
The Simla Conference: A futile attempt to bypass Pakistan Scheme

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"The conference of Indian leaders called by Wavell on 25 June 1945 was a charade from the beginning to the end. Delegates from all the major parties, the representatives of the Sikhs and the Scheduled Castes and the premiers of British provinces present and former including the Congress Party premiers who had resigned in 1939 were invited to meet the viceroy in the Viceregal Lodge in the Raj's summer capital of Simla, up in the Himalayas. It would transport the Indian leaders from the sweltering heat of the Indian plains in summer, some from jails, to a climate approximating summer in Scotland or Gstaad in Switzerland, amongst hillsides covered by pine, oak and deodar trees, with spectacular views of snow-clad mountains to the north. In Simla they would either walk to the Viceroy's Lodge or be carried there in a rickshaw, for no car except that of the Viceroy was permitted on the roads of this hill station. The rickshaw was a light wooden contraption with a double seat suspended over two wheels, which was pulled and pushed by five men with the help of poles attached to its front and rear. The lodge itself was a replica of a Scottish castle with towers and gabled windows, surrounded by sloping lawns, graveled paths and miles of hedges of English summer flowers. Gandhiji also came to Simla, but did not attend the conference;

Nehru was not invited because he did not fall within any of the categories for participation designated by Wavell the Viceroy. It was Jinnah, in his London suits, who was the star."¹

The Gandhi-Jinnah negotiations had failed and thereafter, Gandhi tried to come closer to the Government. Maulana Azad criticizes Gandhi's action by saying that it was ill timed." It will be recalled² that when hostilities began, I tried hard to persuade Congress to take a realistic and positive attitude towards the war. Gandhi at that time had taken the stand that political independence of India was no doubt important but adherence to non-violence was even more important...Now he said that Congress should cooperate with the British if India was declared free. This was a complete reversal of his earlier views and caused misunderstanding in India and abroad, [in Britain it was interpreted that Gandhi's] offer of support [was] an attempt to gain British sympathy now that the victory of the Allies was assured... the British were no longer so much in need of Indian support as they had been in the earlier days of the war."³ Azad's estimate is accurate; Wavell and London were in no mood, at least for the moment, to make any advances.

Similarly, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, with Gandhi's approval, now got in touch with Jinnah; Sapru formed a committee but the League decided not to cooperate. Wavell was of the opinion that the Sapru committee was entirely Hindu and therefore was not expected to produce any positive result. Jinnah was also aware of the facts and 'described this committee as an appendage of the Congress. Sapru continued his work but in the meantime a new political move was also initiated to resolve the political deadlock. At a time when the war was coming to a close and the Congress detainees were set at liberty and discussions for an interim Government were again started. Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Congress in the Central legislative Assembly, began negotiations with Liaquat Ali Khan, the deputy leader of the League, about forming provisional⁴ central Government subject

to ratification by Gandhi and Jinnah. They agreed that the representation of the League and the Congress would be 40% each and that of the other parties 20%. Gandhi put the seal of approval on the Liaquat-Desai agreement.

Desai also got in touch with Wavell's private secretary, Sir Evan Jenkins, (later became Governor of Punjab) but the war cabinet did not think that Desai would be able to succeed. It may be noted that Jinnah's health was not good at the time when Liaquat was discussing the proposed agreement. Mudie, the Home Member of the Viceroy's council, sent a cable to Wavell informing that Jinnah knew nothing about the Liaquat-Desai deal.⁵ But Desai was very much confident. After an exchange of letters and telegrams, Wavell was given a go-ahead signal to meet Jinnah. The Viceroy asked the Governor of Bombay (Colville) to sound Jinnah about this new initiative with Desai; Jinnah was willing to meet the Viceroy at a later date, due to his ill-health.

On 21 March 1945, Wavell left for London to have further discussions on the Indian political situation. S.M. Burke comments: "As the fortunes of war began to turn in favour of the Allies, Wavell felt that the time had come for him to make proposals for a resolution of the political deadlock in India. During an informal discussion of the political situation in the Governors conference on 31 August 1944, Wavell gave it as his view that in the short-term, India could be kept quiet, but the long-term view was less comfortable because as soon as the war with Japan ended, His Majesty's Government's cheque would be presented and would have to be honoured'.

His objective, as stated in a letter to Churchill, was to form "a provisional government, of the type suggested in the Cripps Declaration, within the present Constitution, coupled with an earnest but not necessarily simultaneous attempt to devise a means to reach a constitutional settlement'. Wavell told Amery

that he attached much importance to his proposals and was prepared to visit London to urge their acceptance, but it was not till 11 January 1945 that he was informed that he could come in late March. He eventually arrived on 23 March.

He had a one-and-a-quarter hour meeting with Churchill on 29 March. The prime minister thought that the problem of India, 'could be kept on ice', but Wavell told him quite firmly that the question of India was very urgent and very important. Wavell's impression was that Churchill seemed 'to favour partition into Pakistan, Hindustan, Princestan, etc'.

During May, while Wavell was still in England, the war in Europe came to an end, the coalition government in England broke up and Conservative 'caretaker' Government under Churchill took office with Amery continuing as Secretary of State in India."⁶

The Viceroy appeared before the India Committee and told them that so far as Jinnah was concerned the creation of Pakistan was the only solution. The acting Viceroy informed Amery that Jinnah was annoyed with Liaquat for having talks with Desai. Desai was also repudiated by the leaders of the Congress and soon relegated to the background. The acting Viceroy also reported that Jinnah criticized the recently published recommendations of the Sapru Committee commenting that the question of Pakistan was the first and foremost issue to be solved at the time of framing new constitution for India. Sapru had not only rejected the Pakistan scheme but also recommended that the Muslim right to separate electorates should also be abolished.

In London, the Viceroy discussed his idea of having a conference of Indian leaders with Amery; Cripps and the India committee and it took two months to get approval of his plans. A careful study of the documents unravel the truth that Wavell and Glancy got too much involved in the affairs of the Punjab and the

Viceroy was under the influence of Anti-Pakistan Governor of the Punjab, Sir Bertrand Glancy. At a time when the Viceroy was in London, Glancy sent a request that the Unionist party must be given a share in the future Cabinet of the Viceroy to which Wavell responded by saying that he had in mind to give a due importance to Khizer Hayat. Glancy and Khizer met the Viceroy on his return to India to remind him the same point. But the fact of the matter was that both Glancy and Khizer very much preferred to maintain the *status quo* at the centre because otherwise it was not possible for the Unionist Ministry to continue their hold on the Punjab for long.⁷

Meanwhile, the war in Europe ended and on 23 May 1945 Churchill's coalition resigned and was replaced by a caretaker government. Churchill had agreed to make a declaration about India before Parliament was dissolved on 15 June. The Viceroy was granted permission to convene a conference of Indian leaders to help him to form a new executive Council that would represent the main communities and would include equal proportion of Caste Hindus and Muslims. With general elections due in the near future, Churchill had to give in to the Viceroy. And on the eve of Wavell's departure, the Secretary of State had made an announcement in the House of Commons to that effect. On 14 June Wavell announced that a conference would be held on 25 June in Simla: twenty one political leaders would be invited, that the Council would be fully Indianised, except the Viceroy and the C-in-C, and that more progress would be made if the conference succeeded. Remaining political prisoners were also released, the invitations for the Conference had already been sent.

The Viceroy decided to meet Jinnah on 24 June but the League leader wished to get the conference postponed allowing time to consult his Working Committee; but Wavell did not agree and asked the Quaid to convene the meeting in Simla. On 20 June, writing to Amery, the Viceroy expressed the hope that

Jinnah would cooperate with him on the parity issue and that all the Muslims on the Council would be from the League. Four days later Jinnah had a meeting with the Viceroy; Jinnah had foreseen that the members belonging to the Scheduled Castes would vote with the Congress and therefore it was important that the League must nominate all the Muslims members of the Council. The Quaid-i-Azam also told Wavell that the Unionists were traitors to Muslim interests.⁸ On 25 June, as soon as the Viceroy opened the Conference, a difference of opinion was clearly noticed. Jinnah repeated his stance that the Congress represented Hindus but Dr. Khan Sahib did not agree. Wavell said that the Congress represented its members and Jinnah accepted this explanation. Jinnah also made it plain that he would not accept any constitution except on the fundamental principle of Pakistan, but the Congress point of view was exactly the opposite. It may be mentioned that Lord Wavell had arranged this Conference with the aim of by-passing the Pakistan scheme; he was of the opinion that once the two principal parties began to work together, the idea of Pakistan might evaporate with the passage of time.

On the next day, the conference met again but no progress was possible. Azad says that the League leader had "expressed the wish that he would like to have an informal discussion with the Congress. I nominated for the purpose Pandit Govind Pant⁹ who I thought would be the right person to negotiate with Jinnah. Their discussions continued for several days but in the end proved abortive. Khizer Hayat Khan who was attending the Conference as the Premier of the Punjab met me several times during this period. I was glad to find that he had taken a very reasonable attitude on all questions¹⁰ and was helpful and cooperative in solving problems as they arose.. [Jinnah demanded that the Congress could nominate all the Hindu members whereas the League had the right to nominate all the Muslim members]... I pointed out that the Congress could never accept such a demand. It had approached all political problems from a national point of

view [insisting on its national character] and recognized no distinction between Hindus and Muslims on political issues. It could not agree to be an organization of Hindus alone. I therefore insisted that the Congress should have the freedom to nominate any Indian it liked regardless of whether¹¹ he was a Hindu or a Muslim or a Parsee or a Sikh. Congress should participate on the basis of Indian nationhood or not participate at all" But Jinnah did not accept this and conveyed to Wavell that he was not going to tolerate the inclusion of Khizer Hayat Khan in the Council and once again repeated his stance to nominate all Muslims on the new Council.

It may also be noted that Nawab Mohammad Yamin and Begum Shahnawaz proposed to Khizer that if he supported the League's principled stand Jinnah would nominate a Punjabi Muslim of Khizer's choice; but the Punjab premier did not accept this compromise as he was already in touch with Azad who had promised that the Congress would not object to his inclusion in the Council. Moreover, Khizer was also closely in touch with the Governor of the Punjab who personally did not wish to see the League coming into power at the Center fearing that it would create enormous problems for the Khizer Ministry in the Punjab. Glancy commented that the League's demands were outrageously unreasonable and that if Jinnah were given three out of a total of five Muslims, he should consider himself fortunate. Khizer Hayat also gave a list of members, in case Jinnah refused to cooperate with the Viceroy. Glancy, however, was of the opinion that if the League leader did not accept the Viceroy's decision, the Conference should be suspended, putting the blame for its failure on Jinnah's intransigent behaviour.¹²

The Congress reassembled on 29 June for the fourth time. Congress and the League had failed to sort out their differences. The Congress President says that they could not accept the League as the sole representative and authoritative organization of the Muslims of India using the plea that there was a Congress

ministry in the N.W.F.P.; in the Punjab it was a Unionist ministry; in Sind Ghulam Hussain depended upon the Congress support and much the same position was in Assam. The Viceroy now asked each party to send its list of members they would like to be included in the Council. The Quaid did not approve of this procedure. Wavell knew it too well that Jinnah would not send him any list. But the Congress held a meeting of its working Committee and a list was sent on 7 June to the Viceroy. On the same day the Quaid informed the Viceroy that the working Committee of the League had decided that all Muslim members of the Council must belong to the League and that Jinnah must be taken into confidence. On the next day, a meeting took place between Jinnah and the Viceroy in which the League leader once again insisted on his stance on the question appointment of Muslim members of the Viceroy Council. Wavell also stuck to his guns but Jinnah refused to cooperate with him on the condition he considered harmful to the League.¹³

Now the Viceroy using his own judgment, made a provisional list of the members of his Council and later tried to get Amery's approval. In London, the Cabinet held its meeting in which the Lord Chancellor was of the opinion¹⁴ that the Viceroy's nominations were in fact not according to the approved policy laid down by the Cabinet because one of the major political parties had not submitted any list. The Secretary of State for war argued that it was essential to avoid a bad start using the plea that the Muslim League should not be given a pretext to be arrogant and hostile. The Foreign Secretary concluding the discussion made it plain that it was not possible to go ahead ignoring the Muslim League. Amery got into touch with the Viceroy to tell him about the new situation, appreciating his efforts but at the same time conveying him that the Cabinet could not give the Viceroy any approval of his new ideas.

The fact of the matter was that the two principal political parties, Congress and the Muslim League, that were really

responsible for the failure. They had taken up positions which admitted of no compromise. If Congress had allowed the Muslim League to have a monopoly of Muslims, it would have been tantamount to accepting that it was itself purely a Hindu body. And if the League had permitted Congress to nominate Muslims, it would have thereby accepted the Congress claim that it represented all the communities in India. In his final report to Amery on the Simla Conference, Wavell correctly diagnosed that:

The immediate cause of the failure of the conference was Jinnah's intransigence about Muslim representation and Muslim safeguards. The deeper cause was the real distrust of the Muslims other than Nationalist Muslims, for Congress and the Hindus. Their fear that Congress, by parading its national character and using Muslim dummies, will permeate the entire administration of any united India is real, and cannot be dismissed as an obsession of Jinnah and his- immediate entourage.

Congress leaders blamed Jinnah for the lost opportunity and said that the viceroy should have gone ahead without the League. But in fact that entire plan had been based on the idea that the Executive Council would be an all-party body. During Wavell's discussion with the India Committee on 26 March 1945, Attlee had raised the possibility that the members of the proposed Executive Council might walk out if they were overridden by a viceregal veto, to which the viceroy had replied that the real safeguard was the communal balance; unless Hindus and Muslims were united, they could not out-vote him.

Jinnah was under great stress during the Simla Conference. Wavell recorded in his journal: 'I had one and a half hours with Jinnah yesterday (8 July). He was obviously in a high state of nervous tension, and said to me more than once, "I am at the end of my tether", he also said, "I ask you not to wreck the [Muslim]

League'. After the failure of the conference the impression gained ground that Jinnah would be able to veto any constitutional advance of which he did not approve, and that it was necessary to win his favour if one aspired to be accepted as a representative Muslim. On 12 July 1945, Amery wrote to Wavell that Congress 'must now either acquiesce in Pakistan, or realize that they have somehow or other to win over Muslim support against Jinnah, and that a mere facade of tame Congress Muslims does not help them'.

Some days after the conference, the Quaid-i-Azam, at a public meeting, referred to Gandhi's presence at Simla during the Conference in scathing terms: 'The first question is why did Mr. Gandhi as one of the leaders of the recognized parties go to Simla? Having gone there, why did Mr. Gandhi not attend the conference? The reason is simple. It was to play the role of wire puller'.

On 31 August 1945, Churchill told Wavell that the only reason he had agreed to Wavell's political move resulting in the Simla Conference was that the India Committee had told him it was bound to fail. Churchill's view as already expressed to Amery on 29 July 1941 had been that if the British Government had refused self-government, Hindus and Muslims would have united in demanding it and that the more the British Government said that they meant to give it, the more violently they disagreed and prevented the British Government from doing anything.

The Viceroy had met Jinnah several times but was unable to change his attitude. Wavell therefore communicated to the Governors that the Simla Conference had failed and that the timetable for the central and provincial elections would be discussed in the near future. The Viceroy also told Amery that he had not succeeded in his plans, gracefully accepting the blame for the failure of the Conference. On 14 July, the Viceroy announced the failure to the delegates of the Simla Conference saying that

unfortunately the Conference was unable to agree about the strength and composition of the Executive Council. Rajaji was of the opinion that the League's claim was absurd for it had not been established through the elections. But Jinnah tried to explain that the failure was due to fundamental issues and entirely different angle of vision and that the stand taken by him was that the League stood by demand for Pakistan and on the other hand the Congress wanted a united India. The Congress president argued that the conference failed because of Jinnah's intransigent attitude.¹⁵ In a press conference, on the same day Jinnah said that on a final examination and the analysis of the Wavell plan, we found that it was a snare.¹⁶ There was a combination consisting of Gandhi-Hindu Congress which stands for India's Hindu national independence as one India and the latest exponent of geographical unity, Lord Wavell and Glancy-Khizer who were bent upon creating disruption¹⁷ among the Musalmans in the Punjab, and we were sought to be pushed into this arrangement which if we had agreed to, as proposed by Lord Wavell, would have signed out death-warrant... all the other minorities such as Scheduled Castes, Sikhs and Christians have the same goal as the Congress... it is obvious to any intelligent man that if we accept this arrangement, the Pakistan issue will be shelved and put in the cold storage indefinitely, whereas the Congress will have secured under this arrangement what they want, namely a clear road for their advance towards securing Hindu national independence of India."

The Viceroy's efforts to relegate the demand for Pakistan did not succeed. On the contrary, the League's image and popularity of Jinnah amongst the Muslims received a tremendous boost. The general impression was that no constitutional plan would succeed without getting an approval from Jinnah. Soon some important Muslim leaders including prominent supporters of the Congress crossed over to the Muslim League. The anti-Pakistan elements such as Khizer Hayat, Maulana Azad, Glancy and Wavell were the main targets of the

League. On 22 July Wavell reported that the League's paper *Dawn* was assigned the task to propagate against Khizer and Azad. The Governor of the N.W.F.P. told the Viceroy that the League leaders were happy at Jinnah's success and they thought that their own prestige had been greatly improved.

Narendera Singh Sarila argues, "Wavell knew all along that Jinnah would stick to his guns, a stand that would be unacceptable to the Congress Party. He also knew that London would never agree to overrule Jinnah's demand, however absurd it may be; or let the Congress Party enter his 'cabinet', without the countervailing presence of the Muslim League in it. Therefore, 'enacting' the Simla Conference had no other purpose except to build up Jinnah against his Muslim rivals in the Punjab and to head off renewed American pressure for Indian self-government. And in this, Wavell succeeded brilliantly. The results of Simla were recorded by the Punjab governor as follows: 'Since Jinnah succeeded by his intransigence in wrecking the Simla Conference his stock has been standing very high with his followers and with a large section of the Muslim population. He has openly come out that the [coming] election will show an overwhelming verdict in favour of Pakistan. The uninformed Muslim would be told that the question he is called on to answer at the polls is - Are you a true believer or an infidel or a traitor? Against this slogan the Unionists have no spectacular battle cry.'¹⁸

Glancy then warned: 'If Pakistan becomes an imminent reality we shall be heading straight for bloodshed on a wide scale.'

H.V Hodson, the former reforms commissioner and main adviser to the viceroy, concurs with Glancy: 'Mr Jinnah's demonstration of imperious strength at the Simla Conference was a shot in the arm for the League and a serious blow for its Muslim opponents especially in the Punjab...Lord Wavell's sudden abandonment of his plan [to set up a representative executive council] was a decisive move that made the partition of India

inevitable to twist Mr. Jinnah's arm, it is clear, was not part of the plan that he had so laboriously agreed with His Majesty's Government.¹⁹

After Simla, Muslims with political ambitions, including those from other Muslim formations, began to switch sides to the League in large numbers, though, in the Punjab, Khizer held his ground. Soon after the conference, the secretary of state, Leopold Amery, in a personal telegram to the viceroy, congratulated him: 'The Congress Party, after all by coming into the Conference, abandoned their claim that they are only people to take over from us.' The same Amery who, in 1940, had warned Linlithgow of the dangers of Pakistan, had by now become an enthusiastic supporter of the partition of India. A Britain greatly weakened by the war needed allies in the subcontinent to help it to resist Soviet pressure in the fresh *chukker* of the Great Game, which was about to begin. For the British to listen to warnings of massacres and blood baths would be similar to the Americans denying support to the Mujahedins against the Soviets in Afghanistan some forty years later, despite the ever-present danger of fuelling Islamic fundamentalism.²⁰

Lahore became a centre of the League's activities for quite some time, meetings were held in which Khizer came under heavy bombardment because there was plenty of ammunition against him; and at the same time the message was put across that there was no alternative for the Muslims of British India but Pakistan. The governor of the N.W.F.P. had to admit (on 9 August 1945) that after the failure of the Simla conference people were thinking and talking more about the Pakistan scheme. The League leaders were making speeches labeling Khizer his supporters and his associates as traitors; the Muslims were warned that if Pakistan was not given to them they would have to face a permanent Hindu domination leading towards the Hindu Raj in India. On 16 August 1945, Glancy had to admit that Jinnah had

been hailed as the champion of Islam with his stock standing very high.²¹

On the other hand, the failure of the Simla conference had a great impact in London; it was noticed that some influential Labor leaders were convinced that in their opinion the time had arrived whereby a permanent solution for Indian deadlock was essential. Cripps gave an important statement in London meaning that the Muslims could not be allowed to have a veto to hinder the constitutional advance in India, but at the same time, the Muslims would not be forced to accept a new constitutional arrangement to which they took fundamental objection. Soon the Labor Party came into power with a big majority in Parliament, and one of its priorities was to review the political situation in India.

On 26 July, Attlee became the British Prime Minister and Lord Pethick-Lawrence was appointed the new Secretary of the State for India. The Congress leaders, who had cultivated close relationship with the Labor Party over the years, felt elated and tried to take advantage of their close connections. The Congress president, Azad, sent a letter congratulating Attlee and Cripps expressing the hope²² that as the Labor Party had come into power, it would fulfill the pledges it had always given to India about its freedom. The next important event was that was that the Second World War came to an end with the surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945. So far as India was concerned, after the failure of the Simla conference only fresh General Elections could determine the representative character of various political parties. Further, Cripps insisted that there must be a permanent solution in which the question of Pakistan must form a major issue. He also declared that no more time should be wasted and that new elections should be held in India.

It may be mentioned that Jinnah had declared openly that the League would fight the upcoming election on the question of

Pakistan or no Pakistan. Jinnah declared, with tremendous confidence, that the League would win almost all the Muslim seats, both central and provincial. The anti-Pakistan forces also acknowledged that the League's prestige would increase enormously in the coming elections. The Viceroy, on the basis of official reports, was of the opinion that the League would be able to win most of the Muslim seats. The Punjab government, Congress, the Sikhs and the Unionist party were also worried about the League's victory at the polls. Glancy, Khizer's well-wisher, advised the Viceroy to take measures to counter the League's publicity campaign in favour of Pakistan by announcing a clear-cut policy placing a new interpretation of the option clause in the Cripps offer of 1942 by making the process of separation of provinces from the main union more difficult.²³ The Congress was also lukewarm in the beginning but soon it began to make preparation for the elections. Azad was made in charge of campaign especially the Muslim provinces. It may be of some interest to mention that some letters to and from Sardar Patel clearly indicate that Patel was not optimistic about the chances of Congress success on Muslim seats despite the fact that huge amounts were made available for the election campaign.

On 21 August, the Viceroy declared that the elections would be held in the coming cold weather, that he would shortly be visiting London for consultations. Wavell spent the last week of August and the first two weeks of September in London. On his return to India the Viceroy declared that after the elections, the Government would substantiate whether the Cripps offer was acceptable or whether some modified scheme was preferable. Atlee also appealed to the political leaders to evolve an agreeable formula, but the reactions of the Congress and the League were not favorable. The Congress very much liked to get an assurance for independence and the League wished to have a clear acceptance of the Pakistan scheme. Jinnah made it plain that no plan would be accepted if it did not promise the creation of Pakistan unequivocally.

In December, the new Secretary of State declared that he had proposed to send out an all-Party parliamentary delegation to India to meet political leaders and convey the British desire to grant independence to India. Professor Robert Richards was the leader of the ten-member delegation, which arrived in India on 5 January 1946. Jinnah met the delegation and made clear that he would not take part in the Interim Government without a prior declaration accepting the Pakistan scheme and a promise that the League would be given parity with all other parties. He also insisted that Pakistan must be a viable state. Nehru, on the other hand, although conceded the Pakistan scheme, insisted on a plebiscite in border districts to confirm it. Nehru also added that the Muslims did not know what they were voting for.

However, the issue of Pakistan had to be put to the test at the general elections for the provincial and central legislatures, both the Congress and the League did their utmost to win this electoral battle due to the reason that the Muslims were pinning their hopes on the outcome of these elections to verify their claims that they truly wanted to achieve Pakistan. Jinnah had appealed to all small Muslim parties such as the Momin Conference, the *Ahrars*, the Unionists, the *Khaksars* and other to pause and review the situation saying that if they continued to oppose the League they would be doing great disservice to the cause of the Muslims and as well as to India's freedom. The Quaid requested these organizations' either to merge with the Muslim League or to retire from the field altogether.

But these parties were more close to the Congress. The *Ahrars* and the *Khaksars* never realized that Gandhi had always wanted them to fight against the British (perhaps repeating the events of 1857, whereby the Muslims would be punished and the Hindus would be able to benefit from the situation) and also against Jinnah. The Congress was also giving them financial help for that purpose. A careful study reveals the fact that the leader of these organizations, Allama Mashriqi and Ata Ullah Shah Bokhari

had no clear-cut manifestos or program to follow. Reports of the C.I.D.²⁴ Punjab Police tell us the stories of some crazy activities of these organizations.

In 1942, Mazhar Ali Azhar (the Ahrar leader in the Punjab) gave statements that Pakistan should be achieved by cooperation with the Hindus and the Sikhs, without realizing the attitude adopted by these two communities on the Pakistan scheme. In 1943, the *Ahrars* advised Muslims to pay attention on religious not geographical boundaries. In 1945, in their conference the *Ahrars* wanted Jinnah to declare that only Islamic laws would be introduced in Pakistan, and that Jinnah should have declared the ban on the use of liquor in his Pakistan. As the elections were approaching, the *Ahrars* were thinking to exploit the situation by saying that Jinnah had married a Parsee girl in 1918, and alleging that Jinnah was not a true Muslim for he did not observe religious doctrine of Islam.

In January 1946, Mazhar Ali directed the *Ahrars* to follow Jinnah and disrupt the Muslim League's meetings. Ata Ullah Shah Bokhari had also been delivering speeches criticizing Jinnah as "the biggest obstacle in the way of India's freedom" also uttering words of hatred against the League and Pakistan. In one meeting, Allama Mashriqi appeared; Jinnah welcomed him politely and gave him a seat on the platform. Mashriqi wished to speak to the audience but Jinnah asked him to get the permission from the organizers; but Mashriqi did not care and began his speech and the organizers had to disconnect the microphone. The police had to do something to rescue the Allama Mashriqi who had been addressing meetings in Lahore criticizing Jinnah and had been threatening that he would call the *Khaksars* from all the provinces to interrupt the League's meetings.²⁵

But despite the cheap tactics adopted by his opponents, Jinnah was able to galvanize all units and branches of the League; funds were collected and soon the electioneering was in

full swing showing a tremendous amount of unity, faith and discipline (as Jinnah had been asking for over the years) in the Muslim ranks. Azad says that in the Punjab, Bengal and Sind, the League "had carried on with his propaganda to arouse religious fanaticism and communal passions. This clouded the political issues so much that Muslims who stood on Congress or any other tickets had great difficulty in even securing a hearing from the people". The Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State that Jinnah had been speaking with confidence about the prospects of the League winning a good number of seats. He was attaching more importance to the number of seats the League could win in the Central and Provincial assemblies, and that Jinnah did not care much about the formation of ministries in the Muslim majority provinces.

Jinnah had issued many statements and time and again indicated in his speeches that now the Muslims were looking for a permanent settlement. Pakistan issue must be decided if the issue of independence of India was to be decided. The Muslims will never surrender the issue of Pakistan to anybody as their claim was a just and righteous one and it was the only solution for India. The Muslims wanted to fight the elections, so that they might once for all convince those who doubted their representative character. He insisted that if the Muslims properly organized, they will sweep the polls. The name of the Muslim League was resounding in the whole world and the Muslims had now awakened to a new consciousness of nationhood. If the Conference had succeeded in bypassing the Muslim League, I would not have asked you for money to fight the elections; but more than that "I would have asked you for complete sacrifice for the realization of our goal of Pakistan."²⁶ Later one more speeches were made in which determination was expressed to fight the *Hindu Raj* and assist any attempt to impose a union upon the Muslims of British India. He also pointed out that "Gandhi's constructive program" really meant a destructive program for Muslims.²⁷

As was anticipated, the results clearly showed a decisive victory for Pakistan. At the end of 1945, the results were declared for the Central Assembly, the League won all the places, which were to be filled by Muslim votes. Jinnah declared that it was a clear verdict of Muslim India in favour of Pakistan and that the first round of the battle for Pakistan had been won, that it was an established fact that the League was the sole representative of Muslim opinion, thereafter celebrating "the Victory Day".²⁸ As for the provincial elections, in Assam the Congress won all the general seats and territorial seats and the League won all the Muslim seats. The result was that the Congress formed the Government. In Sind the League formed a ministry. In the N.W.F.P. the Congress was able to form the government; Congress had won 30 seats whereas the League could win only 17. In the Punjab, the League was the single largest party winning 79/86 Muslim seats;²⁹ the Unionist party led by Khizer Hayat was completely routed out, despite the support given by the Punjab's Governor and bureaucracy.

At that stage Maulana Azad's services were once again required; the Maulana flew to Lahore in connection with the formation of the provincial ministry. According to Azad, it was due to his efforts that the League had been isolated and the Congress, though it was a minority, had become a decisive factor in Punjab affairs."³⁰ Khizer who had only five to six supporters in the Punjab Assembly became the Chief Minister once again with the support of Congress and the Sikhs, and with the blessings of Glancy. Azad admits that Nehru held the opinion that it was not right for the Congress without being the majority party to become a part of the Punjab ministry. But Gandhi supported Azad and Nehru had to agree. As regards Bengal, the League won 113 seats and was able to form a government with Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy as the Chief Minister. Of the provinces under Governors' rule the Congress won a clear majority in Bihar, in the U.P., Bombay, Madras, C.P. and Orrissa. In summary, therefore, the results of the elections, as

mentioned above, had clearly indicated that the League was the sole representative of Muslim opinion and that the Muslims were determined to have Pakistan.

Notes and References

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- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Wavell to Amery, 16 January 1945 (tel) Mausergh, *Transfer of Power (TOP)*, Vol. 5, No. 197, Mudie to Jenkins, 15 January 1945, Ibid, 199.
- 5 Mudie to Jenkins, 19 January 1945, Ibid, 199.
- 6 S.M. Burke, *Landmarks of Pakistan Movement*, pp. 343-344.
- 7 Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, Lahore 1992, p. 288.
- 8 Ibid, pp. 288-89.
- 9 Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, p. 117.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid. p. 119.

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- 12 Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, pp. 289-90.
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 - 14 War Cabinet Meeting, 10 July, 1945, TOP, Vol. 5, No. 586.
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 - 16 For details, see, Waheed Ahmad (Ed.), *Speeches, Statements & Messages of the Quaid-i-Azam*, Vol. III, Statement of 14 July, 1945, pp. 2026-28.
 - 17 Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, p. 295.
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 - 21 Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim politics in the Punjab*, p. 295.
 - 22 Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, p. 126.
 - 23 Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, p. 295.
 - 24 Criminal Investigation Department(CID) Reports files S-411-414, at National Documentation Centre (NDC), Islamabad.
 - 25 Ibid.

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 - 28 Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslims Politics in the Punjab*, p. 296.
 - 29 Ibid, p. 298.
 - 30 Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 134-37.