### Legacy of Colonial Interests

In Pakistan's first government Mr. Jinnah was the governor general, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan the prime Minister, and the other prominent Muslim leaguers, like Mr. Chundrigar and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar. Were all named the ministers. A Harijan, Mr. Logindarnath Mandal was also included as law minister.

Muslim League had declared that in the Islamic state of Pakistan, it would be the holy Prophet's Shariat and the law of the Holy Quran that would prevail. But now when the Islamic state was formed, people noticed that of all the portfolios. That of Shariat-i-Mohammadi, had been assigned to a Harijan. This became an embarrassment for the country's mullahs and pirs; especially so for a person like Pir of Manki Sharif who had preserved a letter from the Quaid-i-Azam promising Shariat and Islamic order in Pakistan. Handing over the country's top judicial post to a non-Muslim, making him the Qazi-ul-qazat of an Islamic state, did seem like a mockery of the earlier resolves. Who could give a satisfactory explanation of that?

There was however another aspect of this which has been mentioned earlier. We discussed at some length how the British had adopted the scheme to carve up the country in order to advance their imperialist policies. They had planned an Islamic ideological front to withstand the feared onslaught of Russia's communist ideology. It was designed to stretch from Turkey to China and to act like a halter round the Russian neck. If this required dividing up India and a bloodbath of the country's Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs or if needed fragmentation of the Islamic world, so be it. The British were not really a foe of the Hindus or a friend of the Muslims, they were promoting the Pakistan plan not of any good will for Muslims but in answer to their own international objectives.

We also saw that at one time the British, in accordance with Lord Wavell's Breakdown Plan, had to decide that if they could not remain in control of the entire subcontinent, they would let the Hindu majority provinces go, but since the making of Pakistan was vital to their interests, all the British civilian and military personnel would shift bag and baggage to the Muslim-majority area. However this plan was shot down by the Labour party government in London. Wavell was a soldier. His vision was limited. The politicians in Britain knew that the times of military conquests had past, and that no country could remain in

military occupation of another for a long period. They had considered the issues deeply and from all angles.

Following the partition plan, the British could see that both the new-born entities had emerged weakened. India had remained compact but strategically its borders had become less defensible. On the north-west frontier the mountain barriers extending from Khyber to Bolan and further up to Sinkiang on the Chinese border had passed out of its hands. Similarly on the Eastern flank, Assam had become more vulnerable since the river routes, railways, roads & airfields had partially gone to east Pakistan, So had the three important ports of Chilian, Khulna and Chittagong, which also meant the loss of the heretofore exclusive control over the Bay of Bengal. Apart from these geographical defences, India was also deprived of the source of major military strength- the one which the British referred to as P.M., short for Punjabi Mussalman. According to the British the P.M. had been most useful in spreading and consolidating the British power. There was hardly a corner in the vastness of the British Empire where this Punjabi Mussalman had not shed his blood for the sake of Britain's colonial and imperialist's interests.

Economically too, India faced a host of new problems. If the factories were left on one side, their raw material was now on the other. Similarly, the manufactures and their principal markets were now divided by a barrier.

In short, the British had succeeded in leading the country to such defence and economic dependence that, along with the rampant poverty, it would for a long time kept it tied the interests of the western powers.

Pakistan's case was even more complicated and challenging. The biggest problem was geographical - the country was divided into two parts separated by one thousand miles of Indian territory\_ a territory where the consequences of the partition were still fresh, where the blood shed in the communal riots was still warm. Pakistan had no choice but to depend wholly on India for all communications and flow of goods between its two wings. Besides this, there were formidable economic problems. To tame and colonise the desert and the barren and holly regions of west Pakistan and to reclaim the inundated parts of East Pakistan, to make them productive, to set up essential industries, and to take the country towards to developed stage required not years but ages \_pending which the country was bound to remain in thrall to the western and the affluent government of the world.

However, the most dangerous elements in the partition of India in my view was the hatred and hostility created and which the communal riots turned into a cancer. The worst destabilising factor were the refugees who had to migrate

from one country to the other in rags, deprived of everything they had, including in many cases the honour of their women-folk. After their experiences any state of normalcy between the two countries, leave alone one of mutual amity and co-operation, was unthinkable. It was thus natural that the two countries should there after plunge into a mad race for arms. Instead of spreading the benefits of independence and engaging in the task of removing poverty from their lands they were compelled by mutual hostility and suspicion to return to abject dependence on the western powers.

Concerning India and the congress the British knew that they had struggled hard and sacrificed a great deal for the sake of national independence. The congress had emerged as the elected ruling organisation of independent India and they did not expect that it would want close relationship with them. Besides the Indian leaders had for a long time been involved in the national movement. They had acquired awareness and a breadth of vision that gave them a clear understanding not only of regional politics but also of international affairs. They knew well of British imperialism's designs and objectives. Britain was under no illusion that it could use them for advancement of its interests.

About Pakistan, however, it felt better assured. It saw that the government here was in the hands of an organisation, the Muslim League, which had done nothing for the nations' independence from slavery to the British. All its opposition had been concentrated on the congress, and that had only made it dependent on the British and obliged it to cooperate with them. The British also knew that in the entire country there was one, and only one, organisation that had taken part in the national crusade against them, the Khudai Khimatgars of the Frontier province. But they had no fear from it, since they also knew that because of organisation's uncompromising opposition both to the British bondage and the British communal politics it was placed in the same relationship with the Muslim league as it had been with the British, and hence the Muslim league government would be bound to treat it exactly in the same way as the British would want. Britain could also see that being a new country, Pakistan would take a long time to find its feet and hence it would remain dependent on Britain's assistance in the future.

There was another helpful factor with regard to Pakistan. The rulers here were almost all non-local. They had migrated from India and were refugees themselves. Since their roots were not in the soil, the springs of their strength were bound to lie in the Muslim League itself, which in the past had failed to develop a political following even in the Punjab. In the absence of a strong organisation into the eager grasp of the bureaucracy. The situation was thus

altogether after the heart of the British. They thus felt reassured about Pakistan's further dependence on them.

They also quickly noticed that the Pakistan government was following exactly the course they had counted on. Almost all the key posts in the new country went to their own men. When time to nominating governors of the provinces, all except Sindh went to the British – Sir Fredrick Bourme for Bengal, Sir Francis Mudie for Punjab, and Sir George Cunningham for NWFP. Sindh got Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. That might be mentioned here. Since the capital of Sindh as well as of the country as a whole was Karachi, and since the governor house of the Province had to be taken over for the governor-general of the country, the Sindh governor had to be released.

Similarly the Chiefs of the three armed services were selected from the British general Sir Frank Masservy for the Army, Air vice marshal Perry Keane for the Air Force and Rear Admiral Jefford for the Navy.

In the central secretariat five secretaries were British, several other senior positions both in the civil and military wings were also held by the British. Sikandar Mirza in his autobiography wrote of these men in glowing terms-how they worked day and night to get the country on the rails. He was particularly rhapsodic about one of them. Gen. Roses Makkay, who was responsible for the reorganisation of the Pakistan Army. He mentioned two other British officers who helped the country take possession of Gilgit and annex Skardu. According to Sikandar Mirza these men organised an uprising among the scouts there which paved the way for the annexation. "In the most northern sector, things went well. We were able to take over Gilgit Agency and Skardu, here a rising of the Gilgit Scouts was organised by the two British officers with the scouts who were pro-Pakistan.

## Chapter 28

### Inheriting the British Mantle

NWFP was in some ways special case. It has the most sensitive from the point of view of Britain's century-long imperialist and colonial objectives. Britain's problem had always of course been the fact that this Muslim majority province had remained opposed to Muslim League Politics and Britain's own world designs alike. Indeed, in the last election before independence, the Khudai Khidmatgars had obtained a two-thirds majority in the provincial assembly.

For this reason it becomes important both for the British and the Pakistan Government to deal with this province and the Khudai Khidmatgars first. It used to be said about Mr. Jinnah in those days that he believed that the Pathan yields to no one except the British. Probably it was that belief that led to the appointment of so many British officers in key position in the early years of Pakistan that it used to be difficult to believe that the British had really left and we were a free people. The Governor was a Briton; the chief secretary was a Briton; and so were the secretaries of various departments, the police chief, and even the secretaries of the public works and of the electricity departments.

In addition to the NWFP, there was also the worry about the tribal areas. In the light of the century-long experience of the British, it had been made clear that the Maliks of these tribes should be assured that Britain's resources would remain available to the new state. Even the British officers would stay on in senior positions and would even be in supreme command of the army. The tribals had yet to announce their allegiance to Pakistan, and it was considered necessary that they be first assured that there was going to be no material break from the past, that a kind of continuity would be maintained. They could even sign their new agreement with the British rather than with the Pakistan authorities.

The British had convinced the government of Pakistan that they would themselves want to reassure the tribals that the Pakistan government was their true successor and that they were going to remain in full strength to give Pakistan the necessary support and stability. It was believed to be best, therefore, that all the agreements reached from time to time between the colonial rulers and the tribals should be renewed for the Government of Pakistan only through the British governor and officials.

Considering the strategic importance of the area, the British were not only concerned about their past agreements with the tribals but also had an eye on the future policies of the government of neighbouring Afghanistan. The British

government remained true to the view that since the government of Pakistan was its rightful successor, all the past accords negotiated by the government of India in this region would automatically pass on to Pakistan. It had also made it clear to Afghanistan that since Pakistan was now a member of the British Commonwealth, the agreement reached between the British and Afghanistan would remain in force in relation to Pakistan as well. In other words, the Durand Line that had heretofore been considered the international boundary between British India and Afghanistan would continue to remain exactly the same between Pakistan and Afghanistan; it would now demarcate the limits of the commonwealth. Britain also emphasised to Kabul that since Pakistan was now a member of the commonwealth, Britain also emphasised to Kabul that since Pakistan was not a member of the commonwealth, the defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity would be a responsibility of the British government.

This must have surprised the Afghanistan government. There was a time when following the German attack on Russia and the latter's retreat right up to Moscow, the British had felt reassured that Germany had early conquered Europe and if it also succeeded in defeating Russia then the danger it had continually felt from the latter in the subcontinent would end. Besides, when Japan had overrun the British colonies one after the other and, annexing Burma, had started bombing Calcutta, the British were in panic, and were said to have themselves sent word to Kabul that it demand from British the restoration of the Afghan territories that, as the Frontier province and Baluchistan, it had annexed to India under the treaty of 1893.

There was thus time when British itself was keen to restore these areas to Afghanistan, and there was now this situation now that Germany and Japan had lost the war and the Soviets had won and there was a need in the British view to revive the Red bogey-that the same Britain had been reminded of the sacredness of the Durand Line and its own responsibility with regard to that international boundary.

On the face of it, the British were anxious about Pakistan's integrity and stability. In fact, their concern was their own imperialist interest. They wished to see that Afghanistan remained no more than a mere buffer state, and that their anti-Soviet objectives in the region were promoted through Pakistan.

This talk of succession reminds one of a related situation. When a political party by the name of Muslim League had emerged here in NWFP, it was seen that although it kept swearing by Islam at every step, its leaders were bereft of the basic human considerations, let alone the primary demands of good political conduct. Since they could offer no argument against the Khudai Khidmatgars, they used to malign their services and sacrifices as coming from a

party that was an agent of the Hindu Congress. They adopted the line of the British governor Sir George Cunningham – that since the Hindus were not a people of the Book, and since the Khudai Khidmatgars were working in concert with the Hindu Congress for national independence and freedom from British slavery, hence this partnership was in fact a partnership with heathenish, with Kufr.

The Muslim League spoke in the same vein and declared that the Khudai Khidmatgars were the friends of kafirs. Some of the Muslim Leaguers even went beyond delivering such fatwa's and descended to the level of using abusive language in their speeches and statements, calling the Khudai Khidmatgars the natural off spring of Hindus. But when during the Pakistan-making phase communal riots were engineered to drive out the non-Muslims, it were the same Muslim League leaders who took possession of the evacuee properties, the big houses and factories left behind, as their rightful due.

I used to question the Muslim Leaguers on this strange logic – that when we were fighting alongside the Congress for the independence of the country, these gutless Muslim Leaguers used to denounce us as the off-springs of Hindus, but now that the Hindus had left behind billions of rupees worth of properties the same Muslim Leaguers have jumped and seized them. I would argue that according to all temporal and divine laws the true legatees of fathers are their sons, but look who was laying claims to the estates and properties left behind by the Hindus; it should be clear that whoever had the authorisation from the Hindus, he alone had the right to their inheritance, and he alone was their offspring.

It was, indeed, an odd situation. When it was a question of struggling and giving sacrifices for the independence of the country against the British, the Khudai Khidmatgars were blamed for being the progeny of Hindus; but when it was a matter of the inheritance of these same Hindus, the Muslim Leaguers were the first to stake the claim that it were they who were their rightful legatees. Now leave the decision to the Muslim Leaguers themselves as to who were the true progeny of the Hindus, they or the Khudai Khidmatgars.

Similarly, take this issue of being successors to the British. What real basis did the Muslim League have to claim that status? Did the Muslim League launch any movement, wage any struggle, and render any sacrifice to qualify for that right? If the Congress claimed to be the natural inheritors of power in India, it had a basis to do so. It had rendered invaluable sacrifices in the cause of independence; thousands of men and women had lost their lives, hundreds of thousands had languished endlessly in jails; and after years of bitter struggle they had forced independence out of the grasp of British imperialism.

In contrast, what had been the role of Pakistan's ruling party, the Muslim League? It had been an ally of the British, and in the conflict between the British and the Congress it remained on the farmer's side. Leave alone sacrifices in the cause of independence, it actually stayed hostile to all the movements launched in that cause. Not only was it opposed to the Congress, it was even wholly unsympathetic to all the Muslim organisations fighting the British - to the righteous scholars and leaders of Deoband, whom it did not even desist from abusing. It was not prepared to recognise the efforts of other individual Muslims who were contributing to the national movement for independence. On the contrary, it had kept pressing the British not to recognise any other Muslim or Muslim organisation except the Muslim League as representative of the country's entire Muslims.

The conclusion then must be that since the Muslim League had no role in liberating this land from British slavery and since the party had rendered no sacrifice, waged no battle to obtain this real estate, and since, on the contrary, its exertions had largely been in support of the British, the question of Muslim League's succession is reduced only to its assuming the mantle of the British. The Muslim League will have to accept that in laying claim to British succession it was only avowing to be in the direct line of British descent, to be the natural heir to the British.

Let us leave this issue here. We should next look at what happened after independence to the Muslim League and to the political parties that had been opposed to the British. In the light of historical events and confidential records we shall examine how following World War II and the liquidation of their empire, the British were obliged to pass one their designs in the region to the U.S. We shall also see how, true to tradition, the Muslim League allowed itself to be used by Uncle Sam, its new masters, for the promotion of the latter's neo-colonialist and neo-imperialist policies in the international arena. And how the Muslim League leaders used the sacred name of Islam to make other Muslim countries as well satellites of the U.S.

It is a matter of some satisfaction that just as the British have preserved their confidential papers in their archives, so there are secret American documents also, some of which have come to my hand. There is much in them for the student of history and for the nationalist Pakistani. I will take them up in my next book.

## THE AUTHOR

Born in Utmanzai near Charsadda in Peshawar District on 11th January 1917. Initial education at the Azad Islamia High School established by his father Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Was its first student in 1922. Later shifted to Public School Dera Dun run by an Irish. Did his Senior Cambridge in 1933 when he developed eye trouble and the doctors advised him no more studies.

Began his political career as a Khudai Khidmatgars in 1942. Sent to jail for the first time in 1943 under the Frontier Crimes Regulations without trial but released shortly afterwards. Was arrested and detained umpteen times, before and after the partition of the Sub-Continent, while fighting for the right of the people. Was member of the All India Congress Committee and Joint Secretary of the NWFP Congress in 1947. Jailed in 1948 without trial and freed by the Federal Govt. in 1954 because there were no detention orders. Elected to the National and Provincial Assemblies in 1970 on NAP (National Awami Party, one of the leading most political parties of Pakistan dedicated to the democratic traditions) ticket. Elected leader of the Combined opposition in the National Assembly. Has been President of the NAP, NDP for several times. Currently President of the Awami National Party. NAP was banned in February 1975 and the author was arrested along with many other party leaders. Put on trial before Hyderabad Tribunal and freed by the Court in December 1977. A widely traveled politician. Attended twice the Peace Conference held by the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organisation in Stockholm in 1958 and Copenhagen in 1986.