

UNIONIST - MUSLIM LEAGUE RELATIONS AND THE PUNJAB ADMINISTRATION

Punjab was considered to be the key to the Indian Muslim politics not only by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan and the leader of the All-India Muslim League (AIML) but also by the Congress hierarchy, the Sikh leadership and the British policy-makers in India and London. Mr. Jinnah in his speeches and statements before and after the elections of 1945-6, declared that the key to the creation of Pakistan lay in the hands of Punjab Muslims and that the Punjab was the cornerstone of his Pakistan. The Congress and the Sikh leadership also thought that the Punjab held the key to the unity of India. It was perhaps the only province which could have prevented the division of India and the creation of Pakistan. In Talbot's words, "Pakistan's creation depended on the Punjab".¹ Therefore, the outcome of the 1946 elections in India were to determine the future of Indian Muslims and substantiate or otherwise the Muslims League's claim that they were a nation and that the Muslim League was the sole representative of Muslim opinion in British India. These elections were thus fought only on one agenda that was: Pakistan or no Pakistan.

It may be mentioned that in the 20th century Punjab, policies of the British administration in the Punjab were focused on at least on one major objective that they should do their utmost to keep the Punjab away from the mainstream Indian politics. "Provincialized politics" within

the Punjab with little or no connection with the “outside political parties and their leaders” was deeply encouraged by the successive governors in the Punjab like Sir. Michael O’Dwyer,² Sir. Edward MacLagan, Sir Malcolm Hailey, Sir Herbert Emerson, Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, Sir Henry Craik, Sir Bertrand Glancy and Sir Evan Jenkins. All these governors continued this policy with a *status quo* vision with sincerity and deep commitment. Governors correspondence with the Viceroys unravel the fact that the visits to Lahore by leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Bose, Azad and Jinnah had always been that of sadness, pain, worries or at least of greatest attention. Secret and confidential reports also indicate the extent of Punjab’s British administrators involvement in the affairs of what they described in their letters as “Home Grown Politicians”. With a great deal of success, the Punjab administration was able to create a very dedicated class of loyal supporters of the British *raj* among the Punjab Muslims, (represented by the Unionist Party) the Sikhs and the followers of Hindu Mahasabha.³ This loyalist class seriously and most sincerely believed that the interests of their communities they represent were identical with those of the British government. In 1924, the Punjab Unionist party⁴ was established to follow this policy as a role model among of course other objectives such as to protect the interest of the landed classes.

The bond of solidarity between the Punjab administration and the Unionist hierarchy strengthened as the time went by and reached its climax at the time of 1945-6 elections in the Punjab. In summa of support, guidance, patronage and supervision was provided to the Unionist Party leadership in their dealings with other all-India based political parties like the Congress and the All India Muslim League. It may be noted that a majority of the members of Punjab assembly used to spend huge amounts

of money during their election campaign and therefore, they expected material advantages not only for themselves but also for their relatives and close supporters in the form of an appointment as registrar, honorary magistrate and even on lower positions in the administration.⁵

1937 Elections in the Punjab

As soon as the Unionist party became the ruling force from 1923 onwards, when very shrewd Punjabi politicians like Sir. Mian Fazl-i-Husain⁶, who was also leader of the Unionist party, became a senior minister in the Punjab cabinet, the Punjab Muslim League and Congress party in Punjab had begun to loose their strength. The conservative leaders in the Punjab Muslim League under Sir Muhammad Shafi's leadership were advised by the Punjab's administration to revolt against the supporters of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on various important political developments from time to time. The revolt against Mr. Jinnah became very serious splitting the Punjab Muslim League into two groups – the Jinnah group and the Shafi group. These deep divisions had earlier been created with the British support on the eve of conclusion of historic Lucknow Pact of 1916 between the Congress and the Muslim League.

The second important rift was on the issue of proposals (the Dehli Muslim Proposals)⁷ presented by Quaid-i-Azam to resolve the communal problem in India. The other important issue was to cooperate or boycott the all-white Simon Commission appointed by the British Government. On the last two issues, Mr. Jinnah was sincerely trying to find a solution of ever-increasing communalism in Indian politics and at the same time he was trying to establish a common front for the freedom of India. But the Punjabi group of politicians with the support of British administration in India, engineered a *coup d'état*

against Mr. Jinnah's leadership and successfully relegated the All India Muslim League to the background. At this point in time, both the British administration and the Congress party were happy that in their opinion, Mr. Jinnah could no longer represent the Muslims of British India. The All India Muslim Conference with official patronage emerged as a political organization under the leadership of Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan to represent the Muslims opinion in India replacing the All India Muslim League with all practical purposes. As a follow-up, the British Governor of the Punjab and the UP arranged a very high position for the Unionist party's top brass, their allies and also for their nominees to assume a leading role in all the negotiations for constitutional advance in India at the Round Table Conferences in London in 1930's leading to the Government of India Act – 1935. The All India Muslim League had little to say in these negotiations and it was under these circumstances that Mr. Jinnah had to spend a few years in self-exile in London.

In 1934, the Quaid-i-Azam returned to India with a new mission and a new vision to revive the Muslim League at center and provincial levels. However, the actual reorganization started in 1936 to contest the upcoming elections a year later. Due to the shortage of time, Mr. Jinnah decided to re-establish links with the already entrenched regional and provincial political parties in various provinces. In the Punjab, the Unionist boss, Sir Fazl-i-Husain, was requested to preside over a session of the Muslim League; but calculating the advantages and disadvantages of his alliance with a purely Muslim Party, Fazl-i-Husain refused to oblige Mr. Jinnah.⁸ The Unionist Party leaders had decided to challenge the revival of the Punjab Muslim League and defeat Jinnah's efforts to put a new life in to it. The Unionist Party was the in-charge of the corridors of the powers in the Punjab and therefore,

their leaders were in the driving seats. Opinion-polls in the leading Punjab's newspapers and officials estimates indicated that the Unionist candidates will win in the upcoming elections. Private papers, letters and correspondence to and from the Unionist leaders indicated that they had made plans to keep the Punjab Muslim League out of politics and to keep the Punjab Muslims away from the activities of the Punjab Muslim League under the leadership of Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, who later became Punjab's Chief Minister being extremely rude advised Jinnah to keep his finger out of Punjab pie – 'and if the meddles – Jinnah might burn his fingers'. As a follow up, the Unionist machinery also bribed some journalists in the Punjab and pressured some eminent people threatening them with dire consequences, in case they did not support the Unionist candidates. The PML's supporters were given the impression that their continued support for Muslim League could perhaps make their lives uncomfortable. The daily *Inqilab* and the *Eastern Times* wrote against the central leadership of the Muslim League for disturbing the political situation, peace and tranquility in the Punjab. No wonder the Quaid-i-Azam later issued a statement saying that "the Punjab is the most official ridden province and that some leaders of the Punjab were the creatures of the British government".

As anticipated, in the 1937 elections the Unionist party was able to win a heavy mandate of the Muslims of the Punjab. On the other hand the Punjab Muslim League was able to win only two seats in the Punjab Assembly. One of the winning candidates, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan deserted the PML as soon as the results were officially announced. Raja Sahib was offered a position of Parliamentary secretary-ship of the ruling Unionist Party. Sir Fazl-i-Husain died in 1936, leaving the way clear for

Sir Sikander Hayat Khan to become the first Chief Minister of the Punjab under the newly introduced provincially autonomy under the act of 1935. Sir Sikander was the strongest Chief Minister in India getting the support of 120 out of 175 members of the Punjab Assembly. He laid the foundation of the strongest pro-government ministry in the Punjab.

Sikander-Jinnah Pact and Revival of Punjab Muslim League

Contrary to his expectations, the Congress party soon after resuming power in India made Sir Sikander's life extremely difficult in the Punjab. The Punjab Congress and their allies like the Khaksars, Majlis-e-Itihad-e-Millat and the Ahrars pooled their resources to give Sir Sikander a very tough opposition. The Congress leader, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru sent secret messages, which were intercepted by secret agencies in the Punjab and brought into the attention to the premier and these messages implied that the Punjab Congress, their supporters and allies should make their best efforts to not only topple the Sikander ministry but also replace with a Congress ministry. Nehru also gave threats to Sir Sikander through his speeches and statements by painting Sir Sikander and his associates in the Punjab as lackeys and *darbaries* of the British imperialism. Nehru had also been issuing statements by adopting a highly provocative posture picking up quarrels and throwing challenges to other non-Congress ministries (especially Sikander's and Fazlul Haq's ministries) and also at the same time questioning the representative character of the all India Muslim League and its leader, Quaid-i-Azam, Jinnah.

In one of his aggressive speeches, Nehru said: "There are only two forces in the country, the Congress and the Government... To vote against the Congress candidate

is to vote for the continuance of British domination... It is the Congress alone which is capable of fighting the government. The opponents of the Congress are bound with each other by a community of interests. Their demands have nothing to do with the masses.”⁹ “Wolpert observed that Nehru’s attitude was not different from that of Gandhi. His political errors of judgment in prodding and challenging Jinnah to leave elitist politics and reach down to the Muslim masses helped him charter a course which would ‘stir’ the Muslim masses awaken them and lure them to march behind Muslim leadership with the cry of Islam in danger.”¹⁰

In response of the above speech of Nehru, Mr. Jinnah replied: “I refused to line up with the Congress”¹¹ Jinnah insisted, when he heard Nehru’s simplistic analysis in Calcutta early in January. “There is a third party in this country and that is the Muslims.”¹² A few days later Jinnah publicly warned Nehru and the Congress to “*Leave the Muslims alone*”¹³; but sensing victory, Nehru refused to be intimidated and decided, instead of backing away from India’s Muslim electorate, to seek to convert the vast mass of them to Congress’s platform. “Mr. Jinnah . . . objects to the Congress interfering with Muslim affairs in Bengal and calls upon the Congress to let Muslims alone... Who are these Muslims apparently only those who follow Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League.”¹⁴ “What does the Muslim League stand for”¹⁵ Nehru asked, with gratuitous insult and acerbity he would long live to regret. “Does it stand for the independence of India, for anti-imperialism? I believe not. It represents a group of Muslims, no doubt highly estimable persons, for functioning in the higher regions of the upper middle classes and having no contacts with the Muslim masses and few even with the Muslim lower middle class. May I suggest to Mr. Jinnah that I come into greater touch

with the Muslim masses than most of the members of the Muslim League?”¹⁶

Later Jinnah responded by saying “What can I say to the busybody president of the Congress?” Jinnah remarked of Nehru in an interview several months later. “He seems to carry the responsibility of the whole world on his shoulders and must poke his nose into everything except minding his own business.” Stanley Wolpert argues: “It would not be the last of Nehru’s political errors of Judgment in his dealings with Jinnah, but it was one of the most fatal mistakes he ever made in a moment of hubris. More than Iqbal, it was Nehru who charted a new mass strategy for the League, prodding and challenging Jinnah to leave the drawing rooms of politics to reach down to the hundred million Muslims.”

Growth of the Punjab Muslim League.

Jawaharlal Nehru’s statements against Sir Sikander Hayat Khan and his arguments against Mr. Jinnah proved to be a blessing in disguise for the growth of Punjab Muslim League and a milestone for the serious Muslim League-Unionist cooperation in the Punjab. These developments paved the way for the revival of moribund PML giving them a window of opportunity hitherto denied under the British model of improvising party politics at regional basis. Sir Sikander Hayat Khan and his party could no longer afford to be politically isolated and some sort of alliance with the Punjab Muslim League, no matter how loose it may be, was essential for the survival of Sikander Ministry. But the price to pay to the PML was at least to open the gates of the Punjab for its political activities. Now both circumstances and the timing were perfect for a political alliance between PML and the Unionist party. This was the model which Jinnah was looking for and had failed to achieve in 1936; at this point in time, only Muslim

League was in a need for alliance whereas the Unionist party was much better without it. However, the alliance materialized in the form of Sikander-Jinnah Pact in October 1937 during the Lucknow session of the Muslim League. Sikander agreed to advise his Unionist party's Muslim colleagues to join the Muslim League ranks and become the subjects of PML discipline.

It may be mentioned that Sir Sikander Hayat could not truly anticipate the possible effects and implications of his alliance on his party's non-communal nature on his Hindu and Sikh coalition partners and the possibilities of dismantling the power-politics infrastructure introduced by the Punjab's administration. It is therefore not surprising that, his Governor, Sir Herbert Emerson, and his senior minister, Sir Chhotu Ram (one of the best brains in the Unionist party) warned Sikander that by concluding an innocent-looking alliance with the PML, the Punjab Premier had in-fact made a big mistake.¹⁷ Chhotu Ram had deeply resented Sir Sikander's negotiations with the Muslim League; it is believed that he had gone to the extent of threatening Sikander to resign from the Unionist Party on this issue. It is also said that perhaps Sir Sikandar assured Sir Chhotu Ram that the Unionist Party's interest and rights will not be sacrificed by the Punjab Chief Minister. Sir Sikander also realized and therefore began to misinterpret the Sikander-Jinnah agreement by saying that his understanding with Jinnah would not change the facts on ground and would not upset any previous understandings and arrangements in the Punjab. However, when Sikander came under pressure from his PML colleagues, he obliged them by issuing another statement implying that he would honestly honour the spirit of the alliance with PML.

On the other hand, the PML leaders like Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Malik Barkat Ali¹⁸ began to send a catalogue of complaints to Jinnah against Sir Sikander alleging that the Punjab Premier had been hindering the growth the PML at all levels and both Barkat Ali and Iqbal also recommended the rupture of Sikander-Jinnah alliance and punish the Punjab Premier. Iqbal died in 1938 and Sir Shahnawaz Mamdot who was a personal friend of Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, became the PML leader. The Nawab due to his connections with the British administrators and also due to his friendship with Sikander was not in favour of severing links with the Unionist party. Moreover, it seems that Jinnah would have made his own calculations that at least for the time being playing for time was the best policy in dealing with Sir Sikander Hayat's policies based on maintaining the *status quo* model in Punjab politics. Quaid-i-Azam was a man of vision and farsightedness and he fully understood the limitations of the PML analyzing that Iqbal was a poet-philosopher and Barkat Ali had personal grievances against Sikander; and that putting undue pressure on Sir Sikander was not in the best interest of the PML.

He eventually decided to advise all political opponents of Sir Sikander to cooperate with him and at the same time reorganize the PML down to its lowest level ignoring what Sikander said and did practically. Thereafter, the PML fully supported Sir Sikander's agrarian bills of 1938 under the Unionist party program and also refrained from making any statements against Sir Sikander. It may be noted that these agrarian bills were described by the Unionists and their supporters as "Golden Bills" but their opponents called them "Black Bills".¹⁹ The PML also did not embarrass Sikander on communal issues such as the *Shaheed Ganj* Mosque dispute in Punjab. Quaid-i-Azam had made it clear to Sikander's opponents that the Punjab

Premier's popularity should remain intact because it was in the best interest of the growth of the PML in the longer run. Sikander very much appreciated the League's cooperation, felt most grateful and gave a statement that his Muslim colleagues in the Punjab Assembly would join the PML party in the assembly. Although his statement was a lip service and was not translated in to a reality, the Punjab premier obliged the Muslim League by positively supporting the Jinnah and his anti-Congress campaign.

In October 1938, the League held its session in Karachi and Sikander hoisted the League's green flag. He also delivered speeches and statements in support of anti-Congress campaign. In one of his speeches he said, "the Sind and Frontier province must fulfill the expectations of the Muslim League by extending their fullest cooperation for the Muslim cause; Sikander also criticized the anti-Muslim policies of the Congress party and advised the Sindh Muslims to bury their differences and rally around the Muslim League for the prestige of Islam in India. It may be noted that Sikander was warned by his Governor that it was not appropriate for him to issue statements in favour of Muslim League or Muslim cause because he was the leader of a non-communal political party (Unionists) and that he was not an ordinary Muslim but Chief Minister of a Province where he should not injure the feelings of non-Muslims and especially his non-Muslim coalition partners. Thereafter, Sir Sikander became very careful in his dealings with the Muslim League.

The next biggest move by the Muslim League was passage of Lahore resolution²⁰ in March 1940 which entailed the dismemberment of the Punjab and the division of India in to Hindu and Muslim states. The Lahore resolution created many problems for Sikander and his successor Khizr Hayat Tiwana.²¹ The cooperation between

PML and the Unionist therefore did not last long because Sir Sikander once again tried to sail into two boats. However his dual loyalty was tolerated by the League leadership and no strict action was taken against him.

Generally, Quaid-i-Azam, Jinnah explained and clarified that Sir Sikander Hayat Khan and his followers in the Punjab had joined the Muslim League bandwagon without any reservations. Sir Sikander kept on trying to satisfy the Muslim League and also his non-Muslim coalition partners in Punjab. In 1941, on the issue of Defence Council he accepted the Muslim League position and resigned from the Council; he also issued a statement saying that he would acknowledge Mr. Jinnah as his leader whether his Quaid-i-Azam was right or wrong. Although Sir Sikander developed some differences with Jinnah later on, before his death in 1942, the Punjab CM once again mended his fences with the Muslim League.²² It may be noted that Punjab's governor did not like Sir Sikander to surrender to Jinnah.²³ It may also be noted that the Punjab administration's influence also had an impact on the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India; both Lord Linlithgow and Lord Zetland were therefore, in favour of Sir Sikander Hayat Khan becoming the leader of Muslims rather than Jinnah. The Viceroy, Lord Wavell and even British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee were influenced by the Punjab administration that was biased in favour of Unionist Party. Sikander Hayat and his successor, Khizr Hayat Tiwana were described as responsible and the best leaders of Muslim India.²⁴

Sir Khizr Hayat Tiwana became Chief Minister of Punjab in 1942 after the death of Sir Sikander Hayat Khan. It looks as if the Muslim League had taken a decision not to allow the new CM to continue sailing in two boats. On the other hand the new premier with the advice of his Governor

was not ready to accept and implement Jinnah's policies in the Punjab. But Khizr Tiwana also realized and knew too well that he will be facing the greatest challenge not only from the Central Muslim League but also that other major problem for him was the pro-Pakistan movement in the Punjab. It may be mentioned that Khizr Tiwana did not have the required political skills or experience to deal with the leader of the Muslim League. Khizr was appointed Chief Minister of Punjab because of his family's deep loyalty to the British.²⁵ When he was considered for the Chief Ministership, there were eminent and experienced politicians available; they were Nawab Muzaffar Khan, Lquat Hayat Khan and Malik Feroz Khan Noon. However, The Governor perhaps preferred Khizr because he was expected to rely more on his advice. Khizr was only 42 and youngest Chief Minister of an Indian province. At a later stage, Governor Glancy himself commented that "Khizr lacks the experience and political ability of his predecessor (Sikander Hayat Khan). But he is in much respect a firmer character. He has a most attractive personality and he is very pleased to work with. He is shrewd, even-tempered and blessed with a sense of humour though he is at heart an aristocrat and something of a reactionary; he keeps his prejudices in the background and is in my opinion essentially fair-minded. He has shown no signs of communal bias."²⁶ The Governor liked his new Chief Minister but Muslim League was determined not to give way to Malik Khizr Hayat Tiwana; and on the other hand both the CM and his governor were planning to play for time against Jinnah and Muslim League as long as they could.

Soon after Khizr's taking over as chief minister, the Muslim League tried to assert its position by putting pressure on him. First of all the Muslim League demanded to know as to why the Governor Punjab did not consult the

Punjab Muslim League leader Nawab Mamdot while appointing Khizr his Chief Minister; that the PML Leader was not even granted an interview with the governor. Similarly, Shaukat Hayat Khan was appointed a minister only to honor Sir Sikander Hayat Khan's family and their contribution to the British *Raj*. He was serving in the army at that time and therefore the League decided to oppose this appointment using the plea that it was an insult to democratic process. Tiwana was therefore, asked to explain the reasons and circumstances of his appointment and the appointment of Shaukat Hayat Khan. He was also asked to explain the reasons as to why the Muslim League party in the Punjab Assembly was not so far functional. Khizr Tiwana at this stage behaved sensibly and did not pick up quarrels with the Muslim League and promised to make the Muslim League fully functional by making efforts to put a new life in it enabling it to serve the true interests of the Punjab Muslims.

In fact, the ground reality was that Khizr had started the same game which was played by his predecessor, Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, for five years. Malik Khizr Tiwana did not practically do anything to make Muslim League functional in the assembly; however he tolerated the Muslim League's pro-Pakistan movement such as celebrating the third anniversary of the Lahore Resolution in the Punjab. However, Jinnah reminded Khizr that he had not yet played a role and not fulfilled his commitments given from time to time to the Muslim League and personally to the leader of the Muslim League.

Playing for time, the premier in his response assured the League leader that his province will play its due role to support the Muslim League and he will also endorse the Muslim demand for the right of self-determination. However, his right hand man Sir Chhotu Ram very deeply

opposed the idea of creating any Muslim League party in the Assembly or even describing the existing coalition ministry as Muslim League-Unionist Ministry. It was noticed that *Nawa-i-Waqt*²⁷ also supported the Muslim League implying that the Sikander-Jinnah pact did not prevent the creation of a Muslim League Ministry in the Punjab. Nawab Mamdot, the PML Leader also put pressure on Khizr Tiwana to issue a statement to that effect. Khizr Tiwana refused to oblige or to accept the Nawab's request. He brought this matter into the attention of Viceroy through his secretary Sir, Evan Jenkins. The Viceroy and Governor Punjab assured fullest their support for the Unionist Party.

It may be pointed out that Sikander-Jinnah agreement was more in favour of the Muslim League but the Unionist leaders like Sikander Hayat and Khizr Hayat Tiwana misinterpreted the agreement to suit their own definition.²⁸ However, Governor Glancy admitted at a later stage that the loose wording of the Sikander-Jinnah agreement favoured the Muslim League. Glancy candidly pointed out that the more he studied this agreement the less he liked it. That it was easier for the Muslim League leader to twist this understanding in his own convenience than for the ruling the Unionist Party. The Pact contained no satisfactory announcement of the doctrine that the Muslim League authorities were expected to keep away from interference in Unionist politics.²⁹

Soon, Khizr's problem multiplied when one of his ministers, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, also issued statements that the Muslim League demands were not unreasonable and that the formation of a League Ministry in the Punjab was in line with the Sikander-Jinnah understanding and that the Unionist ministry should accept the League's discipline. The statements by Shaukat Hayat created a rift between the Muslim supporters of the

Unionist ministry. Furthermore, Khizr's coalition partners like Baldev Singh and Sir Chhotu Ram were in no mood to accept any role by the Punjab Muslim League. The PML had by now gathered support from 20 Muslim Members of the Assembly against Khizr and his coalition partners which resulted in a meeting between Mr. Jinnah and Khizr to sort out the controversial issues. The meeting took place but it did not bring about any settlement. In the meantime, the Punjab Muslim League and the Punjab Muslim Students Federation (PMSF) kept on sending complaints to Mr. Jinnah against what they called non-cooperative attitude of Khizr Tiwana against the growth of Muslim League in the Punjab.

In March 1944, PMSF organized a session at Lahore for the purpose of putting more pressure on Khizr Tiwana to accept the demands of the Muslim League and to honor the pledges given by him and his predecessor in this connection. When negotiations were held between Khizr and Jinnah on these issues, the League Leader insisted that the name of Punjab Ministry must be changed to Unionist-League coalition and also that this ministry must support the creation of Pakistan in its official capacity. The Muslim League needed such a commitment because the non-Muslims including Khizr's coalition partners were openly criticizing the Pakistan scheme for the last four years in various ways. Since the matter needed urgent decisions, , therefore, an ultimatum was given to Khizr Hayat by Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah.

It is very important to mention that the Punjab Premier at this point in time has accepted his defeat and was ready to give in to the League's demands. But his interview with the governor for his administrative advice changed the whole situation dramatically. It may also be mentioned that Governor Glancy had calculated in 1943

that the major threat to Punjab's political stability will come from the leader of the Muslim League and its leader, Mr. Jinnah.³⁰ During this meeting, Khizr told his governor that Unionist party had practically lost its power and position in many ways – it was perhaps existing in names only without any capacity to resist. Khizr knew too well that the Unionist party will loose in the upcoming elections; that his supporters will join the Muslim League and that the future belongs to only two major parties, Congress and the Muslim League. Also that if he stood up against Jinnah, he will be relegated to the background and in his point of view, the best option for him was to retire from politics after the war ended in India. Khizr however, asked his governor to give him order so that he should stand firm against Jinnah. It may be noted that the Viceroy commented in April 1944:

“It is of the greatest importance that until the end of the war against Japan there should be a stable administration in the Punjab, the dissolution of the Unionist Ministry and the substitution of a Muslim League Ministry such as Jinnah wants, will be a disaster. I very much hope that Khizr will look at the matter from this point of view and rally the Unionist.”³¹ The Viceroy shared this information and policy pursued by the Governor of Punjab with Secretary of State for India (L.S. Amery) saying that the Chief Minister of Punjab, Khizr Tiwana had been leaning heavily on his governor for getting advice and support at the same time.³²

Now at this stage, the Governor Punjab gave him the required and much-needed advice to hold on the “Unionist fort” as long as possible and Khizr's cabinet colleagues accept Shaukat Hayat Khan, also supported the governor's view point. It may be noted that earlier on Shaukat Hayat Khan had threatened to resign if Khizr did

not accept the Muslim League demands. Most interestingly, the Viceroy also supported the advice given by governor to his CM against the Muslim League. The Viceroy also thought that the creation of Muslim League ministry in Punjab would be a disaster. The Viceroy went to the extent of conveying to his governor that not only the Punjab governor held that opinion against the League, the Viceroy also supported the line taken by the governor Punjab. The Viceroy however, warned his governor that only Khizr Tiwana should be informed about his opinion and that Khizr should not tell his followers that the governor and Viceroy were in favour of resisting the Muslim League's pressure.

As a follow up, the governor Punjab approved an offensive against the leader of the Unionist party's Muslim dissidents under the leadership of Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan for making speeches in favor of Pakistan scheme. Khizr Tiwana was asked to sack Shaukat as minister before he acts first and gets time to resign from the Khizr cabinet. A political game was therefore, designed in which charges of corruption will be leveled against Shaukat Hayat Khan and then he will be sacked. In the meantime, Khizr Tiwana was playing for time by issuing statements to the press on Muslim League-Unionist relationship from 1937 onwards. Heated arguments were also exchanged between the Unionist and the Muslim League supporters; Jinnah described Khizr's attitude as childish declaring that battle against the Unionist party had begun and he would soon kill the name of Unionist and see to it that its funeral is arranged as early as possible. He also demanded an inquiry on this issue and described the dismissal of Shaukat Hayat Khan as meanest action on part of the Chief Minister and further demanded that the Governor should also be dismissed if he was proved guilty of having victimized Shaukat Hayat. Jinnah described Khizr as a "Culprit and a

Traitor” and indicated that Khizr would be challenged and expelled by the League in due course of time.

It is noticed from the secret reports that from this time forward, Khizr Tiwana began to rely more and more heavily on the Punjab governor for advice, help and support for his efforts to hold on against the Muslim League. The governor gave him full administrative support whereby Khizr was allowed to induct new ministers and distribute patronage amongst the opponents of the Muslim League. But the situation was so charged that unlike the past, the induction of new ministers did not help Khizr Tiwana to recuperate any strength. On the contrary, the Muslim League as an organization, now declared that the battle against the Unionist party had begun. Now onwards Shaukat Hayat Khan won a great deal of support and became a “political martyr” and began to address Muslim League rallies and functions on regular basis. Eminent Muslim leaders from other provinces also came to Punjab to give support against what they called unethical and immoral behavior of Khizr Tiwana ministry. The League leader openly declared that Khizr had gone under the joint control of governor Punjab and Chhotu Ram and also said that in fact the Unionist party had now been controlled by governor and his allies and not by Khizr Tiwana anymore. The Muslim supporters of Unionist party were therefore advised by the Muslim League to divorce themselves from the Unionist Party and join the Muslim League ranks as early as possible.

In the meantime, due to the activities of Rajagopalachariya’s formula leading to Gandhi-Jinnah talks in 1944, accepting the creation of Pakistan in principle further damaged the credibility of Khizr and his supporters.³³ Meanwhile, the Congress, the Mahasabha and the Sikh political parties criticized Rajagopalachariya for

his acceptance of the Pakistan scheme. Moreover, in January 1945, when Liaquat and Dessai discussed a proposal whereby an equal number of persons would be nominated by the League and Congress in the Central Government and the coalition ministries would also be formed by mutual agreement, the Unionist party and its supporters became very uncomfortable. The party thought that if the League took office at the Center, the survival of the Unionist party and ministry in the Punjab would become more doubtful.

In May 1945, when viceroy was in London trying to secure ministerial support for his new initiative to get the principal political parties into his new Executive Council, the Punjab government sent requests implying that if political leaders were invited for discussion, on the Viceroy's return and if there were to be a popular government at the Center, there should be a Unionist Party representative in the new Viceroy's Council. To this the Viceroy replied: "I have no (repeat no) intention of handing over central government to any one party. If the conference comes off I shall hope for Khizr's advice and help. An interim government of the kind might prove a useful step towards inducing Muslims to abandon the Pakistan objective. At any rate Khizr knows me well enough to understand that I have the interest of the Punjab and its soldiers at heart." On June 23, the Governor of the Punjab and Khizr met the Viceroy and emphasized the same point: "Governor is most apprehensive of the effect on the Punjab Ministry of appointment of Executive Council in which the Unionist party is not represented. He said the Ministry might resign and even if the Premier decided to carry on, danger of interference and pressure from the Centre would be real. The Premier expressed similar views except that he did not suggest resignation. He said frankly but in a very friendly way that we were abandoning our supporters and

that if we faced him with Congress-League coalition at the Centre, he would be in a most difficult position.”

The Viceroy's efforts finally resulted in a conference of Indian leaders at Simla on 25 June, 1945. In this meeting Jinnah described Unionist leaders as “traitor to Muslim cause” and that the Khizr ministry had existed only by his sufferance. Muslim leaders tried to work on Khizr Hayat Tiwana for accepting the Muslim League position to nominate all the Muslim Members of the Viceroy's council. On the other hand, the Governor of Punjab advised the Viceroy not to accept Jinnah's demands and that he should postpone the conference putting the blame on Mr. Jinnah's hard attitude. It may be mentioned that in 1942 when Sir Sikander was alive and Sir Stafford Cripps brought his proposals, Governor Glancy was deeply against the option clause in the Cripps proposals using the argument that such a course of action would destroy the Unionist party's structure and further strengthen the Muslim League and its pro-Pakistan campaign.

The Simla conference, like the Cripps offer, failed to bring about a settlement ending the political deadlock in India. Khizr was relieved for the time being but he knew it too well that when the Muslim League will come into power at center, it will be difficult for him to maintain the existence of his party. The Muslim League was already blaming him for damaging the Muslim Cause and had branded Khizr and supporters as traitors. At this stage, even the pro-Unionist party newspapers admitted that this party had in-fact ceased to exist; its influence is only within the four walls of the assembly and that the Muslim League was going to win the upcoming elections with a big majority. The Muslim League's non-Muslim opponents also acknowledged this fact that the PML will increase its strength enormously in the coming elections. It was against

this background that Governor Punjab, Glancy advised the Viceroy to clear up the “Pakistan issue” before elections were arranged so that the League should not take advantage of the popularity of this crucial issue in the Punjab. Glancy was in favour of highlighting the economic and other negative consequences of the creation of Pakistan so that the Muslims could be steered away from the Pakistan movement. Glancy also advised the Viceroy to make it clear that the British were not going to force the non-Muslim majority areas of the Punjab to come under the Muslim rule. He thought that if the Muslim supporters of Pakistan were told that Punjab will be partitioned, they will choose to stay in the Indian Union instead of creating Pakistan. Glancy and his premier Khizr also insisted that the British should announce a definite policy on the issue of Pakistan implying that Pakistan will not be created. The Punjab Governor also suggested that at least, the Cripps offer should be modified to make the creation of Pakistan more difficult. Governor Glancy was in favour of a statement to counter what he called the doctrine of “Islam in danger”, hoping that such a statement would prevent the elections being fought on Pakistan or no Pakistan issue. It may be noted that Muslim League had been planning to fight elections on only one point agenda - Pakistan or no Pakistan.

But despite these arrangements, the Muslim supporters of the Unionist party were trickling towards the Muslim League. Some leading *Sajjada Nasheens* and *Pirs*³⁴ joined the Muslim League and later on they appealed to the Muslims to support the Muslim League’s Pakistan Movement³⁵ because by doing so they will be supporting the cause of Islam.³⁶ The Punjabi Muslims were advised not to have a division on the basis of tribal or *Biradari* networking (David Gilmartin and Ian Talbot have mentioned religious appeals of the Muslim League in

details). In some cases, while preaching in mosques, some Imams had gone to the extent of branding those Muslims who will not vote for Muslim League as *Kafirs* and Traitors. Some *Fatwas* were also issued. It was not only the Muslim League, the Unionist party also used religious appeals in their propaganda against the PML candidates also implying that the Unionist party candidates were in fact better Muslims. The Unionist party hired some Ulama from anti-Muslim League parties like JUI, Ahrar and Khaksars who were openly opposing the creation of Pakistan. In fact, Chhotu Ram had made a comprehensive plan before his death to employ religious preachers to campaign for the election of Unionist Party's candidates. Even Khizr Hayat Tiwana was using verses from the Holy Qur'an to support his party's election campaign. The PML also organized Pakistan Conference in big cities of the Punjab. Some speakers at these conference blamed *Zaildars*, *Numberdars* and the Unionist official machinery for interfering in the election process against the PML. The Punjab League promised that the foundation of Pakistan will help to solve all social, economic and religious problems of the people of Punjab.

Students and leaders from other provinces also came to Punjab for Muslim League's election campaign. Khizr Tiwana's own tribal elders were also divided. Head of the Mittha Tiwana clan gave Jinnah 5000 Rupees to organize the Muslim League. The eminent Congressmen like Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din resigned from the Congress and began to support the Muslim League program. The premier was so confused that he was publically saying that he supported the Pakistan scheme and there was no difference between Muslim League and Unionist Party. But on the other hand, one of Tiwana's ministers, Tika Ram, issued a statement implying that there was no difference between Unionist Party and the Congress because both the parties

opposed the creation of Pakistan. Sir Chhotu Ram, before his death had also issued statements that his Unionist party was indirectly promoting the Congress party's program. He was in the middle of reviving the *Zamindara* League using secular appeals divorcing religion from politics. He died in January, 1945. It may be mentioned that the communally charged Hindu press now began to support Khizr Hayat Tiwana and the Unionist party which in turn further strengthened the faith of Muslim League supporter in the creation of Pakistan.³⁷ Khizr's coalition partners were promising to carry out the Congress program in the Punjab if they were elected. Nehru, Patel, Azad and their supporters gave statements to defeat the forces of disintegration-meaning the Muslim League. Nehru also said that in the Punjab one sees the image of the British Government in the form of the Unionist Party.

By early 1946, the Muslim League had been able to secure the support of many leading families of Punjab and also eminent *Pirs* and *Sajjada Nasheens*. Jinnah issued statements criticizing what he called the 'Shameless Interference' in the elections by Unionist Party and criticized governor's bias in favor of the ruling Unionist party.

It may be mentioned that the Congress party that had been always criticizing the Unionist style of politics and policies was now ready to cooperate with the opponents of the Muslim Leagues in larger interest in order to keep India united and hinder the creation of Pakistan. Maulana Azad prepared the ground for an understanding between Sikhs, Congress and the Unionist against the Muslim League. All these forces were prepared for an arrangement with Punjab Governor's blessing so as to keep the Muslim League out of power even after winning the elections in a predominantly Muslim province. Steps were

therefore taken for a post-election understanding against the Muslim League. The Congress was all out to help the Unionist maintain their position against the Muslim League and doing every thing possible to strengthen the Unionist party. This was in sharp contrast to Congress policy during and after the 1937 elections.

On 23 February 1946, all the results of the elections were known and the Punjab Press reported with big headlines the crushing defeat of the Unionist party. Only 13 Muslims were elected on the Unionist ticket, even some of their minister lost their securities in the elections. The Muslim League won a grand victory by capturing 73 seats of a total of 86. Even at this stage, the Congress was all out to install a Unionist ministry in order to keep the Muslim League out of power.

Now the role of the Punjab Governor was again very important, because the objective of the anti-League forces was to install an un-popular ministry in a predominantly Muslim province. This most fateful decision was approved by the British Governor without realizing that the consequences of such a decision would be bad even for the Congress and the Sikhs. Governor Glancy believed very positively in a “United India” and could not see how Pakistan could work successfully. Khizr Tiwana had resigned after the elections but the Governor Punjab asked him to continue with the hope that if he was appointed Chief Minister once again, some of the Punjab Muslim League supporters might shift their allegiance towards the Unionist party with the hope of becoming ministers or getting some other kind of patronage from the government. On 6 March, 1946, it was reported by the Punjab press that the negotiations between Congress, Unionist and the Sikhs had been materialized and on the next day (7 March) Glancy asked Khizr to form his new ministry again. For the

first time in the history of the Unionist party, the ministry formation had become a very difficult task. Even the sitting ministers were now crossing floor to join the Muslim League. As a matter of fact, the party in power was reduced to only half a dozen of elected Muslims. The Government of Punjab's own secret reports had pointed out that the Unionist party has been practically eliminated by the Punjab Muslim League.

It was for the first time that with a very weak base, the Unionist party and its allies began to challenge the most organized and single largest party in the Punjab that had been given a very heavy mandate by the majority community in the Province. It may be mentioned that at a time when the Muslim League had only one elected member in the Punjab Assembly, the Unionist party with a strength of more than 130 in the assembly and with a most popular Chief Minister, Sikander Hayat did not challenge the Punjab Muslim League. Even at times, when Sikander Hayat Khan defied the Muslim League, he always had second thoughts and eventually made peace with the Muslim League leadership. In the aftermath of the 1945-46 elections, it was a recognized fact that there were only two political parties [Congress and the Muslim League] which mattered most and that there was no place in politics for smaller groups or provincial parties like Unionist and the Mahasabha. Khizr Hayat, Governor Glancy and their allies perhaps realized but were not ready to accept that they were fighting a losing-battle and moreover that bad relations between the Muslim League and its opponents would only have a negative impact on the peace, prosperity and tranquility of the Punjab.

In British India the role of governors had always been important in mending fences and building bridges between the opponents. It is noticed that at center, the

Viceroy like Lord Linlithgow and Lord Wavell tried to patch up and sort out the differences between the major political parties. Most of the times, these Viceroy tried to play a role of a good mediator. Several examples can be quoted in this regard. But in the Punjab, Governor Glancy worked behind the scenes and even did not encourage the formation of Muslim League ministry in the interest of avoiding communal violence. At times when Nawab Mamdot, the leader of the Punjab Muslim League told governor that they were in a position to form a ministry in the Punjab, Glancy pointed out that Mamdot's claims were doubtful. In several interviews, Governor Glancy told the PML Leader that his list of supporters was not genuine or correct; and that due to some misunderstanding, some Unionist Jat members had previously agreed to support Nawab Mamdot. Clearly, the Governor Punjab was not in favour of creating a truly representative ministry; he made hardly any attempt to bring about reconciliation between the Sikhs, Muslim League and the Congress to make arrangements for good relations in the interest a peaceful transfer of power in India.

Notes and References

- 1 He further says: “The region’s large Muslim population, agricultural wealth and even more importantly its strategic position as the ‘land-gate’ of the Indo-Gangetic Plain made it crucial to the viability of a North Indian Muslim homeland. Indeed, Jinnah called Punjab the ‘corner-stone’ of Pakistan. Yet its politics were dominated by the cross-communal Unionist Party. ” Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana: The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India*, OUP, 2002, 1.
- 2 “The increasing importance of this rural class in the early twentieth century emerged in Sir Michael O’Dwyer’s scheme for grants to the “Landed gentry,” which was first developed in 1914 in connection with the distribution of land in the Lower Bari Doab Colony.” David Gilmartin, *Empire in Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*, London, 1988, 25. See also O’Dwyer, *India as I knew it 1885-1925*, (London 1926); H. Calvert, *The Size & Distribution of Land Holdings in Punjab*, Lahore 1925.
- 3 For details see, S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab 1921-1947*, Lahore, 1992.
- 4 For rules and regulations manifesto and infrastructure, see *Punjab Unionist Party*, Lahore 1936.
- 5 Governor to Viceroy, 27 January 1947, LP&J 5/241, IOR.
- 6 For details of his role see, David Page, *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control, 1920-1932*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982, 195-258.
- 7 For details see, S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Jinnah, Second World and the Pakistan Movement*, Multan, 1999.
- 8 Jinnah to Fazl-i-Hussain, 5 January 1936, Aga Khan to Sir Fazl-i-Hussain, 14 January, 1936, see letters of Sir Fazl-i-Hussain, pp. 477-481, Edited by Waheed Ahmad.
- 9 Stanley Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 147
- 10 Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 148 quoted by Sikander Hayat, *The Charismatic Leader*, 9
- 11 Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, p. 147

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- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 The Governor thought that Sikander had unconsciously agreed. (Governor to Viceroy, 12 November 1937), L/P/ & J/5/238, India Office Library and Records, London.
- 18 For details see, Rafique Afzal, *Malik Barkat Ali: His life and writings*, Lahore, 1969.
- 19 For details see, Prem Chaudhary, *Punjab Politics*, 274.
- 20 S. Q. Abid, Lahore Resolution and Punjab in K.F. Yusuf, (Ed.) *Pakistan Resolution Revisited*,
- 21 “The Tiwanas and Noons of Shahpur and the *tumandars*, or Biloch chiefs of Dera Ghazi Khan received numerous grants. The scheme of landed gentry grants thus helped to consolidate a key landed elite in Punjab.” David Gilmartin, *Empire in Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*, 26.
- 22 For details see, S. Qalbi-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab, 1921-47*, pp. 259-61
- 23 Governor to Viceroy, 20 July, 1943, *Transfer of Power*, Vol. IV, p. 110
- 24 See Penderel Moon, ed., *The Viceroy’s Journal*, 81, 74, 414, 379, 368 also quoted in Sikander Hayat, *The Charismatic Leader*, p. 192.
- 25 “Like the Hayats, the Tiwanas too, had a history of devoted and loyal service to the British. The most famous of the Tiwanas was Khizr Hayat who became Premier after Sikander in 1942. But his grandfather Malik Sahib Khan had also played an important role in suppressing the 1857 Revolt in Jhelum under the command of Col. Cooper. He later accompanied General Napier in the Central India campaigns to suppress the Revolt. His son Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana (Khizar’s Father) followed in his father’s footsteps of unquestioned loyalty to the Government. He was among the six Muslims to represent his community at Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. He held various important

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- positions in the army, being the first Indian to be chosen as a Herald for King George's Coronation Durbar. He was made a major-general and appointed aide-de-camp to King George. Khizr Hayat Khan graduated from Aitchinson College and served in the army for some time. He first joined Sikander's ministry in 1937 as minister for Public Works. Many of Khizr's cousins were provincial darbaries, zaildars, jagirdars, etc." Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party 1923-1947*, New Delhi 1999. p. 133
- 26 Governor to Viceroy, 21 July, 1943, Linlithgow papers, 125/94, IOR
- 27 "One of the most powerful voices in Punjabi Muslims politics after 1944, committed to the propagation of Iqbal's message, was the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt*, a newspaper edited by a former president of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation, Hamid Nizami. Strongly influenced by his background in the student movement, Nizami helped to start the *Nawa-i-Waqt* in 1940 as a fortnightly for the "Promotion of Urdu and the popularization for the message of Iqbal". For details see, S.M. Ikram, *Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan*, 266.
- 28 Jinnah was to deny that the written agreement between Sikander and himself had the legal status implied by the word 'pact'. He portrayed it as simply a domestic arrangement within the Muslim League. Because of the Controversy which surrounded the pact it is helpful to reproduce in full the statement which Sikander and Jinnah agreed at the Muslim League Council meeting at Lucknow: (a) That upon his return to the Punjab Sir Sikander Hayat Khan will convene a special meeting of his party and advise all Muslim members of the party who are not members of the Muslim League already to sign its creed and joint it. As such, they will be subject o the rules and regulations of the central and provincial boards of the All-India Muslim League. This will not affect the continuance of the present coalition Unionist Party. (b) That in future elections and by-elections for the legislature, after the adoption of this agreement, the groups constituting the Unionist Party will jointly support candidates put up by their respective groups. (c) That the Muslim members of the legislature who are elected on or accept the League ticket will constitute the Muslim League Party within the legislature. It shall be open to the Muslim League Party so formed to

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- maintain or enter into coalition or alliance with any other party consistent with the fundamental principles, policy and programme of the League. Such an alliance may be evolved before or after the elections. The existing combination shall maintain its present name, Unionist Party. (d) In view of the aforesaid agreement, the provincial League parliamentary board shall be reconstituted. Cited in, Syed Nur Ahmad, *From Martial Law to Martial Law, Politics in the Punjab 1919-1958*, (Boulder, 1985), p. 147, Quoted by Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, p. 165
- 29 Fortnightly report of the Governor of the Punjab, 17 April, 1943, LP&J-5/243
- 30 Fortnightly report by Governor Punjab, 17 April 1943, LP&J V/246, IOR
- 31 Viceroy to Governor 15 April, 1944 TOP. VOL IV. P. 461
- 32 Viceroy to Secretary of State 16 May, 1944, TOP, Vol. IV, p.968
- 33 Ayesha Jalal writes: “The failure of Gandhi-Jinnah talks was greeted by Sikhs as a sign that India would not be partitioned. Uncertain about the future, however, they turned with greater alacrity to consolidating a community whose internal sectarian divisions could encumber any collective assertion of sovereignty. There were increasing displays of ritual sovereignty at Sikh gatherings and more emphasis on a distinctive cultural identity. Giani Kartar Singh delighted an Akali audience in Khanewal by riding an elephant in the company of ninety horsemen and two hundred Akalis bearing swords, some of them drawn. Also present was the redoubtable Tara Singh who said his community was fed up with Muslim rule in the Punjab. It was better for Sikhs to remain under British domination than under Hindu or Muslim Rule.” Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, Lahore, 2007, p. 435.
- 34 For a detailed study see, Katherine Ewing, “The Pir or Sufi Saint in Pakistani Islam” (Ph. D. thesis, University of Chicago) 1980.
- 35 Some important Pirs were Pir of Taunsa Sharif, Pir of Golar Sharif, Pir of Makhad, Pir of Jalalpur, Pir of Alipur, Pir of Pakpattan, the Qureshi and Gillani Pirs of Multan, Sajjada Nishin of the Chishti Shrine of Mahar Sharif (Bahawalpur)the

Sajjada nashin of the Dargah of Hazrat Khwaja Mouddin Chishti (Ajmer) and the Sajjada nishin of the Dargah of Nizamuddin Aulia (Delhi). All these pirs and sajjada nashins exercised a great deal of religious appeal and they were also big landlords.

36 It may be noted that the power and influence of Pirs and Sajjada Nasheens had provided religious legitimacy to the Unionist party also.

37 see the files of *Civil and Military gazette* of March-April, 1944